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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

Focus on Diversity

By Kelly Hennigan

Welcome to the May 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 also include a diversity article, written by John W. Robinson, the Society of Actuaries (SOA) Board Partner to the Leadership & Development (L&D) Section Council. We look forward to the start of a new Diversity Corner addition to our newsletter.

John also serves as a member of the SOA's Inclusion & Diversity Committee (IDC). Their purpose is to determine investments the SOA can make, or programs it can undertake, to achieve the greatest impact on inclusion and diversity in the actuarial profession, long term and short term. Impact can include, but is not limited to, the number of diverse candidates and members and increased number and effectiveness of equal opportunities for advancement and leadership.

The SOA, the actuarial profession, employers and universities are best served when they are inclusive of all individuals and diverse. The future of the profession, in the United States and globally, depends in part on the actuarial profession overcoming barriers to entry and advancement for candidates from demographically underrepresented groups.

Diversity is present in our everyday lives. For example, at the gym the other morning I noticed a diverse approach to working out—some on the treadmills, others on the weight machines, and a few referencing their smartphones in an attempt to follow through with their apps' workout of the day. Also, as I learned upon attending the SOA's semi-annual Council of Chairs meeting in Chicago in November, there are diverse approaches to leadership.

There I had the pleasure of both meeting and participating in a session led by J. Keith Murnighan, the Harold H. Hines Jr. Distinguished Professor of Risk Management at the Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University. Professor Murnighan is the author of the book *Do Nothing!* and promotes a synonymous leadership approach.

My initial reaction prior to hearing him speak was honestly one of disbelief—the notion of leading via doing *nothing at all* truly sounded ludicrous. Was the “Do Nothing” leadership



philosophy purely a catchphrase to promote book sales? While it may be the case that the “Do Nothing” title does appeal to light-hearted readers, the mantra of “Do Nothing” is directed toward serious-minded leaders!

So, upon my return home from Chicago, I immediately went to the library and checked out his book. (And yes, I am one of those people who prefers actual books so that I can turn the pages rather than read from a tablet.) Included in this issue is the first of a three-part series focused on the diverse approach to leadership presented by Murnighan.

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. ■



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