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# Outgoing Chairperson's Note

By Ricky Trachtman

Someone once told me, "You know you're a futurist if you ask 'What's next?' instead of 'What's new?'" I cannot find a better way to describe the people I have met during my tenure as a council member for the Predictive Analytics and Futurism Section (PAF). PAF is, and has been, on the leading edge of practice for the actuarial community, it is always looking into the future. Shortly after joining the PAF council I realized that this particular fact is a source of obligation and pride that drives the people of this section to provide such valuable content on all of its endeavors. But we did not stop there, PAF strives to change and improve the way it interacts with its membership and with the actuarial community at large. PAF works hard to build and maintain its sense of community so people are comfortable asking questions and interacting with each other.

While being on the section council, many things have been done to accomplish the always improving and adjusting vision of the section. It all started with a name change. We changed the name of the section from Forecasting and Futurism to Predictive Analytics and Futurism to better reflect the direction and content the section had been providing all along. With the name change the membership grew and a new opportunity to serve the membership arose. It became apparent that the wealth of knowledge the volunteers of PAF possessed could serve a broader audience, so we continue to improve the ways this section provides content. Our newsletter continues to be a key element of the section, but other media was improved as well.

One of the best examples of other media being provided is the fabulous podcasts being produced by the section. These podcasts are not only easy to listen to, but are the most accessed podcasts in the SOA library. Another example of PAF's great content provided are the sessions at various SOA meetings. These sessions have become very popular and have received good scores and feedback from the audiences. Yet another way we provide content is via webcasts. PAF's webcast are well attended and their content is searched for. In our continued search to improve the way we provide content, we have hosted a Practical Predictive Analytics Seminar (PPAS) twice after the Life and Annuity symposium. This well attended seminar is a hands-on walk through of using and building a predictive analytics model. As I write



this note, the first ever SOA Predictive Analytics Symposium is about to debut with the help of many PAF volunteers. We are also involved in a couple of research projects that should be a great addition to the many ways that PAF's content is distributed.

As I mentioned, PAF is working hard to improve the way we interact with our own membership and other sections. We have started initiatives to better understand why people leave PAF, and what additional things our members would like to see us focus on. If you receive an invitation for a survey, please respond so that you have a voice on the exciting new changes that the PAF council is beginning work on. With the roll-out of our new website, we are changing the way our content is updated so there will be something new for you to look at. We are in the midst of creating a comprehensive indexing of our newsletter to help search for specific content on PAF's website. As the changes to the website are rolled out, we hope that you will come and visit it.

It is hard to believe that a year has passed already and that my term as the PAF section chair is ending. I consider myself fortunate that my term as council member is not finishing, which provides me with another year to work with this incredible group of people. Albert Einstein once said, "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." So my hope is that as predictive analytics is being adopted by actuaries for many distinct applications, PAF will continue to improve and provide not only great content, but that sense of community needed to inspire us all to innovate, improve and continue to ask "What's next?" Thank you for the great opportunity to be part of this amazing community. ■



Ricky Trachtman, FSA, MAAA, is a principal and consulting actuary at Milliman. He can be reached at [ricardo.trachtman@milliman.com](mailto:ricardo.trachtman@milliman.com).