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# Chairperson's Corner

By Sarah Osborne

When I was a student at the University of Central Missouri (UCM), a friend suggested that I check out the actuarial science program. I had never heard of it, but I was told that it was a great program for people who like math. After doing some research on this actuary thing, I found that all I had to do was pass some tests and I would be granted access to this career with low stress, good pay and high demand. Supposedly the exams were challenging, but being the straight A student I was, I was not worried about that. Bring it on!

Like an unassuming squirrel running across the road to grab that tasty acorn, I was flattened by the truck of exam reality. Fail??? How could this be? I had never failed an exam in my life! Eventually I peeled myself off the pavement and tried again, and I learned what it was like to really study. With the encouragement and direction of Dr. Jean Tao and a lot of hard work, I left UCM with my actuarial degree and an exam under my belt.

I started my career at an insurance company in Kansas City, Missouri, and continued to take actuarial exams. I had some great mentors along the way, whom I don't think I've ever properly thanked. So, I'd like to give a shout out to Jay West, Edd Bailey, Delaine Hare and Gayle Brekke. I learned many different things from each of these people, and I am truly thankful for the time that they invested in me.

By 2009 I had earned my way to the Fellowship Admissions Course (FAC), where I met Brian Pauley. Although it was the only FAC I've ever attended, I must say it had to have been one of the best. I met a lot of pretty awesome soon-to-be Fellows, and I think we all had more fun than would be expected at this sort of thing. Afterward, I stayed in touch with several of these individuals, including Brian.

Fast forward a bit, and Brian was elected to the Society of Actuaries (SOA) Leadership & Development Section Council. He reached out to me about running, so I said I would think about

it. He then had Olga Jacobs, council chair at the time, reach out to me. Next thing I know, I'm getting off the phone with Olga and I've somehow committed to running. Ack! What did I get myself into? Do I have time for this? Can I do it? What if I lose the election? Suddenly I was having bad flashbacks from third-grade student council elections.

The thing is, when you stretch out and get uncomfortable, great things happen. Although I'd done some light volunteer work through the spring Health Meeting and exam grading, this was the point where I really dove in. And it has been a more rewarding experience than I could have ever imagined. I can't thank Olga and Brian enough for giving me the little push that I needed. And, for anyone out there who is thinking about taking the next step in leadership or volunteerism, I encourage you to go for it!

Now being on the Health Section Council, I am truly honored to be serving this year as the chairperson. I also want to give special thanks to Brian Pauley for his past three years of service on the council, including his last year as chairperson. I have so much respect for Brian and am truly blessed to call him a friend. He is a tremendous leader and has left some big shoes to fill. I am also assured by the fact that our council is filled with rock star actuaries, including our vice chair, Karen Shelton, and our secretary/treasurer, Jackie Lee. They both hit the ground running when they joined the council, and I can't wait to see what we accomplish this year. We also have a phenomenal SOA staff partner, Joe Wurzburger, who does an amazing job supporting our group.

We have a lot of exciting initiatives as a council this year that I hope our section members will value, including a new Public Health web-exclusive series and the ongoing Commercial Health Care web-exclusive series at [www.theactuarmagazine.org](http://www.theactuarmagazine.org). Please visit our section website at [www.soa.org/health](http://www.soa.org/health) to check out all the great things that are going on and ways that you can get involved. If you have any input for our group, please don't hesitate to reach out and share your feedback with me. I would love to hear from you and look forward to serving you this year. ■



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