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Chairperson's Corner

Why I Volunteer

By Kelly Rabin

As a new FSA, I remember sitting in the audience at SOA meetings, watching speakers present. Who were they? Why were they taking the time to present? How did they know all this stuff? I then noticed that most of the presenters were reinsurers and consultants and it was often the same people speaking about the same topics. While their perspectives were extremely valuable, I was working at an insurance company at the time and craved insight from those who worked in the same environment. But company product actuaries often either didn't want to give away their secrets or weren't encouraged by their companies to volunteer.

As a former consultant myself, I wholly recognize that consultants and reinsurers have a lot more financial incentive to take time out of their busy work schedules to volunteer. Volunteering is not just giving back in that case—it is also part of marketing your brand. Don't get me wrong—speaking at a session, planning a meeting, or writing an article each take a lot of time. I am very grateful to each and every one of our volunteers. The SOA is as well, and has even launched a new volunteer recognition program in the last couple years to reward volunteers for their efforts. That said, I would love to see new volunteers and fresh perspectives—no matter where you work.

So, why volunteer for the SOA—and more specifically, the Product Development Section?

1. You meet amazing people. Our volunteers are some of the most creative and dedicated people I know. I enjoy getting perspectives from all different facets of the profession, even including some international practitioners. Expanding your personal network is always worthwhile.

2. You are first to hear breaking news in the SOA product space. Whether that is new research, upcoming meetings to plan for, or new SOA initiatives, you hear about it before the general membership. This just might make you more successful at your job!
3. You have the chance to give back. The SOA is an organization run mostly by a lot of volunteers and some amazing staff. If you don't lend a hand, who will? We want your fresh perspective!

The last three years on the PD Section Council have been very rewarding. I have learned a lot about how the SOA works and how to motivate volunteer leaders, as well as met some fabulous people who I might not have met otherwise. Our section is stronger than ever. We have over 2600 members. We spend over \$100,000 on research every year that directly benefits those who practice in product development. We partner with other sections on topics like PBR and in-force management. I am proud to have been your chair, and excited to move into my next volunteer role as chair of the Life & Annuity Symposium for the next two years.

How will you step up and make a difference? I hope that I get to sit in your session next year or read your newsletter article so I can think, “this is a really cool perspective; I'm so glad this person decided to volunteer!” ■



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