UVIC BIOCHEMISTRY STUDENT WINS NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

A University of Victoria biochemistry student known for his passion for philanthropy and science has won one of Canada’s most prestigious awards for outstanding leadership.

As one of 10 3M National Student Fellows across Canada, Paul Junhyuck Kim receives a cash award of $5,000 and is invited to attend the annual conference for the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE). There, he’ll participate in a 3M National Student Fellowship Program retreat and develop a cross-Canadian collaborative project to enhance teaching and learning at the post-secondary level.

"Working with other fellows is going to be a great opportunity. It’s going to give me new ideas and perspectives on the projects I’m working on at home," says Kim. "It was humbling to be nominated for the 3M award, but to actually win it makes me speechless."

The award comes as no surprise to Kim’s professors and peers, who know that he’s a passionate leader both in and out of the classroom.

"He has the ability to inspire whether it’s coaching a Taekwondo student, building consensus when chairing meetings, mobilizing a team for a fundraising event, or providing one-to-one support to an overwhelmed student," says Rozanne Poulson, the cooperative education coordinator who nominated Kim.

To Kim, leadership is not about telling people what to do, but about sharing passions and inspiring others. "Whether it’s good communication, being committed or eliciting support, everything starts with passion," he says.

The passions that fuel Kim are philanthropy and biochemistry. Last summer, he completed a studentship with the UBC Centre for Blood Research, where he studied a novel drug to determine its potency against Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (staph infection). This summer, he’ll complete a term as a co-op student with the BC Cancer Agency Deeley Research Centre in Victoria.

Outside the lab, Kim is co-president of UVic Students Offering Support, an organization that leverages revenue raised through UVic exam review sessions to support education in Latin America. He served as the chairperson for the Tobacco Taskforce of the Canadian Cancer Society, where he gave prevention presentations to students across Vancouver Island. His newest project is co-founding GivGro, a non-profit organization that offers philanthropists investment services before
their donations are distributed to charities.

As if this isn’t enough, Kim is also a fourth degree black belt in Taekwondo. And when he saw that there wasn’t a Taekwondo club at UVic, he started his own. Since then he’s taught over 50 UVic students.

About his many accomplishments, Kim is adamant about one thing: "I wouldn’t have achieved what I have without support. Whether it’s collaborating with my peers, doing lab work with leading-edge researchers through co-op or getting advice from professors, I’ve been surrounded by support and passion. They’ve shaped my experience and given me opportunities that I otherwise wouldn’t have had."

The 3M National Student Fellowship is presented by 3M Canada in partnership with the STLHE. Another UVic student, Navarana Smith, was a 2015 recipient.

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