



*4th Annual*

*Graduate Student*

*Awards Gala*

**March 5<sup>th</sup> 2016**

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN  
**ALUMNI**  
ASSOCIATION



*The Graduate Students' Association  
Welcomes you to the  
4<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Awards Gala*

5:30 PM COCKTAILS

6:30 PM Welcome by GSA President

Greetings by U of S President

Greetings by Honourable Gordon Wyant,

Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Greetings by Mayor Atchison

7:00 PM DINNER WITH LIVE MUSIC

8:00 PM Greetings by College of Graduate Studies and  
Research

Greetings by Canadian Federation of Students

Greetings by Alumni Association

First Nations dance performance

8:30 PM AWARD CEREMONY

Excellence in Aboriginal Research

Research Excellence in Social Sciences

Interdisciplinary Research Excellence

Research Excellence in Sciences

Performances:

Indian dance

Persian dance

Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership

Excellence in Community Service

Advising Excellence

Presentation of the Winning 3MT

9:30 PM Certificate presentation to Graduate Students

9:45 PM DOOR PRIZES

Performances:

Bangladeshi Dance,

Mexican singer,

Ukrainian Dance

10:10 PM Dance (Dance floor is open until midnight)

## *Message of Welcome*

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Student Awards Gala. This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize, celebrate and get inspired by the hard work and perseverance of graduate students at the University of Saskatchewan. On behalf of the Graduate Students' Association, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the award winners and we hope you continue to aspire to greater heights in all your academic and professional endeavours.



We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, without whom the GSA Gala would not be possible. It is their generosity that keeps this tradition going annually. We would also like to thank all graduate students who volunteered their time to organize the gala these past several months.

We would like to wish you a very memorable evening and best wishes for the future.

Rajat Chakravarty  
President  
Graduate Students' Association

## *Message of Welcome*

On behalf of the University of Saskatchewan, congratulations to our graduate students being recognized at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Graduate Awards Gala. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Graduate Students' Association for providing this important opportunity to recognize and reward graduate student excellence.



Tonight is the perfect opportunity to celebrate accomplishments, reward hard work and come together as a graduate student community for an evening of fun and fellowship. I wish you a memorable evening and continued success.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "m. stoicheff". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

**Peter Stoicheff**  
President  
University of Saskatchewan

## *Message of Welcome*

These are exciting times for the College of Graduate Studies and Research as we look to change our name and extend our focus to not only represent graduate trainees but also postdoctoral fellows. Removing research from our name in no way diminishes the importance of graduate studies from the mandate of the College. As we can see from this week, research is at the centre of all that



graduate students do, and we have been able to celebrate their achievements through the three-minute thesis competition and the research conference. Tonight caps the week, and I am delighted to bring warm greetings to all graduate students, faculty and staff attending tonight's 4<sup>th</sup> annual Gala. For those of you fortunate enough to be able to attend previous galas, you will remember the excitement of the winners and the joy we all shared hearing their stories of their achievements.

We recognize that for our university to achieve its goal of being one of the most research intensive in North America we must continue to nurture our graduate students so they receive the best graduate education possible from the institution. Part of the nurturing process is to award outstanding achievements. So with that in mind, we are gathered here tonight to fulfill that promise and share with our graduate students our time so that they can be awarded and share their experiences with us. I wish everyone an enjoyable evening.

**Adam Baxter-Jones, PhD**  
Interim Dean  
College of Graduate Studies and Research



## *Message of Welcome*

As Premier of Saskatchewan, I am pleased to welcome you to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Awards Gala in Saskatoon.



Over the last one hundred years, the University of Saskatchewan has transformed into one of the most distinguished universities in Canada. With over a century of alumni, graduates of this educational institution continue to make important contributions in all areas, both at home and around the globe. Continuing in that tradition, tonight we honour some of Saskatchewan's best and most innovative minds.

