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CONTENTS

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTUARIES SECTION

Entrepreneurial Actuaries Section Leadership

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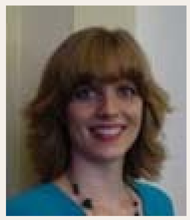

Developing Professional Development

by Jennie McGinnis

As you are no doubt aware, the SOA's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Requirement went into effect in 2009 and at the end of this year all SOA members will be required to attest to their compliance. You may not be aware, however, that in 2009 another significant change was made to the oversight of PD with the establishment of the Professional Development Committee (PDC). The PDC has been charged with the following responsibilities:

- Meeting the diverse development needs of the profession,
- Providing the highest quality learning experiences,
- Ensuring that the program is focused on both current and forward-looking technical and nontechnical content, and
- Making appropriate use of technologies to ensure timely access to relevant and engaging programming.

While numerous volunteers serve to ensure that individual PD events provide meaningful development opportunities, the PDC oversees planning at a higher level to minimize potential gaps in membership needs and the SOA's offerings. The PDC is chaired by Dale Hall, as the Board of Directors' representative, and is comprised of section representatives and liaisons from the Education Committee and SOA staff. Each year the PDC will set out a plan (e.g., number and types of opportunities to be offered) and evaluate the fulfillment of that plan. In addition, the PDC gave focus to the following five areas of interest this year:

Marketing the Competency Framework

SOA Staff

Meg Weber, Staff Partner

Jacque Kirkwood, Staff Editor

Sue Martz, Section Specialist

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Newsletter

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The SOA Competency Framework (CF) was developed by and for actuaries to give focus to the key skills that drive success in the field. Beginning with this year's spring meetings, each learning opportunity has been mapped to one of the eight competencies. The competencies have been organized around business and technical competence and are often interrelated. Session evaluations have been used to gauge the participants' awareness of the CF category when selecting the session and how well the category applied. In the works is a CF self-assessment, which will help provide actuaries with a more informed perspective when selecting PD opportunities.

Piloting a Blended Learning Opportunity

Blended learning utilizes various teaching and learning techniques to increase the retention and comprehension of the material. Science class comes to mind when thinking about blended learning–you read a chapter in advance, attend a lecture and then put what you have learned to work in a lab setting with some measure to validate that learning occurred. These techniques have been used in other SOA sessions before. At this year's Annual Meeting, we are not only using the technique but will assess the effectiveness of this blended learning opportunity with attendees. Participants will be debriefed in order to evaluate how well the structure worked and if/how it should be utilized going forward.

Evaluating the Implementation of a Leadership Institute

The team involved in this project has faced many questions and, upon surveying members and employers, continue to search for answers. Should the SOA offer a Leadership/Executive Development program? Would it be developed in-house or in partnership with an already established program? Will employers support a program geared toward actuaries or is a multidisciplinary approach preferred? Will such a program be cost effective given the number of employers who have training programs of their own? How can technology be used to minimize costs while ensuring engaging programming? Stay tuned!

Piloting the Conversion of an Education e-Learning Module for PD Purposes

A key tenant of PD development is the repurposing and repackaging of material where appropriate. With an increased desire in "anytime" access to learning opportunities and recognizing the availability of e-Learning modules used in basic education, it made sense to determine if this material could be of value to those already credentialed. After review, and with a resounding "yes," the subcommittee has set forth on a pilot conversion. Up first is a module focused on modern corporate finance.

Developing a Speaker Database

Those who have volunteered on a PD planning committee know how difficult it can be to find speakers. Finding subject matter experts and ensuring that they are effective presenters (and available!) can take a significant amount of effort, especially when considering that most panels have more than one speaker and that session coordinators typically work on multiple sessions for any given meeting. The desire and need to ease this process is clear and thus the development of a speaker database was born. Once in effect, it will assist not only those looking for speakers, but will also provide those thinking about presenting a place to post their interest and credentials.

To learn more about PD opportunities, the CPD Requirement and the Competency Framework visit the Professional Development area on the SOA's website. A current list of PDC members can be found here.

ennie McGinnis, FSA, MAAA, CERA, is vice president at Swiss Re in Fort Wayne, Ind. She is also the special interest representative on the PDC. She can be reached at jennifer_mcginnis@swissre.com.

Note: This article first appeared in the November 2010 issue of *Actuary of the Future*, the newsletter of the Actuary of the Future Section.