



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

Article from:

The Actuary

April 1990 – Volume 24, No. 4

Minority recruiting scholarship recipients

by Linda M. Kahn

The Subcommittee on Minority Recruiting urgently needs your financial support for the scholarship awards to be granted this summer for the 1990-91 school year. In addition to individual scholarship awards, the committee continues to support the summer programs for gifted high school students at Howard University and Florida A&M University. Most companies should have received a letter earlier this year from the presidents of the Society of Actuaries and Casualty Actuarial Society requesting financial support. If your company has not yet contributed, I hope it will soon. I would appreciate it if you would encourage your company to contribute. Please mail contributions to "CAS/SOA — Minority Recruiting Program," c/o Society of Actuaries, P.O. Box 95668, Chicago, IL 60694. Individual contributions are also welcome.

The Subcommittee on Minority Recruiting of the Society of Actuaries and Casualty Actuarial Society is pleased to announce the scholarship awards granted for the 1989-90 school year. The names of the scholarship recipients, their year in school, and the schools they are attending are as follows:

Frederick Benjamin, Fr.
Florida A&M University
Carlecia D. Cobbins, Fr.
University of Virginia
Kimberly A. Croston, Fr.
Millersville State College
Sylvia Garcia-Curran, Sr.
Central Missouri State University
Danielle Gray, Fr.
Howard University
Russell H. Greig, Sr.
Florida A&M University
Henry Harris III, Sr.
Florida A&M University
Nivio Z. (Dias) Hibas, Sr.
Temple University
Candace Y. Howell, Soph.
Duke University
Kathy K. Huong, Jr.
Georgia State University
Karmjit S. Jeji, Sr.
Wayne State University
In-Seong J. Kim, Sr.
Ohio State University
Hung Lam, Fr.
Pennsylvania State University

Candice D. Moore, Jr.
De Paul University
Vinay Nadkarni, Fr.
Pennsylvania State University
Khanh K. Nguyen, Sr.
University of Nebraska
Tu Nguyen, Soph.
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Anil K. Reddy, Fr.
Wharton School of Business,
University of Pennsylvania
Maurice L. Ruffin, Fr.
University of Pennsylvania
Akbar S. Sharfi, Fr.
University of Chicago
Kelli D. Shepard-El, Sr.
Temple University
Craig Shigeno, Jr.
Drake University
M. Saqib Siddiqi, Sr.
University of Nebraska
Erik D. Smith, Sr.
University of California/San Diego
Krupa Subramanian, Fr.
University of Pennsylvania
Wai Yun Tong, Jr.
New York University
Pamela A. Turner, Jr.
University of Mississippi
Melissa L. Wong, Jr.
University of California/Los Angeles

Linda M. Kahn is Director of Program Management with Pacific Maritime Association. She is the Chairperson, Subcommittee on Minority Recruiting.

Dear Editor:

Do we want to be more like accountants?

I want to express my support for the positions taken by Steve Radcliffe in his November editorial. While I agree that it would be helpful to individual actuaries to be better communicators and managers, I don't believe that this should motivate us to try to recruit this talent instead of mathematical talents.

The argument in favor of changing the tilt in our recruiting efforts seems to be that we are losing out to MBAs and CPAs who have more of these skills. From that, it is argued, we should conclude that we

should try to change the talent mix of our new recruits to be more like those of these other groups. This would then, presumably, lead to a perception that actuaries were more similar in skills to MBAs and accountants. The proponents of this kind of change must believe that this would be good.

This is not so obvious from the point of view of the individual actuary. If I have strong communication skills, then it will be known. It will get around very quickly because I will communicate it. The curse of the professional reputation can then be quickly exorcised. If my communication skills are poor, that will also be quickly perceived, despite an improved reputation of the profession. The situation with management skills is, I believe, similar, even though perhaps not quite as quickly perceived.

If we believe that a quick judgment on the skills will be made by others based on the particulars of the case, all we will be left with is the downgrading of our mathematical mystique. While the reputation for the group may have a trade-off of better communication skills vs. less math, each individual will be less well off.

I therefore believe that the focus of the Society should not move toward these more general matters but rather concentrate on improving the mathematical and technical skills that have created the profession as it exists today. The Society should recruit and educate for the technical abilities and leave the more general skill selection and development to the individuals or to organizations that have those abilities as their objectives.

The Society provides opportunities to develop both communication and management skills through the various committees, task forces, and meetings for its members.

In short, I believe the profession should expect needs for more technical (including mathematical) expertise in the future and should concern itself with meeting those needs. There are many areas in which we could be providing useful service and do not. If we cease to focus on our technical abilities we will find that other professions develop greater skills in our own areas of expertise, and we will be shut out, no matter our communication skills or management expertise.

Irwin T. Vanderhoof