Graduate studies are about perpetual learning and the sharing of knowledge. As an association that encourages support, cooperation, and educational success throughout the University of Saskatchewan, I commend the Graduate Students' Association for honouring graduate students who have excelled in their research, scholarly and artistic pursuits.

Congratulations to the honourees and best wishes for your future success.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brad Wall'.

**Brad Wall**  
Premier



## *Message of Welcome*

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan and the Ministry of Advanced Education, congratulations to the award recipients. You can be very proud of your accomplishments.

The Government of Saskatchewan understands the importance of post-secondary education and has made a number of investments to expand research capabilities in the areas of innovation, science and medicine.



The University of Saskatchewan is an outstanding institution. Tonight's award recipients are examples of the high-quality education and research offered at the University of Saskatchewan. You are all great ambassadors for your school and the Province of Saskatchewan.

As you reflect on your successes, you should take pride in all you have accomplished.

Thank you to the Graduate Students' Association for hosting tonight's event and ensuring graduate students have access to quality services that support their academic success.

I wish you the best and congratulate you again on this recognition.

**Scott Moe**  
Minister of Advanced Education  
Government of Saskatchewan



## Message of Welcome

It is my sincere pleasure to extend greetings on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, to everyone taking part in the 4th Annual University of Saskatchewan Graduate Student Awards Gala.



Morris C. Shumiatcher once wrote, “No nation can long survive without a genuine establishment that is nourished by the innovative, the inventive, and the energetic, and that is tempered by the sensitive, the conscientious, and the compassionate. No individual will find the polestar by which to guide his steps except in the standards of excellence that men and women of high purpose and good will adopt, and according to which they perform their public duties and live their private lives.”

This beautiful quote speaks to the character of those who will be honoured during this special evening. I congratulate all of the award recipients, and I thank you for your commitment, your work ethic, and your vision. You are the innovative, the inventive, and the energetic, and our province is fortunate, indeed, to benefit from your work. I wish you the very best in your continued studies and research.

I am grateful to the Graduate Students’ Association for providing valuable support to the University’s promising graduate students for over 3 decades, and for hosting this celebration of excellence. Please accept my best wishes for a joyous and memorable gala.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Vaughn Solomon Schofield".

**Vaughn Solomon Schofield**  
Lieutenant Governor  
Province of Saskatchewan



## *Message of Welcome*

On behalf of City Council and the citizens of Saskatoon, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the 4th Annual Graduate Awards Gala.

Tonight's event celebrates all of the hard work and dedication you put into your studies as well as acknowledges the support and encouragement you received from your instructors and mentors along the way.



Congratulations to the organizers of this special evening. I know the extensive preparation that goes into events like these, and I thank everyone involved.

Please accept my best wishes in your future endeavours. I hope you have a memorable night.

**Donald J. Atchison**  
Mayor

“On behalf of the residents of Ward Eight and the constituency of Saskatoon University, I would like to congratulate you on your academic achievements and extend my best wishes for continued success”

**Eric Olason**, Councillor Ward 8.



## *Message of Welcome*

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### Official Sponsor



CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS  
FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES ÉTUDIANT-E-S

The Canadian Federation of Students and its National Graduate Caucus would like to extend a warm welcome to all members present at the 4th annual Graduate Awards Gala. We would like to congratulate the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Student Association, Local 101, for their dedication in working for all members and for recognizing the outstanding work of award recipients this evening.

On behalf of the Federation let us reiterate our commitment to support graduate students by advocating for a high quality system of post-secondary education, addressing the mounting debt crisis facing graduate students and increasing support for grants and research funding. As students, we know that publicly funded research moves this country forward, and it's students who dedicate our lives to this work.

Congratulations to the award recipients this evening, and we wish you all a memorable evening.

