

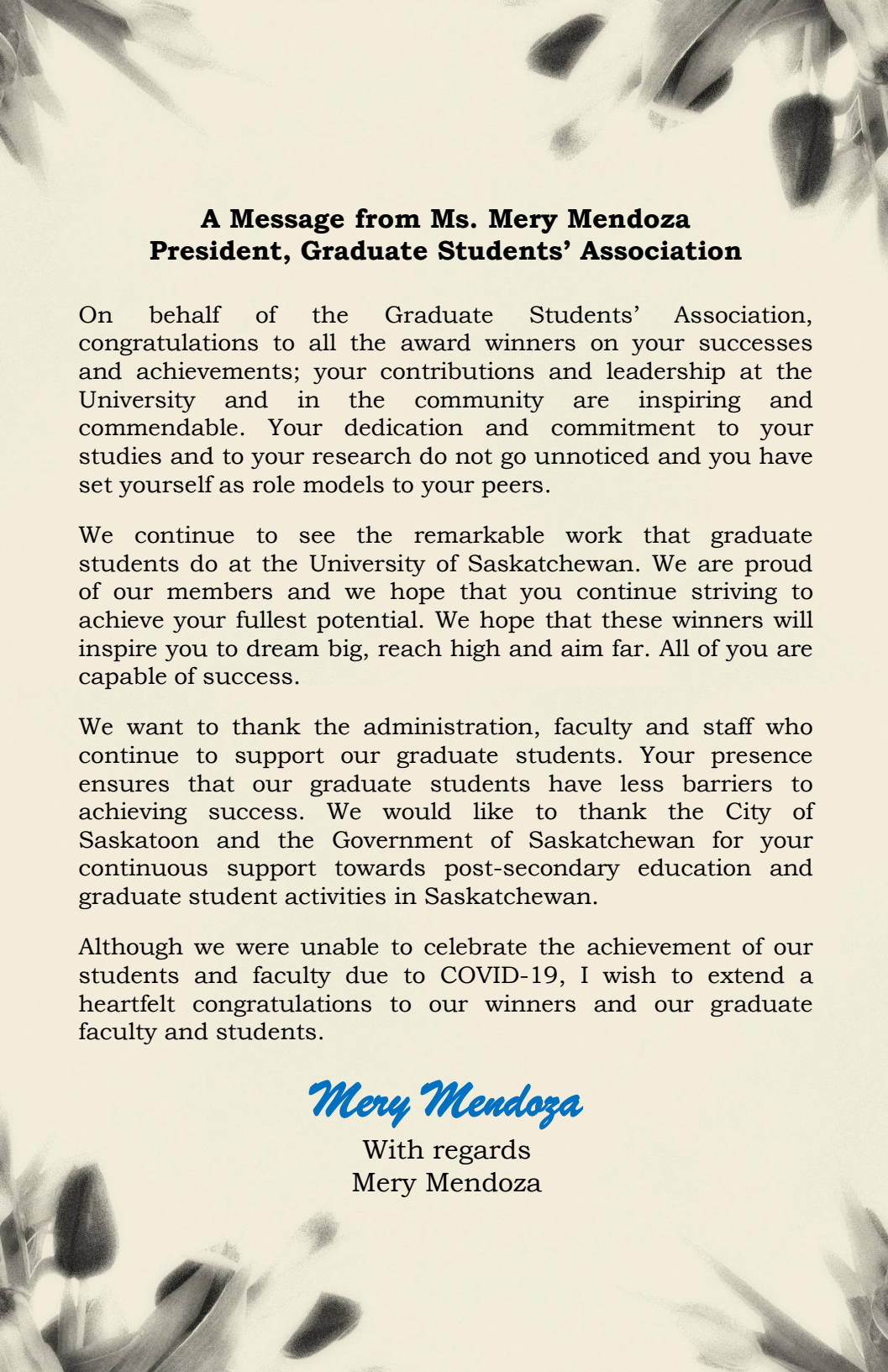


THE GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

8TH ANNUAL AWARDS GALA

Award Winners Booklet

2020



**A Message from Ms. Mery Mendoza
President, Graduate Students' Association**

On behalf of the Graduate Students' Association, congratulations to all the award winners on your successes and achievements; your contributions and leadership at the University and in the community are inspiring and commendable. Your dedication and commitment to your studies and to your research do not go unnoticed and you have set yourself as role models to your peers.

We continue to see the remarkable work that graduate students do at the University of Saskatchewan. We are proud of our members and we hope that you continue striving to achieve your fullest potential. We hope that these winners will inspire you to dream big, reach high and aim far. All of you are capable of success.

We want to thank the administration, faculty and staff who continue to support our graduate students. Your presence ensures that our graduate students have less barriers to achieving success. We would like to thank the City of Saskatoon and the Government of Saskatchewan for your continuous support towards post-secondary education and graduate student activities in Saskatchewan.

Although we were unable to celebrate the achievement of our students and faculty due to COVID-19, I wish to extend a heartfelt congratulations to our winners and our graduate faculty and students.

