



2013 Best Capstone Student *William Thomas Purvis*

William Thomas Purvis, a 5th year Senior from Dublin, Georgia is honored to be the inaugural recipient of the Kermit Hutcheson Best Capstone Student Award. Double majoring in Mathematics and Statistics, Thomas is intrigued by accuracy and appreciates the “security in numbers.” Working with numbers has always come easily to him; however, it wasn’t until he took two Statistics courses taught by Dr. Jeongyoun Ahn that he decided to pursue education in Statistics. He describes her as the teacher most influential in guiding him toward a career in Statistics.

Thomas enjoys the Property/Casual side of actuarial statistics, model building to make predictions and is particularly fond of the Central Limit Theorem. He expects to graduate in December 2013, after which, he has accepted an Actuarial position with Liberty Mutual in Boston. His long-term career goal is to maintain a career as an Actuary and to become a fellow of the [Casualty Actuarial Society \(CAS\)](#).

Offering the student’s perspective, Thomas says that most Statistics courses provide students with a theoretical knowledge and teach students to work problems repeatedly. The Capstone Course is different in that it allows students the opportunity to apply that theoretical knowledge before beginning their career. Through the Capstone Course, Thomas worked with two other students to collaborate with the UGA Chemistry Department’s Complex Carbohydrate Research Center. They applied statistical analysis to discover the most common shapes made by sucrose molecules.

Beyond applying Statistics in a hands-on setting, one of the biggest benefits of the Capstone Course for Thomas was having this experience on his resume. He feels that having this edge was definitely noticed by potential employers. Without a doubt, Thomas recommends the Capstone Course to other students.

Christine Franklin, Undergraduate Coordinator, describes Thomas as an outstanding selection for the inaugural recipient of the Best Capstone Student Award. As she noted in the presentation of the award on May 10, 2013, Thomas exemplified the criteria for the award: Consistently demonstrating throughout the year dedication to the capstone philosophy of seeing the big picture of statistical analysis; embracing the importance of writing, communication, and research skills; a strong work ethic; stepping up to provide leadership and also being a team player; and demonstrating professionalism within the class and working with their group’s client. We are proud of Thomas’s accomplishments. He sets a high standard for the future winners of this award.