**Bilan Arte**

National Chairperson

**Anne-Marie Roy**

National Deputy Chairperson

**Anna Dubinski**

National Treasurer

**Christina Muehlburger**

National Graduate Caucus Chairperson





## *Message of Welcome*

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### **Official Sponsor**



Building upon the foundation of positive student experiences, the U of S Alumni Association fosters goodwill to establish and grow a sense of community among our 147,000 U of S alumni living in 117 countries around the globe.

#### **The University of Saskatchewan Alumni Association:**

1. is dedicated to adding value to the lives of all U of S graduates through a number of special benefits and services,
2. strives to build an involved community of graduates around the world,
3. encourages a lifelong relationship with the university and fellow alumni, and
4. is committed to celebrating and encouraging the success of all its graduates.

Since its inception in 1917, the accomplishments of our members continue to embody the diversity found on our campus—Rhodes scholars, a Nobel Prize winner, a Canadian prime minister, Olympic medalists, CEOs, entrepreneurs, scholars and teachers, doctors and nurses, artists and actors—the list is as long and diverse as the imagination of our graduates.

#### ***Our Mission***

*Building upon the proud history and tradition of the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan Alumni Association encourages and fosters lifelong involvement of alumni in the life of the university. It is committed to adding value to the lives of all alumni by engaging the community of graduates and celebrating alumni success throughout the world.*



# Awards Introduction

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The Graduate Student Awards Gala is held once a year to honour the excellence of graduate students and this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala. The awards are introduced by the category below.

## Excellence in Aboriginal Research

This award honours a graduate student who has made significant impacts in his/her field of study, and research that has positively contributed to the Aboriginal community.

## Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Law or Education

This award honours a graduate student who has made significant impacts in the field of humanities, arts, social sciences, law or education and who has produced outstanding research results throughout their course of study.

## Interdisciplinary Research Excellence

This award honours a graduate student who has made significant impacts in two or more separate but related fields of study and has produced outstanding research results throughout their course of study.

## Research Excellence in Sciences

This award honours a graduate student who has made significant impacts in the field of science and/or engineering that has produced outstanding research results throughout his/her course of study.

## Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership

This award honours a student who has shown strong leadership and exceptional initiative beyond his/her call of duty to carry out the mission of the GSA.

## Excellence in Community Service

This award honours a graduate student who has made significant impacts and who has positively contributed to a local community.

## Advising Excellence

This award honours a graduate student advisor who has shown excellent supervisory and mentoring skills as well as exceptional support for their advisees' ideas, scholarly work, and financial needs.

## Professional Excellence

This award honours a graduate student (non-thesis based program) who has made significant academic achievement in his or her field of study and who has made outstanding non-academic contributions to his or her department of studies.



## *Excellence in Aboriginal Research*

Dr. Ranjan Datta recently completed his PhD dissertation titled: *Land-Water Management and Sustainability: An Indigenous Perspective in Laitu Khyang Community, Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bangladesh*, from the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan (UofS). His teaching, research, and service activities are motivated by his interests in Indigenous education, rights, and practice; anti-racist theory and practice; social and environmental justice; and Indigenous research methodology and methods. Dr. Datta is one of the University's most productive graduate student scholars— his research quality and output are on par with any researcher at the UofS. He has published a number of international peer reviewed journal articles, co-authored several books, and has presented in international and national peer reviewed conferences. Dr. Datta is currently working as a Research Facilitator (RF) in the College of Education at the UofS. In his role, he acts as a liaison between our university's research services, the Deans in the College of Education and individual faculty and researchers.



Dr. Datta is widely known as an international graduate student expert on Indigenous research and making positive impacts on the community, and he has received numerous accolades for research excellence. For two years (2011-2012 and 2014-2015), he was elected to work as Vice President Academic for our Graduate Students Union while he undertook his PhD. Dr. Datta has played a number of leadership roles furthering Indigenous culture and practice in education in his home country Bangladesh and beyond. He has also been able to connect to a larger community in Saskatoon through participation in social well-being and justice movements such as: the Idle No More Movement, First Nations Land Rights, Saskatoon Community Radio (CFRCR 90.5), Saskatoon Car Share Co-op, Saskatchewan Climate Change, Food Bank, and Friendship Inn. Dr. Datta and his spouse (Jebunnessa Chapola) are blessed with two young daughters (Prarthona and Prokriti).