Mery Mendoza

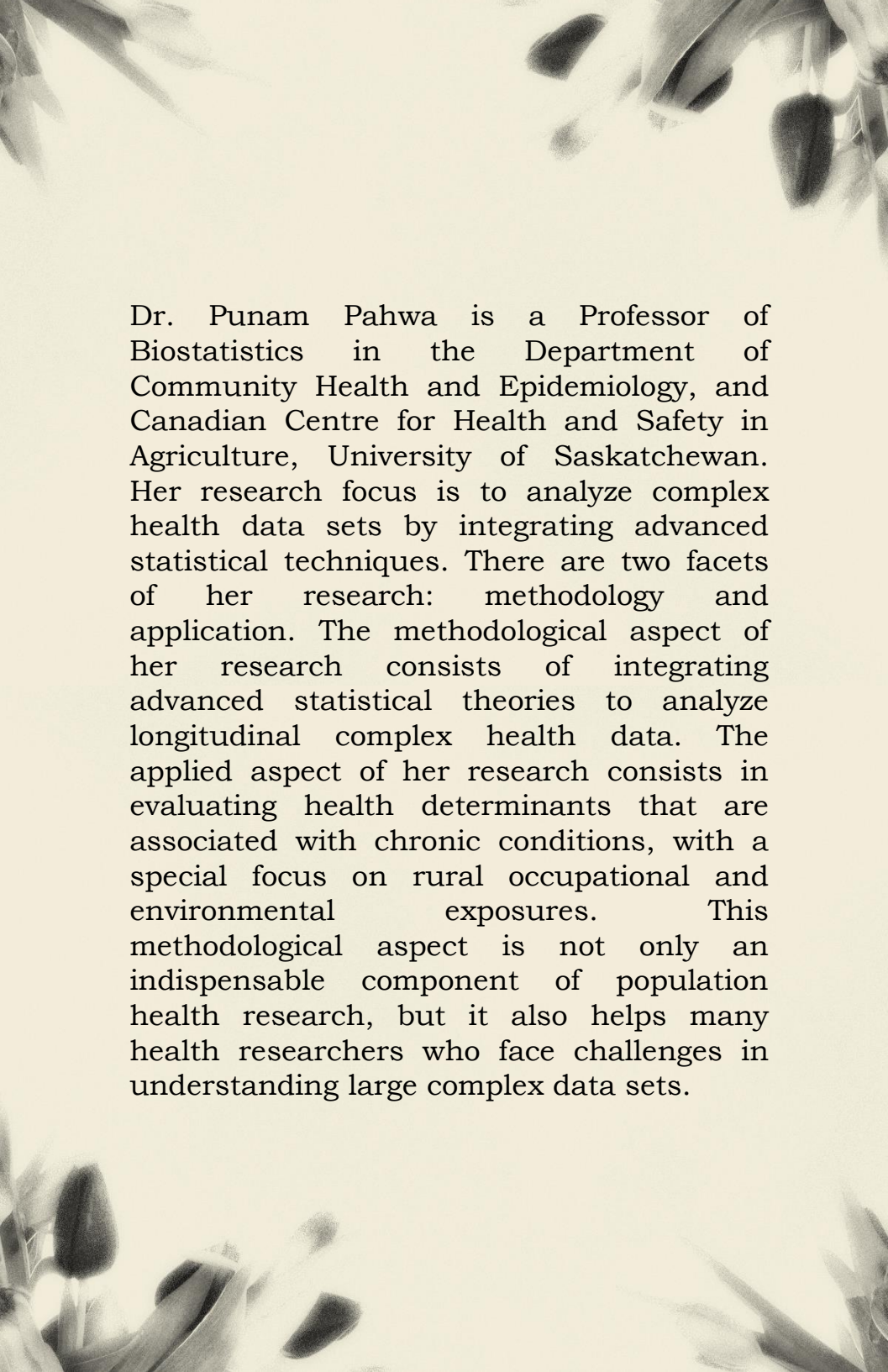
With regards
Mery Mendoza



Advising Excellence Award

Dr. Punam Pahwa

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association Advising Excellence Award is presented to Dr. Punam Pahwa for her excellent supervisory and mentoring skills as well as her exceptional support for her advisees' ideas, scholarly work, and financial needs. Dr. Pahwa embodies the capacity to stimulate graduate students to think critically and creatively, while enhancing their graduate student learning experience.

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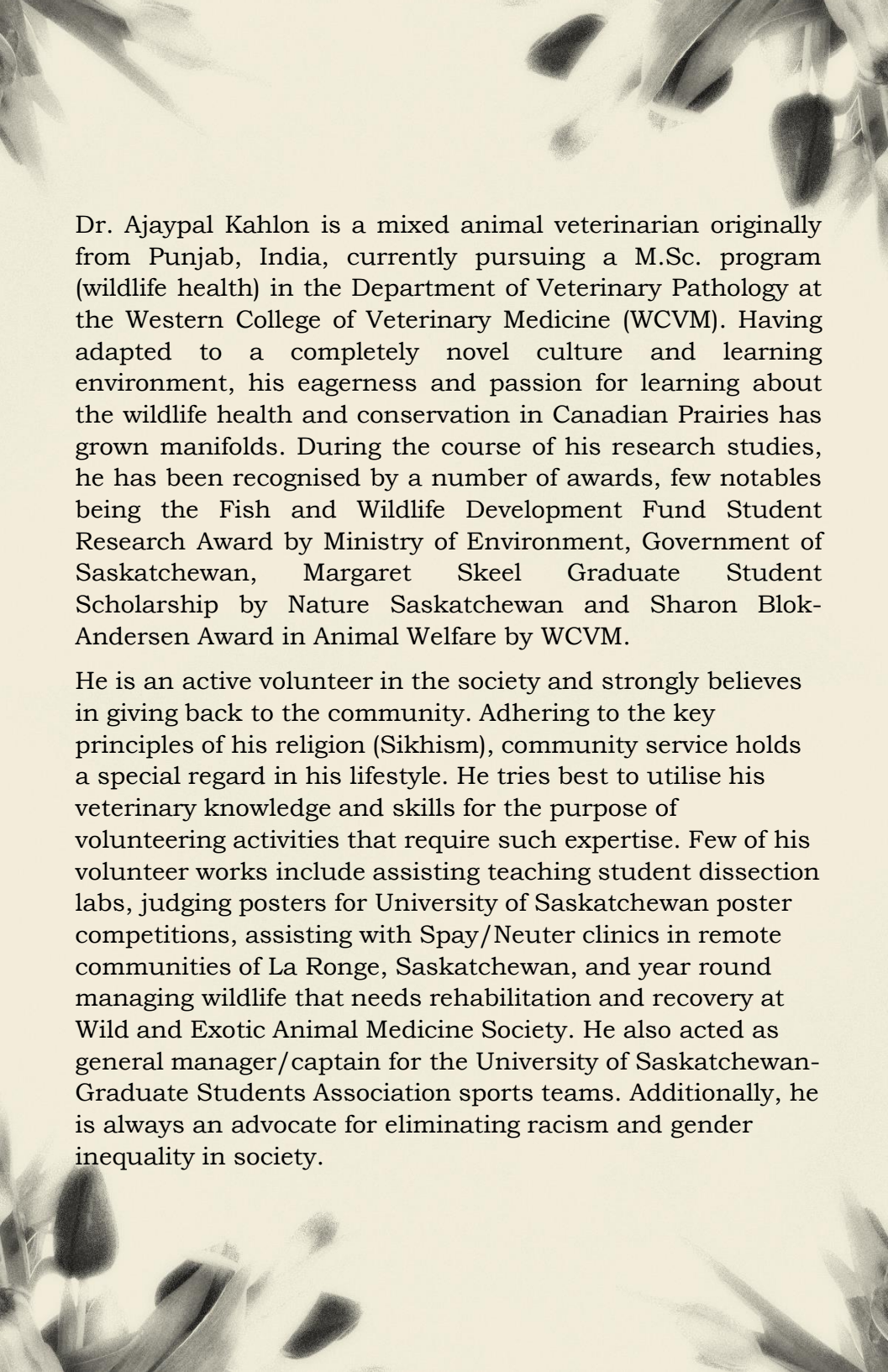
Dr. Punam Pahwa is a Professor of Biostatistics in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, and Canadian Centre for Health and Safety in Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan. Her research focus is to analyze complex health data sets by integrating advanced statistical techniques. There are two facets of her research: methodology and application. The methodological aspect of her research consists of integrating advanced statistical theories to analyze longitudinal complex health data. The applied aspect of her research consists in evaluating health determinants that are associated with chronic conditions, with a special focus on rural occupational and environmental exposures. This methodological aspect is not only an indispensable component of population health research, but it also helps many health researchers who face challenges in understanding large complex data sets.

