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GRASS ROOTS FUTURES

Moderator: DAVID S. WILLIAMS

Summary Report

This session, planned by the Futurism Section as a grass roots discussion of actuarial futures, was conducted in the late period after the end of the regular meeting schedule and prior to the start of the planned reception.

In spite of the hour, it was attended by 55 persons, about 35 of whom were section members, all of whom expressed a strong interest in futurism. To set the stage for the ensuing discussion, the nature of futurism was outlined, together with several of the major areas of futures research activity. Session moderator, David Williams, described futurism as thinking systematically about the future and, quoting one prominent futurist, said "futurists take historical fact and scientific knowledge and add human values and imagination to create images of what may happen in the future." Members of the audience were polled to provide an indication of their relevant backgrounds and areas of interest.

Following this, several Futurism Section council members who were present discussed their experiences with futurism and suggested ways for actuaries to get introduced to futurism. Among their suggestions were readings from the bibliography published by the Futurism Committee and available from the Society Office, participation in the Trend Analysis Program of the American Council of Life Insurance and membership in the World Future Society.

There was a consensus that the role of futurism in actuarial work needed exposition. Several members of the audience suggested the need for specific activities and programs in which section members could participate. A survey, underway at the time of the meeting, was aimed at this goal. The results of the survey plus the input from the grass roots sessions at the three 1983 spring meetings were to be used to select activities and programs for 1984 and later.

Prior to 1984, the council members indicated that plans were under development for a teaching session on scenarios. Additionally, they reported the desire of the council to provide section input into the "Role of The Actuary" project being conducted by the Society's Planning Committee and the possibility of publishing a Section newsletter. Members who would like to participate in either of these 1983 activities were asked to contact the council.

