



Article from

## **The Stepping Stone**

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# CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

## Face to Face

By Kelly Hennigan

Welcome to the August 2016 issue of *The Stepping Stone*! As always, you will find insightful articles on leadership, personal and career development, people and business management, and our popular “What Would You Do?” series. In this issue we include articles on such diverse topics as emotional intelligence, career growth, influence, leadership, and the psychology needed to foster success, and also kick off our Diversity Spotlight addition to the newsletter.

Peter Gruber, the chairman and CEO of Mandalay Entertainment, once said, “Nothing replaces being in the same room, face-to-face, breathing the same air and reading and feeling each other’s micro-expressions.” Our Leadership & Development (L&D) Section Council leaders can attest to this, as we all (finally!) had the opportunity to meet face to face in April.

Due to the nature of the resources provided by the L&D Section, this section is unique—our membership is comprised of individuals across many different practices areas. As such, our nine elected section council leaders rarely find more than two to three of us attending a given Society of Actuaries (SOA) meeting where we could gather to brainstorm on section-related topics. While we do hold a monthly conference call, and may talk more frequently based on ongoing initiatives, we felt strongly that a face-to-face gathering would be beneficial to us, as well as ultimately provide value to our members.

So, we decided to make it happen! Our section council leaders worked with our SOA Board partner (John Robinson) and SOA staff partners (Beth Bernardi and Jane Lesch) to schedule a one-day face-to-face meeting with a jam-packed agenda. I want to share with you the outcome of our meeting discussion.

Over the course of the next year and beyond, the L&D Section Council will focus on three key initiatives: *The Stepping Stone*, meeting speakers and networking opportunities. These are relevant to both our mission statement (found at [www.SOA.org/ld](http://www.SOA.org/ld)) and important to members, based on feedback received through our March 2016 L&D membership survey.



### INITIATIVE #1: THE STEPPING STONE

*We will continue to deliver quality content via a variety of authors and perspectives, via The Stepping Stone quarterly newsletter.*

Over the coming months our readers may see some updates and additions to the publication, such as the recent addition of the Diversity Spotlight. We will also begin to include some shorter “blog-style” articles alongside of the typical-length articles that our membership is accustomed to reading. To supplement our quarterly contact with our membership, L&D will begin piloting an e-news communication to keep our members informed of current events and resources. Of the many L&D Section resources offered, *The Stepping Stone* is the one resource that our membership uses most regularly and finds a great deal of value in doing so.

To those readers who are interested in submitting an article, or who know someone who may be interested in doing so, always feel free to share your articles with our editor, John West Hadley (at [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com)), for consideration in a future edition of *The Stepping Stone*.

### INITIATIVE #2: MEETING SPEAKERS

*We will continue to engage quality speakers at SOA meetings and symposiums.*

While we continue to hear positive feedback on the actuarial-related leadership panel sessions at SOA meetings, we have

branched out to offer non-actuarial speaker sessions where the presenters have ranged from executive coaches to career consultants to social media experts. Second to *The Stepping Stone* resource, many of you provided feedback that our meeting speakers are well-received and very much appreciated to counterbalance the more technical topics offered at SOA meetings.

Also, when possible, we will leverage meeting speakers to further engage them in offerings for our section—such as through participation in webinars/webcasts or by recording podcasts.

### INITIATIVE #3: NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

*We will continue to facilitate and offer a variety of networking opportunities for actuaries.*

At the SOA Life & Annuity Symposium this year, these networking opportunities came in various forms—one of which was L&D as a co-sponsor of the “Actuaries in the C-Suite” panel that I moderated. This panel featured three actuaries—a CEO of a life insurance company’s division; a CEO and co-founder of a pet insurance company; and the COO of a P2P risk sharing company. Needless to say, it was an extremely interesting panel to learn from due to the diversity of experience.

In October at the SOA Annual Meeting & Exhibit, one of our sessions is titled “Breakfast with Senior Leaders,” where each

breakfast table will be hosted by an experienced actuary who has been in a senior leadership, senior management or C-suite role. We hope you will join us in Las Vegas for this meeting!

In this day and age of texting, instant messaging and email communication, the L&D Section Council leaders created the opportunity to get us into the same (conference) room, face to face, breathing the same (conference) room air, so that we could have the ability to read and feel each other’s micro-expressions. We found it extremely worthwhile for both us and our members to have the opportunity to further refine our three key initiatives: *The Stepping Stone*, meeting speakers and networking opportunities.

Thank you for your continued interest in *The Stepping Stone* and the L&D Section. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of our section members with any suggestions you might have for future issues, or contact *The Stepping Stone* directly at [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com). ■



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