Jasmine Shaw Wins Adrian D.C. Chan Award for Volunteer and Community Service - The Learning Log - Carleton University

Monday, September 24, 2012

learninglog.carleton.ca

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Kirsten is a fourth-year journalism student.

By: Kirsten Fenn on Wednesday, April 8, 2015 | CU Leading

Third-year biomedical and mechanical engineering student Jasmine Shaw is the recipient of this year's Adrian D.C. Chan Award for Volunteer and Community Service. Photo provided by Jasmine Shaw

Throughout high school, Jasmine Shaw knew math and problem solving were her fortes. So when it came time to forge her path down the road of post-secondary education, engineering seemed like the natural fit.

The third-year student has since found her passion in biomedical and mechanical engineering. But it's her desire to help others that drives her engagement in the Carleton community and has earned her this year's Adrian D.C. Chan Award for Volunteer and Community Service.

As the incoming president of the Carleton Student Engineering Society (CSES), Shaw has leveraged her leadership role to bring mental health issues to the forefront. Through a week-long campaign which she spearheaded this February, the CSES raised more than $500 for the Canadian Mental Health Association and provided students with activities to relieve stress during midterms.

"It's something that's a recurring issue," Shaw says of student mental health. "Especially with engineering students, it's a very stressful program. So it was just to help people relax. We planned it strategically in February during midterms because that's when people are often very stressed out."

The Adrian D.C. Chan Award for Volunteer and Community Service is issued annually to one full-time undergraduate or graduate student in the Faculty of Engineering and Design who demonstrates exemplary volunteer engagement in and outside the Carleton community, and maintains a high academic standing.

Adrian D.C. Chan, an associate professor in the Department of Systems and Computer Engineering, established the award in 2012 to recognize outstanding engineering students. Shaw is the fourth recipient of the award.

On top of her three years of involvement in the CSES, Shaw has guided incoming first-year students as an EngFrosh facilitator, served as a student senator for the Faculty of Engineering and Design, represented student interests as the engineering rep-elect for the Carleton University Students Association, and served as a delegate at Carleton's 2015 SOAR! Student Leadership Conference.

Shaw credits her EngFrosh facilitator, a former CSES executive, with inspiring her to get involved on campus in her first year.

"She had a ton of innovative ideas and never really let anyone bring her down," Shaw says of her facilitator. Its that attitude that encouraged Shaw to spearhead this year's February Feel Good Week, a CSES

initiative to help students manage stress during the midterm exam period.

The week-long event included yoga sessions, bubble wrap-popping, a student speaker series, an auction and trivia night, and resource booths where students could learn about mental health services offered across the city. Members of the student society also handed out stress balls around campus and gave out bags of candy to students who they saw studying.

"People have put other ideas to work and they've turned out pretty well," Shaw says. "I figured I might as well try and see if it works, and it did."

As the CSES president for the 2015-16 school year, Shaw says she wants to bridge the gaps in mental health resources for engineering students by continuing to develop the society's mental health events. She also wants to change the perception that the society is "cliquey," so all students feel welcome to participate.

"That's something I find very unfortunate, because a lot of the events—knowing this as the person who did events this year—they cater to everyone," she says.

But Shaw doesn't let negativity bring her down. Rather, it motivates her to get more students involved.

"Just seeing people enjoy themselves at an event, or coming into the engineering society office to pick up their hoodie or t-shirt, knowing that other people have the engineering pride….I think that's really important to me and what drives me most."