Excellence in Community Service Award

Dr. Ajaypal Kahlon

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association Excellence in Community Service Award is presented to Dr. Ajaypal Kahlon to honour his significant impacts and positive contributions to the local community in Saskatchewan and beyond. Dr. Kahlon has shown extensive initiative and significant achievements in serving the community in addition to excelling in his academic studies. He has contributed a minimum of seventy-five (75) hours of volunteer work from May 1, 2019 – March 1, 2020.



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Dr. Ajaypal Kahlon is a mixed animal veterinarian originally from Punjab, India, currently pursuing a M.Sc. program (wildlife health) in the Department of Veterinary Pathology at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine (WCVM). Having adapted to a completely novel culture and learning environment, his eagerness and passion for learning about the wildlife health and conservation in Canadian Prairies has grown manifolds. During the course of his research studies, he has been recognised by a number of awards, few notables being the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund Student Research Award by Ministry of Environment, Government of Saskatchewan, Margaret Skeel Graduate Student Scholarship by Nature Saskatchewan and Sharon Blok-Andersen Award in Animal Welfare by WCVM.

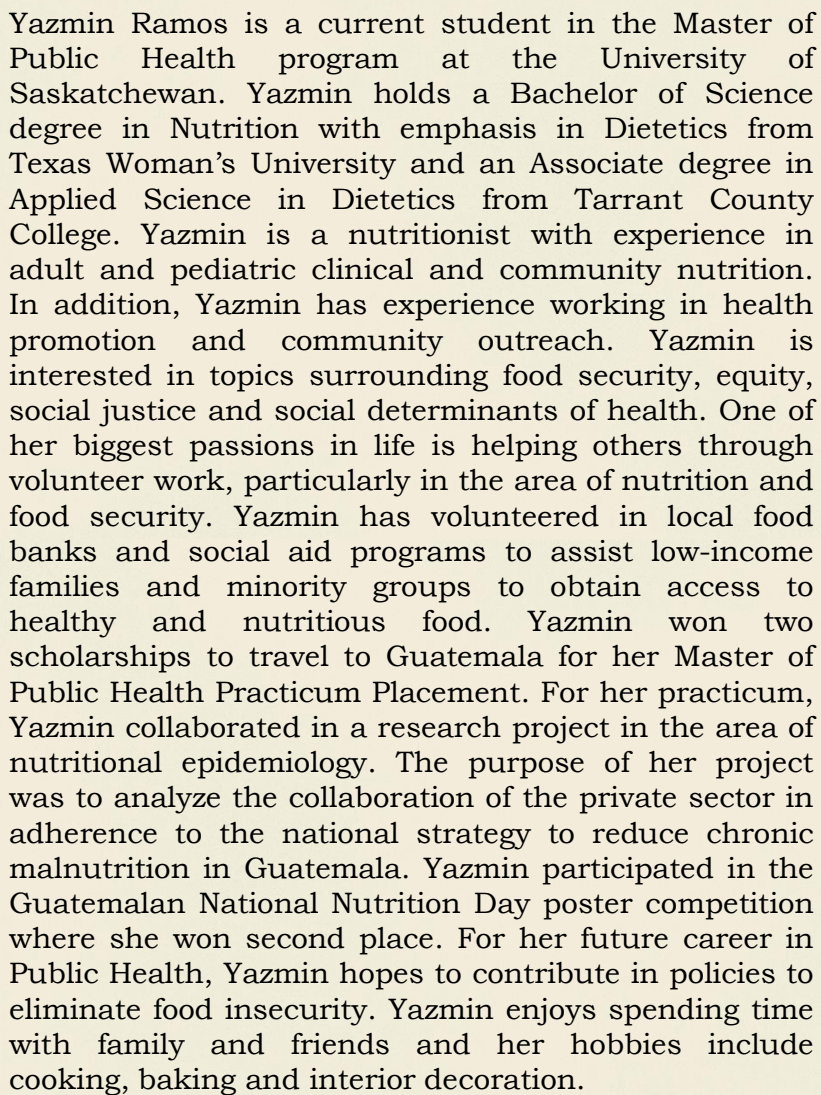
He is an active volunteer in the society and strongly believes in giving back to the community. Adhering to the key principles of his religion (Sikhism), community service holds a special regard in his lifestyle. He tries best to utilise his veterinary knowledge and skills for the purpose of volunteering activities that require such expertise. Few of his volunteer works include assisting teaching student dissection labs, judging posters for University of Saskatchewan poster competitions, assisting with Spay/Neuter clinics in remote communities of La Ronge, Saskatchewan, and year round managing wildlife that needs rehabilitation and recovery at Wild and Exotic Animal Medicine Society. He also acted as general manager/captain for the University of Saskatchewan-Graduate Students Association sports teams. Additionally, he is always an advocate for eliminating racism and gender inequality in society.

Professional Excellence Award

Yazmin Ramos

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association 1st Professional Excellence Award is presented to Yazmin Ramos to honour her significant academic achievements in her field of study and her outstanding non-academic contributions to the School of Public Health. Yazmin is a favourable member that exemplifies scholarly achievements and community involvement.





