UTM Graduate Student Named to Top 25 in Storytellers Challenge

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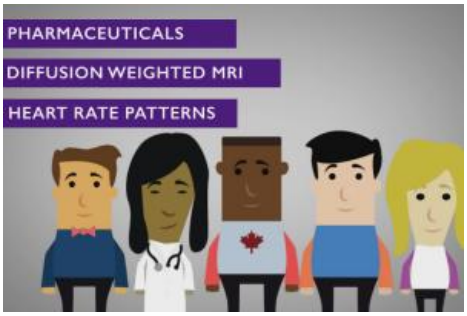
Maeve Doyle
news.utm@utoronto.ca



"Visualizing Biological Data"
Naveen Devasagayam

Naveen Devasagayam, a Master of Science in Biomedical Communications [http://bmc.med.utoronto.ca/bmc/] student, has been named to the Top 25 finalists in the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC's) 2015 Storytellers challenge [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/storytellers-jai_une_histoire_a_raconter/index-eng.aspx] .

SSHRC's unique annual competition challenges postsecondary students from across the country to demonstrate—in up to three minutes or 300 words—how SSHRC-funded research makes a difference in the lives of Canadians. The Top 25 finalists receive a cash prize and go on to compete in The Storytellers Showcase [http://congress2015.ca/program/events/sshrc-storytellers-showcase] , May 30 to June 5 at the University of Ottawa. The Top 5 finalists will present before a VIP audience at the SSHRC Impact Awards Ceremony in Ottawa this fall.

Devasagayam [http://naveendevasagayam.com/] , a second-year graduate student in Professor Jodie Jenkinson's Science Visualization group at the University of Toronto Mississauga, submitted a three-minute animation to the competition. In "**Visualizing Biological Data [http://Visualizing Biological Data]** ", Devasagayam explains the importance of dynamic learning tools such as animations. Animations can help students visualize interactions that occur at multiple levels of time and space.

"Naveen's work will contribute to our understanding of how manipulating visual context can impact upon the viewer's perception of interactions within a cellular environment," Jenkinson says.

Supported by Jenkinson's SSHRC Insight Award [http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/main-news-research-news-general/communicating-molecular-realm] , Devasagayam's master's research project explores approaches to depicting a molecular pathway from start to finish. Devasagayam is developing two 3D animations—one immersive and one cross-sectional—to portray a dynamic process. The different animations will be evaluated by Jenkinson's lab.

"By giving students the tools to effectively understand these complex concepts," Devasagayam says, "we hope that they can use this knowledge or gain new insight to improve healthcare and create new discoveries in science, all of which can help Canadians in the long run."