## *Research Excellence in Social Sciences*

Jan grew in rural Saskatchewan, surrounded by lakes, wildlife, farming, and close community. Born with a curious spirit, she has long been fascinated by humanity and questions of why we think, feel, and behave as we do in certain situations. Throughout her secondary training, she developed a particular interest in extraordinary and transformative life events. This interest was spurred, in part, by her volunteer work with a local brain injury association and the everyday forms of struggle, loss, and resilience she observed therein. She continues to be intrigued by experiences of loss and tragedy and humbled by the human capacity to emerge from crisis and (re)create a life worth living in the face of misfortune.



In her graduate training, Jan became deeply engaged with individuals living with physical and cognitive disabilities and various forms of sexual diversity. With the support of her supervisor, Dr. Michel Desjardins, she carried out an extensive research program in the community, working to develop and evaluate programs and services for individuals and families living with physical and cognitive impairments. She has also contributed methodological and sociocultural works of import to the research literature, publishing in various journals of note in the realm of qualitative research and disability studies. Her research has been supported by numerous national, institutional, and community grants and has earned her various awards.

Jan's PhD. research into the lives of same-sex attracted Christian men represents a sensitive and nuanced investigation of this socially volatile topic. The work was extremely well received by her committee, external examiner, and the college and is poised to make a number of new and valuable contributions to this area of scholarship. Jan can be contacted at [Jan.Gelech@usask.ca](mailto:Jan.Gelech@usask.ca)

## *Interdisciplinary Research Excellence*

Farhad received his B.Sc. in Aerospace Engineering from Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran (2007). Being aware of adverse influence of greenhouse gas emissions on global warming, Farhad was awarded his M.Sc. in Aerospace Engineering (Sharif University of technology, 2010) focusing on efficient gas turbines with less pollutant emissions. During his master and bachelor studies, he was known as a distinguished student among his faculties and colleagues.



Farhad joined the Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Saskatchewan in 2012 to start his Ph.D. in the Heat and Mass Transfer research group (Supervised by Dr. Simonson). Inspired by being in this highly productive group, Farhad has been conducting a comprehensive research on an energy recovery technology, known as desiccant wheels, which substantially reduces the energy consumption in ventilation systems. Attempting to address the industrial issues, Farhad has been searching for an environmentally friendly alternative biomaterial to enhance the efficiency of this technology through a collaborating research with high qualified scientists (Dr. L. Wilson and Ms. L. Dehabadi, Department of Chemistry, University of Saskatchewan). The promising results have been published in a high-quality peer-reviewed journals that should be of great interest to various divisions of engineering, industrial manufacturers, and researchers in the field of Energy Recovery, Sustainable Chemistry and Materials Science. Farhad's scientific achievements brought him several prestigious awards such as the Devolved Graduate Scholarship of Department of Mechanical Engineering 2014-2105", "Saskatchewan Innovation & Opportunity Scholarship 2015" "College of Engineering Graduate Student Awards 2016-2012".

Farhad's passionate commitment in transferring knowledge has motivated him to serve as the instructor for 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 3<sup>rd</sup> year engineering courses in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. Along with his academic life, Farhad plays Iranian traditional instruments and been involved in several nationwide festivals and multi-cultural events.

