



Faith R. Neale, Associate Professor of Risk Management and Insurance at UNC Charlotte, SIEF scholarship recipient Ryan McKellar, SIEF President Heidi Leenay and SIEF Board member Alex Giordano

SELF-INSURANCE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (SIEF) \$2,500 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

The first time Ryan McKellar set foot on a plane, he chose a destination befitting an aspiring actuary: London, where he visited what he referred to as the “holy ground” of Lloyd’s of London.

“I’ve always been good at math. I enjoyed the classes I’ve taken in statistics and data analytics. My dream is to be an actuary, but I’m also interested in learning about underwriting and risk management,” said Ryan, who said he learned about actuarial science while taking an Advanced Placement (AP) Statistics course in high school.

As this year’s Self-Insurance Educational Foundation (SIEF) \$2,500 scholarship winner, Ryan is especially interested in “Big Data,” the art of analyzing extremely large data sets to identify patterns, trends, and associations. “I like looking for the meaning in the numbers, narrowing it down,” he explained.

A Junior majoring in Mathematics for Business with a concentration in Actuarial Sciences at the University of North Carolina, Ryan already is working toward the Associate in Actuarial Science designation and has passed the first exam in Financial Mathematics, a feat he attributes to his self-drive and focus. Given its complexity, “it’s

not an easy exam to study for,” he explained. He is preparing to take the Society’s Probability exam this March.

Ryan also demonstrated his leadership capabilities by serving as captain of the UNC team that conducted a case study of Swedish furniture retailer IKEA’s risk management program for this year’s Spencer-RIMS Risk Management Challenge. This 8-month-long competition, cosponsored by the Spencer Educational Foundation and the Risk & Insurance Management Society Inc., gives college students real-world risk management experience by analyzing data and developing a program for an actual company.

Ryan feels his greatest strengths as a leader are his communication skills and being able to delegate while still retaining some responsibilities for himself. Although Ryan’s team did not win the contest, it will be attending the 2019 RIMS Annual Conference & Exhibition in Boston this April to network with risk management professionals and potential employers.

Growing up in a military family in North Carolina, Ryan inherited his work ethic from his father, Charles, who taught him the value of diligence and perseverance. Ryan’s dad, who served as a truck driver during his first tour of duty in the U.S. Army, later attended college to obtain a computer science degree and now works in cyber security and network defense in the U.S. Air Force.

Although his two brothers are following the family tradition—his older brother, Alden, is in the Army, while his younger brother, Charles, recently joined the Marines—Ryan

said his family—especially his mom, Lisa McKellar, have been very supportive of his decision to pursue a career as an actuary.

Ryan is the second recipient of the SIEF scholarship, which was introduced in 2018 to encourage college students to pursue careers in the self-insurance industry. Anna Petrides was last year’s scholarship recipient while a Junior at the University of South Carolina’s Darla Moore School of Business majoring in risk management/insurance.

“We are excited to support the self-insurance industry through the SIEF scholarship fund and hope there will be many more talented students like Ryan to benefit from the program in the future,” said SIEF President Heidi Leenay. ■



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