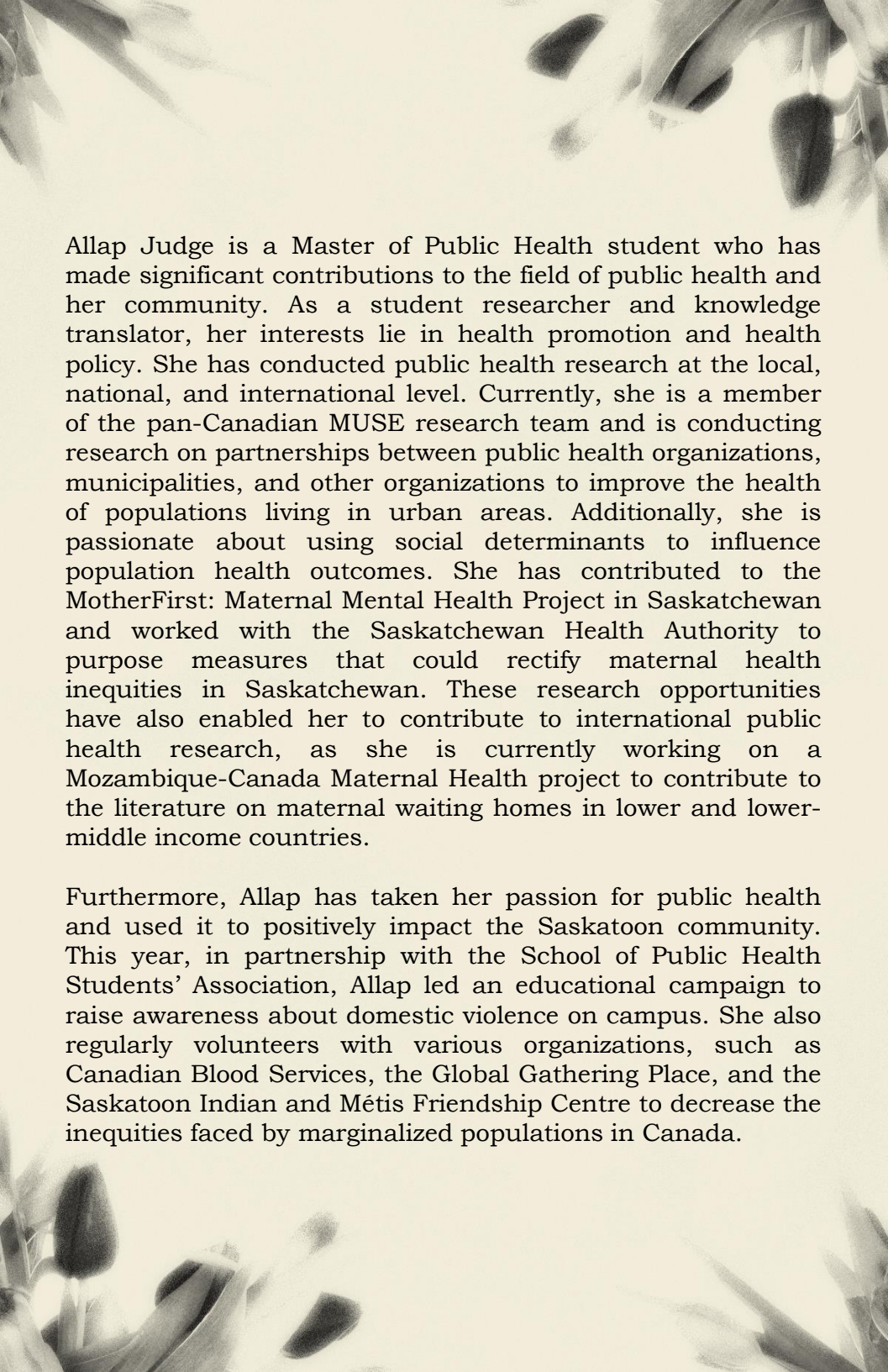
Yazmin Ramos is a current student in the Master of Public Health program at the University of Saskatchewan. Yazmin holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition with emphasis in Dietetics from Texas Woman's University and an Associate degree in Applied Science in Dietetics from Tarrant County College. Yazmin is a nutritionist with experience in adult and pediatric clinical and community nutrition. In addition, Yazmin has experience working in health promotion and community outreach. Yazmin is interested in topics surrounding food security, equity, social justice and social determinants of health. One of her biggest passions in life is helping others through volunteer work, particularly in the area of nutrition and food security. Yazmin has volunteered in local food banks and social aid programs to assist low-income families and minority groups to obtain access to healthy and nutritious food. Yazmin won two scholarships to travel to Guatemala for her Master of Public Health Practicum Placement. For her practicum, Yazmin collaborated in a research project in the area of nutritional epidemiology. The purpose of her project was to analyze the collaboration of the private sector in adherence to the national strategy to reduce chronic malnutrition in Guatemala. Yazmin participated in the Guatemalan National Nutrition Day poster competition where she won second place. For her future career in Public Health, Yazmin hopes to contribute in policies to eliminate food insecurity. Yazmin enjoys spending time with family and friends and her hobbies include cooking, baking and interior decoration.

Professional Excellence Award

Allap Judge

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association 2nd Professional Excellence Award is presented to Allap Judge to honour her significant academic achievements in her field of study and her outstanding non-academic contributions to the School of Public Health. Allap is a favourable member that exemplifies scholarly achievements and community involvement.



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Allap Judge is a Master of Public Health student who has made significant contributions to the field of public health and her community. As a student researcher and knowledge translator, her interests lie in health promotion and health policy. She has conducted public health research at the local, national, and international level. Currently, she is a member of the pan-Canadian MUSE research team and is conducting research on partnerships between public health organizations, municipalities, and other organizations to improve the health of populations living in urban areas. Additionally, she is passionate about using social determinants to influence population health outcomes. She has contributed to the MotherFirst: Maternal Mental Health Project in Saskatchewan and worked with the Saskatchewan Health Authority to purpose measures that could rectify maternal health inequities in Saskatchewan. These research opportunities have also enabled her to contribute to international public health research, as she is currently working on a Mozambique-Canada Maternal Health project to contribute to the literature on maternal waiting homes in lower and lower-middle income countries.

