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Musings of an Intern

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Some of the best experiences people have are from times when they worked on teams to achieve a common goal. As clichéd as that sounds, when I look back at my experience as the Section Council Intern (SCI) for the Actuary of the Future (AOF), I am inclined to agree. To provide some background, the Actuary of the Future Section's mission is to identify and promote new opportunities, skills and ways of thinking to help actuaries excel on their career journeys. So it makes a great deal of sense to get the perspectives of those who are embarking on the actuarial career path. With this in mind, the section established the position of SCI in late 2010. The purpose of the role is to allow non-credentialed affiliates to volunteer and contribute toward initiatives, and by implication, the direction of the profession itself. The purpose of this piece is to give applicants a glimpse into what they can expect and why it is an excellent volunteering opportunity.

I want to focus on two of my favorite experiences as the SCI. The first is my involvement in the annual strategic planning meeting in Chicago and the second is the AOF Podcast initiative (scheduled to be released soon).

The AOF kicks off every year with a strategic planning session in Chicago. This forum allows new section council members to meet each other and brainstorm about what the initiatives and focus of the section will be. The sheer depth of experience and knowledge of the council members really stood out. How often do you get to sit at a table and debate ideas with actuaries, consultants, directors and vice presidents? In addition to the quality of the discussions, a salient point was the mutual respect everyone had, and their willingness to listen to any idea. I can confidently say that it was very refreshing and definitely one of the highlights of my university experience.

My next-favorite SCI experience would definitely be the new podcast project. The idea (which was brought up at the planning session) was to start an expansive series that

would cater to actuarial folk at all levels. The purpose of the podcast episodes would be to discuss trends, ideas and other interesting tidbits that would have educational value to the listener. I was fortunate enough to work one-on-one throughout the creation process with a very experienced actuary. It was especially exciting to see an idea through from concept to pilot. It also developed skills that are useful in the professional world, from brainstorming to writing episodes and eventually presenting the final cut. Furthermore, it gave me the opportunity to work with other SOA staff members and see how new projects are nurtured into fruition. The experience validated that the SCI position is one that can be extremely educational, and fun too.

In conclusion, it's safe to say that the past year serving as the SCI has been tremendously rewarding in ways that I didn't think were possible. The opportunity for collaboration, autonomy and ownership allows it to be as fulfilling as you let it. I would definitely encourage all professionals even slightly interested in the profession to look into volunteering with the SOA and/or your favorite section; it can cultivate relationships and opportunities that will pay dividends throughout your career. ☆