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ACTUARIAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE

A Retrospective of the 2019 Actuarial Research Conference

By Jeff Beckley

The 2019 Actuarial Research Conference (ARC) was held in Indianapolis in the middle of August. Hosted by Purdue University, Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis, Ball State University, Butler University, University of Notre Dame and DePauw University, the conference was blessed with mild weather, great keynote speakers and 220 attendees.

The ARC started on Wednesday evening with a reception at the Skyline Club, which is on the top floor of the OneAmerica Tower. The attendees enjoyed a spectacular panoramic view of the Indianapolis skyline.

Conference sessions began on Thursday morning with a keynote presentation by Andrew Cairns. Andrew is professor of financial mathematics at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, and director of the Actuarial Research Centre of the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries. Andrew gave a fascinating talk about U.S. mortality and underlying trends by socioeconomic group and cause of death. His eminently understandable talk is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M7D7i2oMK80&feature=youtu.be>.

On Friday, the second keynote speaker was Jan Vecer. Jan is professor at the Charles University in Prague where he teaches courses in mathematical finance and stochastic analysis. He gave a very interesting talk on long-term portfolio protection, including two novel approaches to protect against potential portfolio losses on a long-term horizon for actively traded portfolios. His talk is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBR7znkO3i4&feature=youtu.be>.

The conference banquet was Friday night at the Dallara Indycar Factory, which manufactures the chassis for Indycar racers. The factory has a large banquet area with interactive exhibits. Attendees were able to compete for the fastest lap around the Indianapolis 500 track using simulators. The pole position was won by Steve Guo. Way to go, Steve!



The final keynote address on Saturday morning was by Anya Prince, an associate professor at the University of Iowa College of Law. Her teaching and research interests explore the ethical, legal and social implications of genomic testing, with particular focus on genetic discrimination and privacy rights, the intersection of clinical and research ethics, and insurance coverage of genetic technologies and interventions. Her talk, “Should Life Insurers Use an Applicant’s Genetic Information?: Policy Lessons from the UK, Australia, and Canada,” was very timely and interesting. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-s7i7bbidq0&feature=youtu.be>.

Besides the keynote presentations, there were five invited sessions:

- Professionalism
- Update on Actuarial Education
- Actuarial Society Sponsored Research
- Industry-Academic Cooperation
- Catastrophe Modeling and Insurance

This year’s ARC had many other excellent presentations, approximately 100 of which were given by academic faculty and graduate students. The quality of all the presentations I attended was very high and impressive.

Of course, the networking opportunities to catch up and learn from friends, colleagues and new acquaintances are often as valuable as the more formal sessions.

The ARC in 2020 will be held at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. I look forward to seeing you there. ■



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