



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

International News

'F gego dgt 2009 – Issue No.4;



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A Global Opportunity

By S. Michael McLaughlin

Thank you for inviting me to write an article for *International News*! As a member of the SOA, and now as president, I have always appreciated the International Section's mission of encouraging and facilitating international issues and areas of practice.

I've taken special interest in this mission because of the international aspects of my own life and career.

I grew up in Jamaica and studied at the University of the West Indies and then at the University of Waterloo in Canada.

I was working as a computer programmer at British-American Insurance Company in

Kingston, Jamaica when I learned about the profession. I worked on a few actuarial projects because I was the only programmer who could (at least partially) read actuarial formulas! That impressed my bosses, who suggested I take the actuarial exams. At the time, all actuarial students in Jamaica the Institute of Actuaries exams, and so that was the path I followed. I received my FIA in 1977.

I also lived in the Bahamas for three years. Those were wonderful days, although I had to trade off between studying for exams or going out in the boat! A few years later I moved to the United States, and now I've been in Chicago for over 20 years! Quite a climate change!

I also like to joke that I speak two languages—English and American!

One of the reasons I wanted to become an actuary is because our credentials are widely recognized around the world. I'm glad that I've been able to study and work in different countries. It's been a rich experience. I've gained an awareness of and respect for many different cultures over the years.

Many of you who know me know that I am a champion of actuaries moving into enterprise risk management and the Chartered Enterprise Risk Analyst (CERA) credential.

The CERA was launched in 2007, and it is the only new credential since the SOA's inception in 1949. The adoption of the CERA demonstrates the importance of risk management to our profession!



Karaoke at the International Section reception in Orlando, Florida.
Pictured: Rich de Haan, Mike McLaughlin, Bosco Chan, Alistair Cammidge, Cathy Lyn and Darryl Wagner

“Our profession is truly blazing a trail. I haven’t yet seen another global credential formed by consensus among multiple organizations.”

Actuaries worldwide have recognized the importance of enterprise risk management and the benefits of the credential as well. This was brought to the forefront in mid-November when we signed a treaty to establish the CERA as the globally recognized ERM credential.

This collaboration involves 14 actuarial associations in 12 countries—a first for our profession! The countries include: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, Sweden, the United Kingdom and of course, the United States.

The Treaty of Recognition and Accreditation coordinates the various signatory organizations. Provisions of the treaty include a common global syllabus, a thorough quality assurance protocol, and marketing and branding standards.

The designation will be awarded through the qualified participating associations and will incorporate and adopt the name of the CERA credential. It will recognize actuaries globally who meet stringent education requirements in ERM and are governed by a strong code of professional conduct.

This is a significant endorsement by the global actuarial profession of the need for an international ERM credential. It sends a strong message to employers and candidates that the actuarial skill set provides significant insight and risk management expertise, especially in this time of increased globalization.

As you can imagine, this is an ambitious endeavor! Our profession is truly blazing a trail. I haven’t yet seen another global credential



The signatories of the global CERA treaty. Shown from left to right: Ralph Blanchard, Casualty Actuarial Society (U.S.); Malcolm Campbell, Svenska Aktuarieföreningen (Sweden); Nigel Masters, Institute of Actuaries (United Kingdom); Tsutomu Igarashi, Institute of Actuaries of Japan; Mike McLaughlin, Society of Actuaries (U.S.); Eberhard Mueller, Deutsche Aktuarvereinigung e.V. (Germany); Fred Rowley, The Institute of Actuaries of Australia; Bob Howard, The Canadian Institute of Actuaries / Institut Canadien des Actuaire (Canada); Juan Carlos Padilla, Colegio Nacional de Actuarios A.C. (Mexico); Peter Doyle, Actuarial Society of South Africa; Ragjish Sagoenie, Het Actuarieel Genootschap (Netherlands); Ronnie Bowie, Faculty of Actuaries (United Kingdom); Thomas Behar, Institut des Actuaire (France).

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Our profession has the opportunity with ERM to apply our skills much more broadly than before, to help our clients, employers and the public. It is exciting to see the CERA evolve into a truly global credential. Now, actuaries around the world will have even more in common.

This is a great time to be an actuary, and I look forward to serving as your president. My travels will take me to many destinations, and I hope to meet as many of our members as possible in the year to come. □