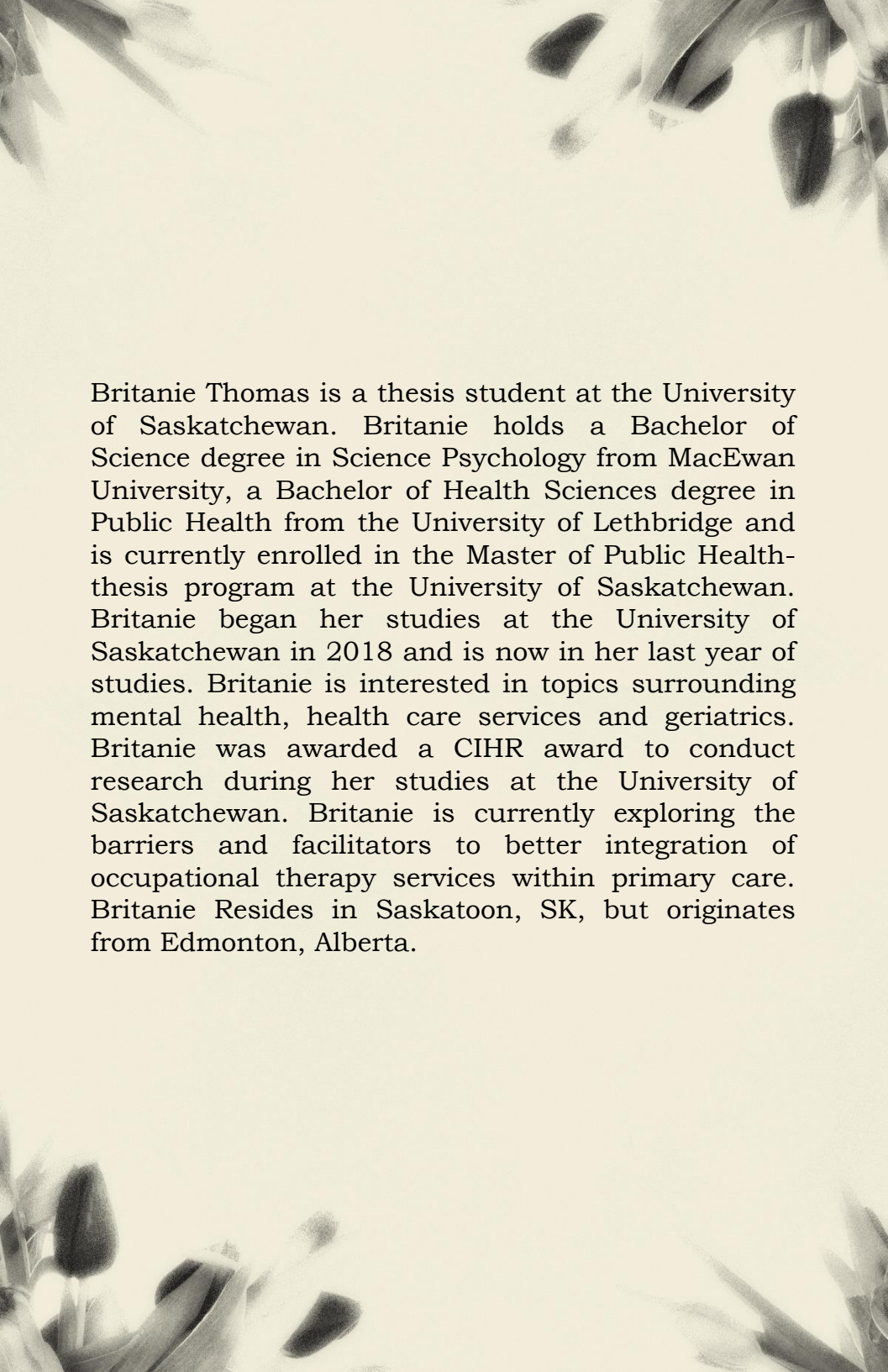
Furthermore, Allap has taken her passion for public health and used it to positively impact the Saskatoon community. This year, in partnership with the School of Public Health Students' Association, Allap led an educational campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence on campus. She also regularly volunteers with various organizations, such as Canadian Blood Services, the Global Gathering Place, and the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre to decrease the inequities faced by marginalized populations in Canada.

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

Britanie Thomas

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association Research Excellence in Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences, Law or Education Award is presented to Britanie Thomas to honour the significant impacts she has made in Social Sciences and for her outstanding research results throughout her course of study. Britanie has demonstrated that she is a favourable member in the research community, exemplifies scholarly achievements and has contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.



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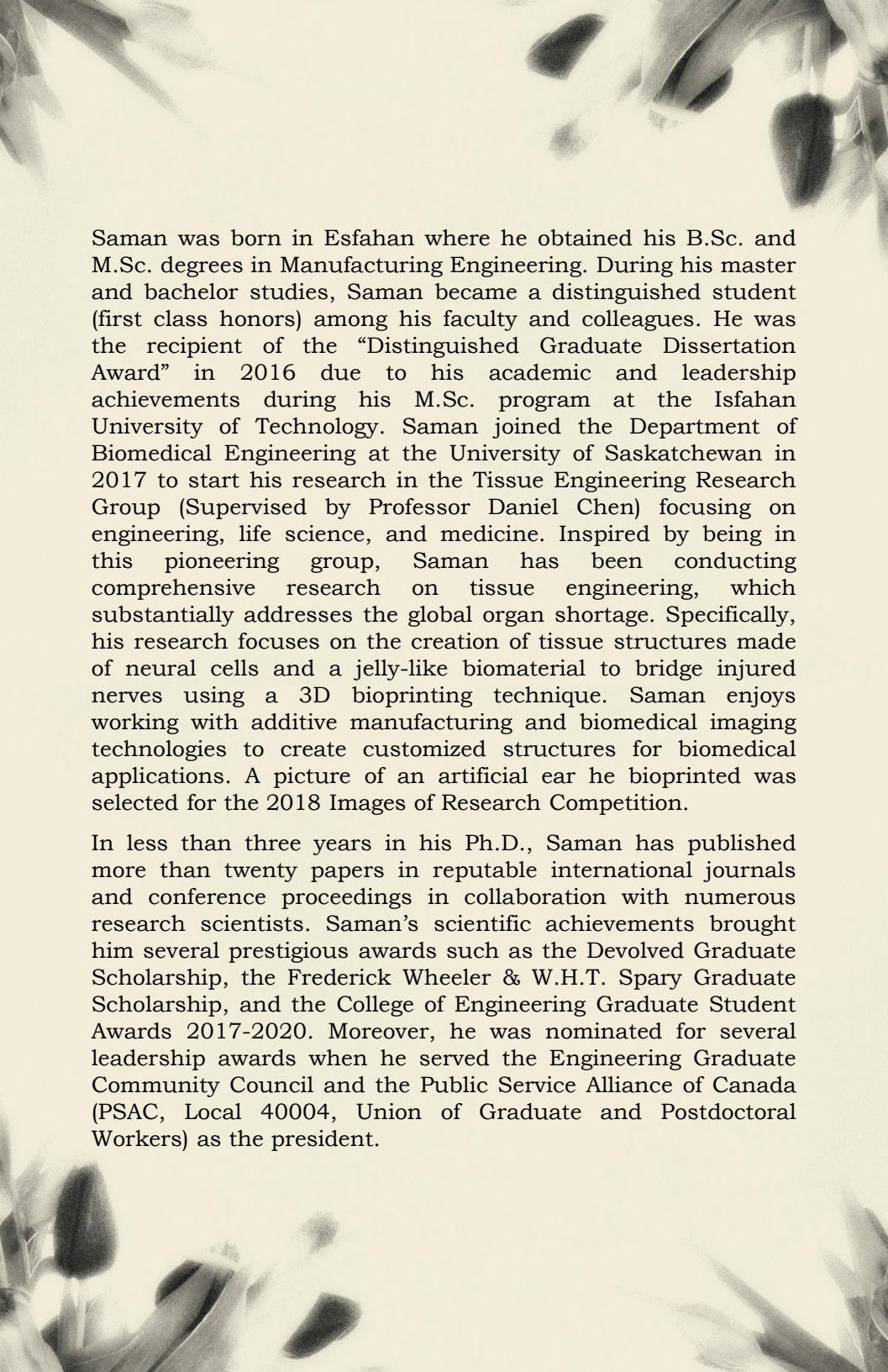
Britanie Thomas is a thesis student at the University of Saskatchewan. Britanie holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Science Psychology from MacEwan University, a Bachelor of Health Sciences degree in Public Health from the University of Lethbridge and is currently enrolled in the Master of Public Health-thesis program at the University of Saskatchewan. Britanie began her studies at the University of Saskatchewan in 2018 and is now in her last year of studies. Britanie is interested in topics surrounding mental health, health care services and geriatrics. Britanie was awarded a CIHR award to conduct research during her studies at the University of Saskatchewan. Britanie is currently exploring the barriers and facilitators to better integration of occupational therapy services within primary care. Britanie Resides in Saskatoon, SK, but originates from Edmonton, Alberta.