## *Research Excellence in Sciences*

**Max Birk** is a PhD Student at the University of Saskatchewan supervised by Dr. Regan Mandryk. His research evolves around the psychological concept of the self, focusing on implications for player experience research and game design, e.g., modeling motivation and engagement. Max studied at the University of Trier, Germany, where he



researched the physiological and endocrinological effects of videogames. Working in psychophysiology, experimental psychology, games user research, and HCI, Max has a variety of experience, all connected by his interest in games. He has consulted for several indie game companies and served as a program committee member for multiple international HCI conferences. With 20 published or accepted papers related to games, and several best paper awards, Max was selected for the prestigious IGDA Games Developer Conference scholarship 2016. As a lecturer, Max aims to spark curiosity for interactive systems and the research opportunities that digital games provide. In the same spirit, Max volunteers his time to support local outreach programs, summer camps, and the local Game Jam. The goal of his dissertation is to show that interaction design approaches that increase identification with digital representations can improve the engagement with and the efficacy of game-based interventions for health and well-being.

## *Mark Kroeker: Exceptional Student Leadership*

Isaac Pratt is an NSERC PhD candidate in Anatomy & Cell Biology, in the College of Medicine. Isaac earned his MSc from the University of Saskatchewan in 2013 and his HBSc from the University of Toronto in 2011. His research interests are in comparative anatomy, x-ray imaging, and bone microstructure. Isaac is an author on four peer reviewed publications and nineteen conference presentations. He has also been a Teaching Assistant for five years on campus, running anatomy labs for Arts & Science and Kinesiology students.



Isaac has been involved in student initiatives on campus since his arrival at the University of Saskatchewan. He has served as a GSA Councilor since 2013, and has served on several committees for the GSA, including the Bursary Selection Committee, the Finance Committee, the Elections Committee, and is currently the chair of the Governance Committee. He is a proud GSA guppy. Isaac is the President of the College of Medicine Graduate Student Society, and sits on the College of Medicine Faculty Council and the Budget, Planning & Priorities Committee. Isaac is on the Program Executive Committee for the CIHR-THRUST research group, and assists in planning CIHR-THRUST Annual Retreats. Isaac is also a member of the newly formed PSAC Local 40004 RA/TA union bargaining team, where he is working towards the development of the first collective agreement.

On a more personal note, Isaac is honored to accept an award named for his friend Mark Kroeker, as they served together on GSA Council and often discussed ideas for the future of the GSA. Isaac played a significant role in revamping the governance documents of the GSA, an effort Mark would surely have engaged in.

## *Excellence in Community Service*

Kayla Madder was born in Brandon, Manitoba and later moved to Saskatoon where she completed a BSc in Biology and Biotechnology and a 3-Year BA in Psychology. Currently a MSc candidate in Animal Science, Kayla also works as a lab manager in the department. She enjoys working on genetic variant discovery, gene expression and interaction, immunology and nutrigenomics in feedlot cattle, causative mutation analysis for animal health conditions, and other projects through her work and MSc research.



As a child, Kayla's family (specifically her grandmothers) led by example in instilling a passion in her for community service. Over the past several years, Kayla has become involved with a variety of causes. She is thankful for her role as a Big Sister to her Little Sister Anna. Volunteering with BBBS of Saskatoon has enriched Kayla's life immensely and has given her a great friend in Anna. Kayla has also volunteered with SWITCH over the past four years and had the chance to be on the planning committee for the inaugural AIDS Saskatoon Gala in 2015.

Kayla's son Amari was born in 2013, and upon returning to work and school in 2014, she noticed a lack of resources for student parents on campus. In partnership with Student Health, the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition, and a handful of other University groups, the Comfort Room and Parents on Campus Group were created to fill this gap. The Comfort Room is a safe space for student and staff parents to spend time with their child(ren), breastfeed, pump, gather parenting resources, socialize with other parents on campus, or to take a moment away from campus life to relax. The Parents on Campus Group meets weekly in the Comfort Room, where parents are able to form a supportive community through sharing parenting stories, successes, and struggles. Kayla continues to coordinate both services and looks forward to their growth and increased external support in the coming years.

