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# Chairperson's Corner

By Julie Curtis

This is my last article as the Pension Section chairperson and as an elected member of the Pension Section Council. The three-year term as an elected member has gone by quickly for me. It's been a privilege and a pleasure to work with the other members and with the volunteers and SOA staff. It's gratifying to see so many dedicated actuaries are practicing at the highest standard and keeping the profession vibrant and relevant. I will leave the council with a strong appreciation of the work that many volunteers give selflessly and with a new group of kind, funny and fiercely intelligent friends.

Many members of the council mentioned to me that when they first joined, they felt intimidated by the group's knowledge and intensity. So did I. Even now, when we dive into technical issues, I am in awe of my colleagues' depth of knowledge. Over the past three years, I've learned that many of us enter the role a little overwhelmed, but we find that with time and patience, we quickly become contributing members of the team.

I've also learned that many of the Pension Section's most important roles are filled by non-elected volunteers who oversee the continuing education, research, publications, communications, and public outreach. These volunteers move the profession forward and ensure that our practices can grow, adapt and help the public. Without these volunteers, we would not have the *Pension Section News*, *The Pension Forum*, *Pension Section Update*, webcasts, podcasts, Investment Boot Camps, SOA conference sessions, or the many, many research projects and papers that shape our profession, educate the public, and examine current practices and concepts.

My personal involvement with issues the SOA is now addressing has made me a better, more thoughtful actuary. Volunteering on work groups for topics such as credibility theory and reviewing the extensive work being done on current projects such as mor-

tality tables, public pension finance, pension risk, and post-retirement needs and risks have been a rewarding challenge.

The role of retirement actuaries is being re-defined, and although traditional pension plans are not as common as they once were, the need for educating plan sponsors and the public about retirement security is greater than ever. Pension actuaries are in a strong position to fill that need and to advance related research.

During our last in-person meeting, council members reviewed the existing research projects and developed an extensive list of potential new areas to explore in the coming years—topics that include elements of plan de-risking, DC plan design alternatives, bond market capacity, and making retirement plans more accessible.

Although I will miss being a part of the council, it is satisfying to know that the council's future membership will be dedicated and dynamic. This year, we had seven excellent candidates running for the three open council seats, and all seven brought extensive, diverse experience.

Pension actuaries who are interested in the work of the Pension Section Council, but are not voting members, can participate on a non-voting basis as a "Friend of the Council." Friends can provide important insights and contributions to the work of the council and to the section. I plan to become a friend this year and hope that other pension actuaries who would like to participate in research, education, or keeping the retirement practice current and relevant will also join as a friend or volunteer:

<https://www.soa.org/about/volunteer/default.aspx>

I look forward to following the council's contributions in the coming years and am grateful to have been able to participate these last three years. ■



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