Research Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies Award

Saman Naghieh

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association Research Excellence in Interdisciplinary Studies Award is presented to Saman Naghieh to honour the significant impacts he has made in two or more separate, but related, fields of study and for his outstanding research results throughout his course of study. Saman has demonstrated that he is a favourable member in the research community, exemplifies scholarly achievements and has contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.





Saman was born in Esfahan where he obtained his B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in Manufacturing Engineering. During his master and bachelor studies, Saman became a distinguished student (first class honors) among his faculty and colleagues. He was the recipient of the “Distinguished Graduate Dissertation Award” in 2016 due to his academic and leadership achievements during his M.Sc. program at the Isfahan University of Technology. Saman joined the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan in 2017 to start his research in the Tissue Engineering Research Group (Supervised by Professor Daniel Chen) focusing on engineering, life science, and medicine. Inspired by being in this pioneering group, Saman has been conducting comprehensive research on tissue engineering, which substantially addresses the global organ shortage. Specifically, his research focuses on the creation of tissue structures made of neural cells and a jelly-like biomaterial to bridge injured nerves using a 3D bioprinting technique. Saman enjoys working with additive manufacturing and biomedical imaging technologies to create customized structures for biomedical applications. A picture of an artificial ear he bioprinted was selected for the 2018 Images of Research Competition.

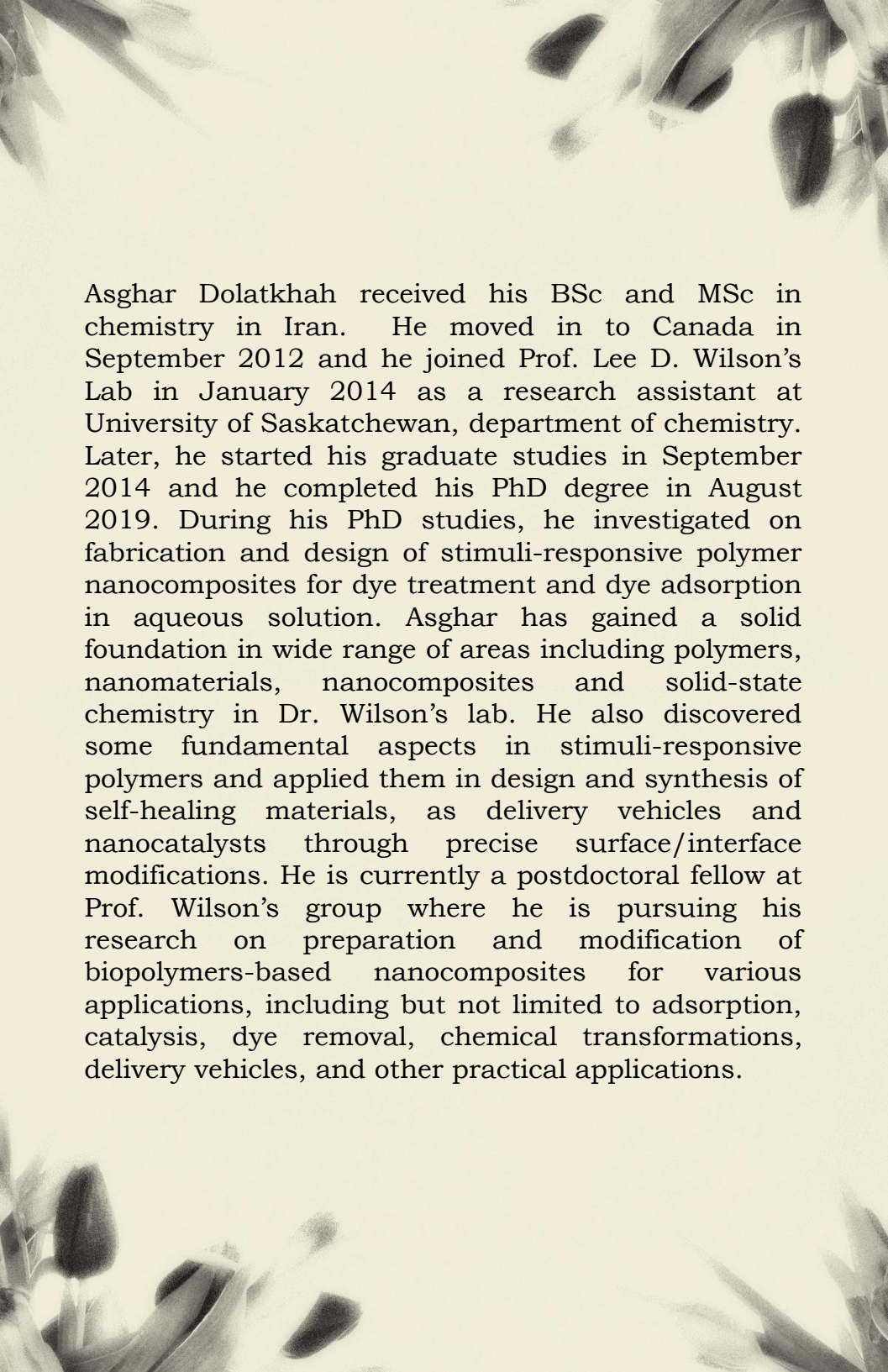
In less than three years in his Ph.D., Saman has published more than twenty papers in reputable international journals and conference proceedings in collaboration with numerous research scientists. Saman’s scientific achievements brought him several prestigious awards such as the Devolved Graduate Scholarship, the Frederick Wheeler & W.H.T. Spary Graduate Scholarship, and the College of Engineering Graduate Student Awards 2017-2020. Moreover, he was nominated for several leadership awards when he served the Engineering Graduate Community Council and the Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC, Local 40004, Union of Graduate and Postdoctoral Workers) as the president.

