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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

Changes in the New Year

By Scott Randles

The Leadership & Development (L&D) Section is excited to present the first 2017 issue of *The Stepping Stone!* When I talk to actuaries about the section, the first thing they mention is how much they enjoy reading *The Stepping Stone*. People always tell me that they like to take it with them when they travel so they can catch up on past issues on the plane. Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to contribute articles for this issue. Your unique perspectives on leadership and development topics make this resource so valuable.

The L&D Section is committed to working hard in this new year to transform and continue to change to provide you with relevant tools you need to grow and succeed as a leader. In 2015, we changed our name to emphasize the importance of leadership in the actuarial career. This year, we're providing more opportunities for you to interact with senior leaders and more frequent, short, electronic communications on L&D topics.

Here are just a few of the many benefits that you will receive as a member of the L&D Section this year:

- Tools to facilitate your personal career development, such as both hard and electronic copies of *The Stepping Stone*, as well as our NEW *LeaD* monthly e-bulletin, which will be sponsored by a different council member each month.
- Access to practical leadership topics and results-oriented skills available to you through our LinkedIn page. These can be helpful regardless of where you are in your career.
- Summaries of leadership books to help you build the bridge from technical knowledge to decision-making via the getAbstract library.
- Educational opportunities and resources to become a more effective leader within your organization. Attend one of the section-sponsored sessions this year at an upcoming meeting! Among others, in 2016 we offered "Important Skills to Focus on in the Next Five Years" and "Dream Team: How to Succeed in the Growing World of Virtual Teams" (which I am very pleased was recognized as one of the top five most



outstanding sessions of the entire 2016 Society of Actuaries Annual Meeting & Exhibit!).

- Networking opportunities that will enhance your management practices and provide you with professional feedback. Attend an interactive section-sponsored session or webcast, such as the popular "Women's Leadership Forum" or "Breakfast with Senior Leaders."

I hope you take advantage of these valuable resources. I know the challenge for me, and all of us, is: How do we carve out time to develop ourselves during the busyness of life? Will 2017 look any different from 2016?

Recently, I took time to stop and contemplate what constitutes a good leader. I self-evaluated my leadership skills and realized I had a lot of areas where I need to improve. Recalling a recent conversation with my teenage daughter, I was reminded that I can learn more from her than just how to fix my iPhone. She told me that in her leadership class last semester she concluded

that a good leader must be someone who is passionate, stands up for what they believe in, has integrity, solves problems for society, and always does the right thing even when it is difficult. While this sounds so simple, I was humbled to realize how much I still have to work on.

The real question is: Am I going to do anything different to develop myself and be a better, different leader in 2017? All of us have to take initiative to change in order to improve ourselves, and it is all up to us to start taking small steps. Sometimes some of the simple things have the biggest impact.

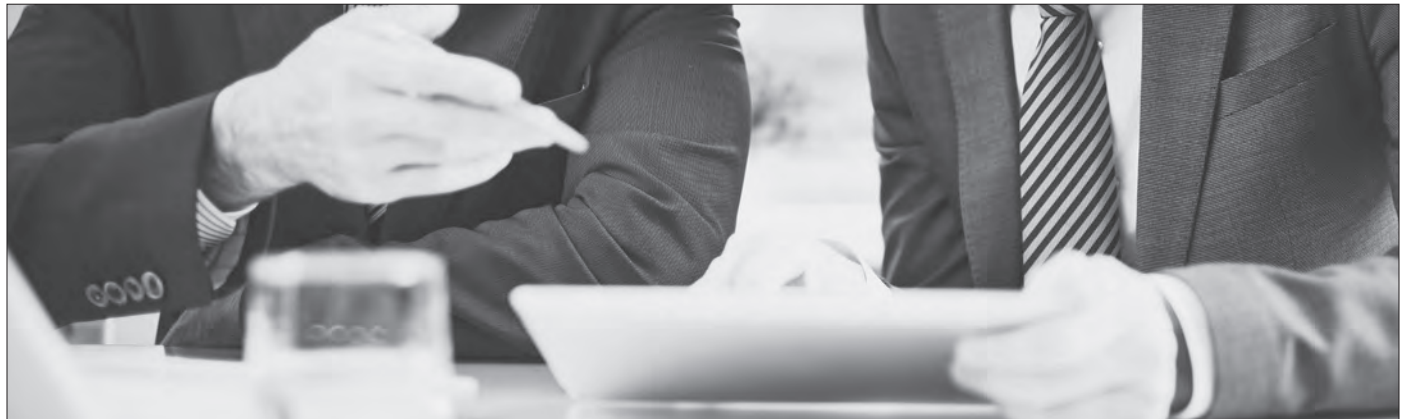
Instead of making a long list of stretch leadership resolutions and goals again this year (which I will never complete), I am going to keep it simple and focus on just two. First, I am committing to find a new way to volunteer in my community, and second, to find mentor(s) who will help challenge and provide counsel for me in my profession as an actuary. I am not sure on the details of how or when yet, but by writing this, I am holding myself accountable and will promise to report my progress in future editions. While this is so very easy to do, it is also

very easy not to do. I encourage you to find just one or two new things to commit to as well.

Finally, I wanted to close by welcoming the newly elected L&D Section Council members: Abe Gootzeit, Rong Rong and Mitch Stephenson. I am excited to have each one of you on the council. I also want to sincerely thank the out-going council members: Kelly Hennigan, for all your efforts leading the section so effectively as chair; Jamie Shallow, for the countless hours coordinating webcasts; and Mary Wagnon, who helped recruit some of the best meeting sessions we have ever sponsored. Thank you very much for giving back to the actuarial community. ■



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Virtual Dream Teams

Mastering the Art of the Growing Virtual Team Workplace

Are you leading a virtual team or do you work virtually? Listen to a new podcast to hear some ideas for a virtual “dream team.” At the 2016 Society of Actuaries Annual Meeting & Exhibit in Las Vegas, Frank Chechel, Zohair Motiwalla and Anne Katcher led an interactive workshop that took participants through two virtual team case studies. The podcast at <https://www.soa.org/prof-dev/podcasts/leadership-podcasts/> shares a summary of the best ideas coming out of that session.