## *Advising Excellence*

Dr. Louise Humbert is a Professor in the College of Kinesiology at the University of Saskatchewan. An award winning teacher, Louise is honoured to with undergraduate and graduate students in courses and research and community settings.



Louise is a community based researcher with over 20 years of experience working in community settings. A founding member of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan in motion, Louise has experience listening to the needs of community members and working with them to develop initiatives that will support them in their efforts to lead healthy physically active lifestyles. Her greatest love is her family; husband Doug, and their children Emily and Davis.

## Thanks to Sponsors

The GSA would like to express our deepest gratitude to our sponsors for your support. This event would not be possible without your generous sponsorship.

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## Door Prizes



**CAMPUS DENTIST**



## A Vote of thanks ...

It is a privilege and a great joy for us to extend a vote of thanks to all those who have contributed in one way or the other to make this Gala a reality.

We would like to give a special thanks to:

- Our sponsors without whom we would not be able to organize this event. Our greatest gratitude goes to you.
- The GSA Commons staff: Sherri Rohovich and her team: Megan Jenkins, Bassey Bassey, Qi Guo, and Vince Anderson for all their hard work and contributions to make this gala a success.
- The GSA Executives for their continuous help and feedback on the planning and organization of this event.
- The Awards Review Committee Members who read through pages and pages of nomination package documents to make the hard decision of selecting a winner.
- Faculty, staff, directors and members from different units across university campus, Government of Saskatchewan and City of Saskatoon for accepting our invitation.
- GSA Council and academic councilors for supporting the event.
- GSA volunteers for donating their time and sharing their expertise with us to make the event planning goes smooth.
- Last but not least, our performers who make it known that graduate students have so many more talents and skills in addition to Academics & Research.

I would like to thank everyone for attending this event and encouraging our GSA to indeed make it a tradition.

Warm regards,

Mohammad Rafati  
GSA Awards Gala Coordinator

Natalia Terekhova  
GSA VP External



## *In memory of Mark Kroeker*

Mark Kroeker was born in Loma Linda, California on September 21, 1989 with a fatal condition known as hypoplastic left heart syndrome and underwent a cardiac transplant when he was just one week old. After recovering from transplant surgery in California for eleven months, Mark moved with his family to British Columbia where he insisted on living a completely normal life.