Research Excellence in STEM Award

Dr. Asghar Dolatkhah

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association Research Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math is presented to Dr. Asghar Dolatkhah for his significant impacts in the field of science, technology, engineering or math and for the production of outstanding research results throughout his course of study. Asghar demonstrated that he is a favourable member in the research community, exemplifies scholarly achievements and has contributed to positive collaborations amongst researchers and the community.



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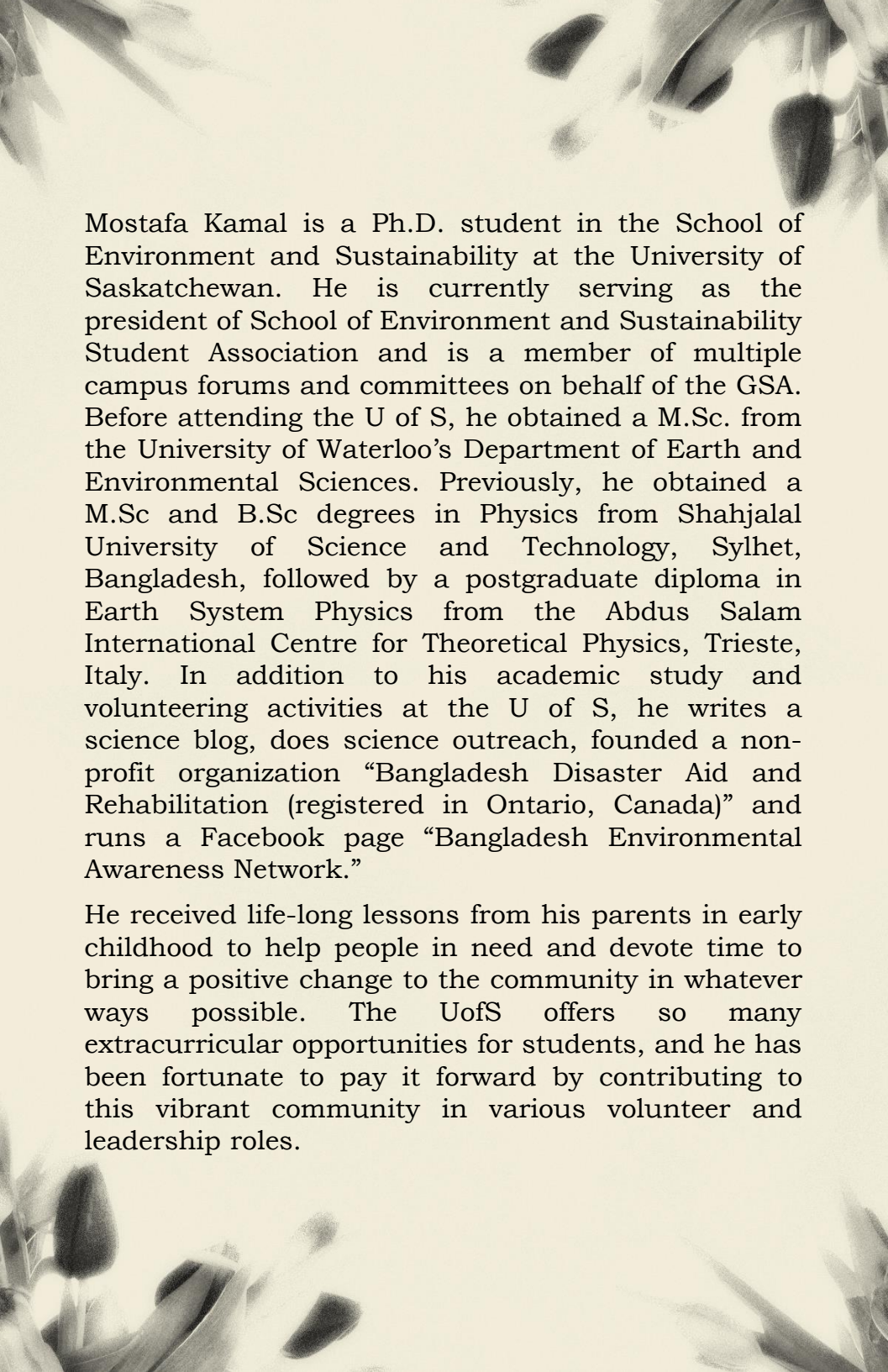
Asghar Dolatkhah received his BSc and MSc in chemistry in Iran. He moved in to Canada in September 2012 and he joined Prof. Lee D. Wilson's Lab in January 2014 as a research assistant at University of Saskatchewan, department of chemistry. Later, he started his graduate studies in September 2014 and he completed his PhD degree in August 2019. During his PhD studies, he investigated on fabrication and design of stimuli-responsive polymer nanocomposites for dye treatment and dye adsorption in aqueous solution. Asghar has gained a solid foundation in wide range of areas including polymers, nanomaterials, nanocomposites and solid-state chemistry in Dr. Wilson's lab. He also discovered some fundamental aspects in stimuli-responsive polymers and applied them in design and synthesis of self-healing materials, as delivery vehicles and nanocatalysts through precise surface/interface modifications. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at Prof. Wilson's group where he is pursuing his research on preparation and modification of biopolymers-based nanocomposites for various applications, including but not limited to adsorption, catalysis, dye removal, chemical transformations, delivery vehicles, and other practical applications.

Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership Award

Mostafa Kamal

The 2020 Graduate Students' Association Mark Kroeker Exceptional Student Leadership Award is presented to Mostafa Kamal in honour of his strong leadership and exceptional initiatives, going above and beyond his call of duty, whilst carrying out the mission of the GSA. Mostafa has shown outstanding involvement and collaboration with graduate students in his unit of study and across campus.



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Mostafa Kamal is a Ph.D. student in the School of Environment and Sustainability at the University of Saskatchewan. He is currently serving as the president of School of Environment and Sustainability Student Association and is a member of multiple campus forums and committees on behalf of the GSA. Before attending the U of S, he obtained a M.Sc. from the University of Waterloo's Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. Previously, he obtained a M.Sc and B.Sc degrees in Physics from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet, Bangladesh, followed by a postgraduate diploma in Earth System Physics from the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, Italy. In addition to his academic study and volunteering activities at the U of S, he writes a science blog, does science outreach, founded a non-profit organization "Bangladesh Disaster Aid and Rehabilitation (registered in Ontario, Canada)" and runs a Facebook page "Bangladesh Environmental Awareness Network."

He received life-long lessons from his parents in early childhood to help people in need and devote time to bring a positive change to the community in whatever ways possible. The UofS offers so many extracurricular opportunities for students, and he has been fortunate to pay it forward by contributing to this vibrant community in various volunteer and leadership roles.

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.

Three Minute Thesis Competition

Held on Friday March 27, 2020

The 3MT® is designed to share and celebrate the outstanding research of our dedicated students and to provide students with the opportunity to showcase the importance of their work.

Congratulations to the 2020 University of Saskatchewan 3MT® winners and honourable mentions.


1st Place: Shaunti Bergen

2nd Place: Farzad Dehghan

3rd Place: Christopher Mahadeo

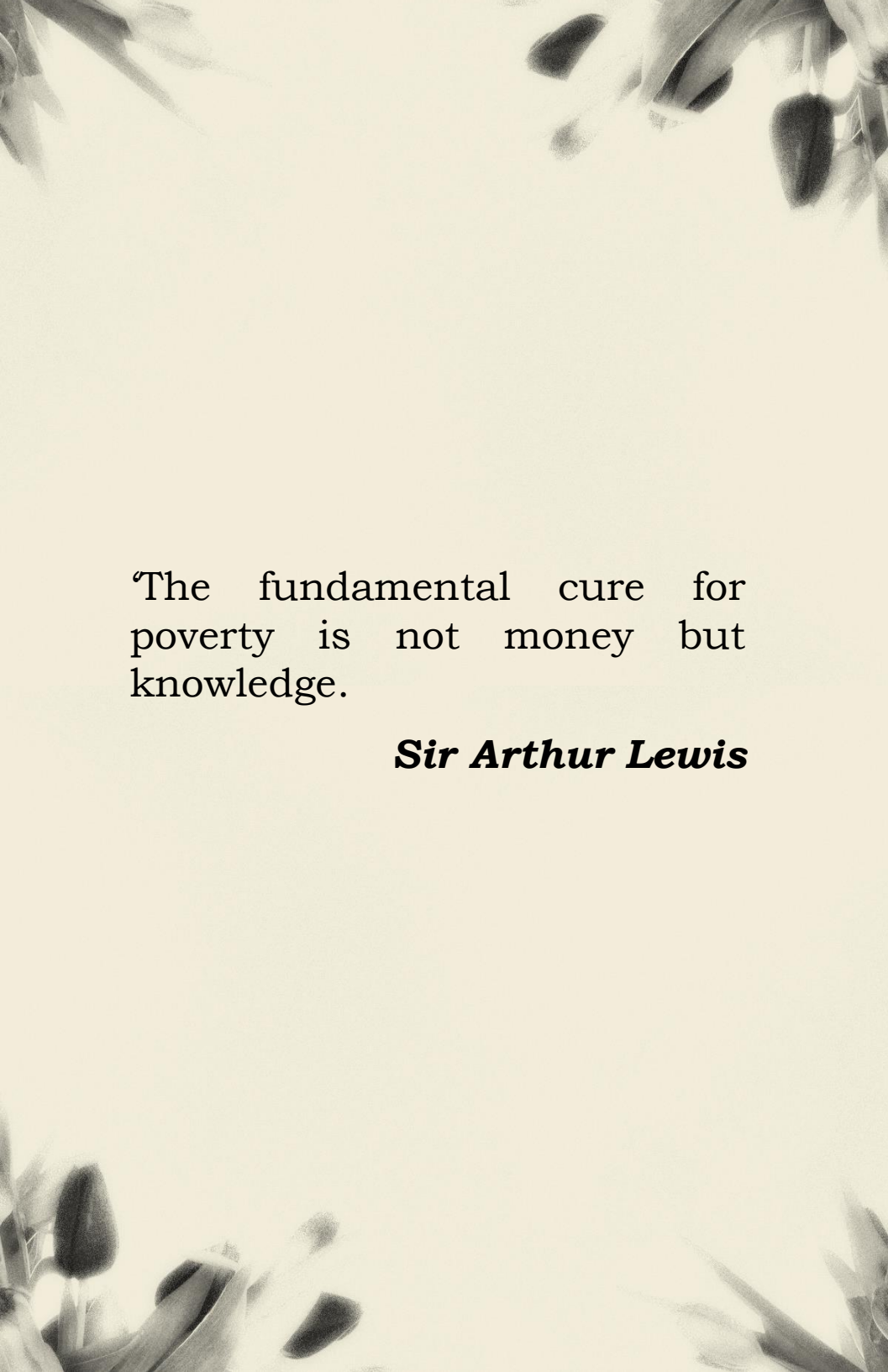
Honourable Mention

Edgar Martinez-Soberanes

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Thank you to all our faculty,
staff and administration for
supporting the successes of
our graduate students,
academically and otherwise.
Let us continue mentoring our
future leaders of tomorrow.

GSA Executives

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'The fundamental cure for
poverty is not money but
knowledge.

Sir Arthur Lewis