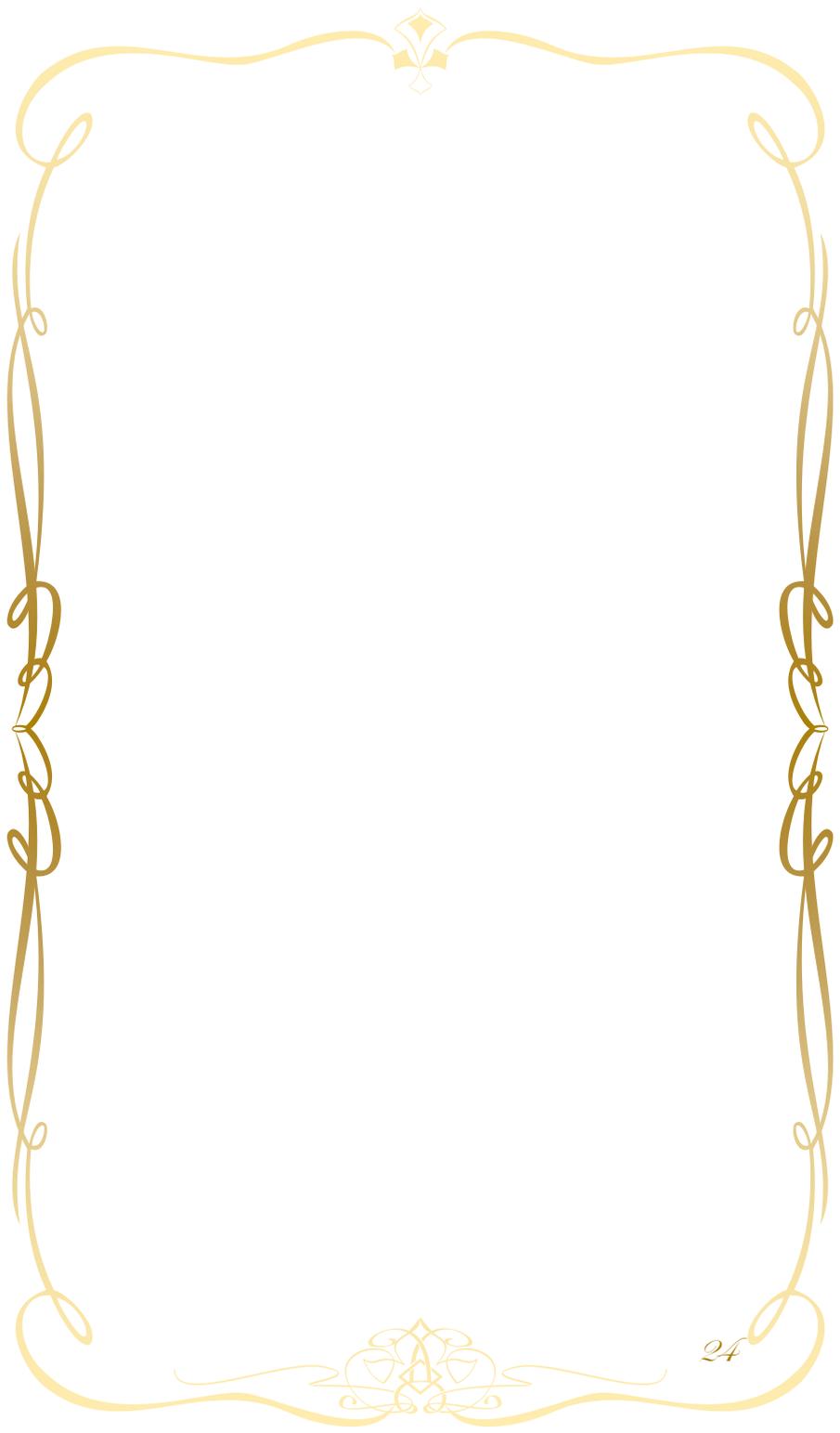


Mark loved school. He was always a strong student leader, and was highly involved with his community. During his final year he was a student representative on the Vancouver School Board. In high school he was very involved with the drama club and won several awards from his school and a city-wide annual event known as Vancouver Drama-Rama.

After graduating from high school, Mark went to study at Mount Allison University in Sackville, N.B. where he completed a B.A. in Geography. Mark served as VP External on the Mount Allison Students' Advisory Council for three years, and was well respected by the community as a leader.

Mark enrolled in a Masters program at the University of Saskatchewan in the department of Geography and Planning, exploring urban Aboriginal attitudes regarding city planning in Saskatoon under the supervision of Dr. Ryan Walker. As per usual, he immediately became engaged in his community, serving as President of the Geography and Planning Students' Association, and Chair of Course Council for the GSA.

Many of us who knew Mark personally are still struggling to come to terms with the enormous void in our hearts and lives left by his sudden and unexpected death in May, 2014. The award in his name to acknowledge exceptional student leadership is a very fitting and meaningful tribute to the Mark Kroeker we all remember.



*The GSA Executive would like to  
thank all of you for attending this  
important event.*

*Please enjoy your evening.*



Front row (l to r): Dana Carriere (Aboriginal Liaison), Natalia Terekhova (VP External), Jebunnessa Chapola (VP Academic)  
Second row: Ziad Ghaith (VP Operation&Communication), Rajat Chakravarty (President), David Bennett (VP Finance)

**cfs fceé**

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF STUDENTS  
FÉDÉRATION CANADIENNE DES ÉTUDIANT-E-S