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Actuarial Research Conference (ARC) Held at the University of Western Ontario

By Ben Marshall

The world's largest annual conference on actuarial research was held in Canada this year, from Aug. 8–11 at the University of Western Ontario (corporately branded as “Western University” and more commonly known as “Western”) in London, Ontario. Roughly 170 delegates from across six continents gathered at the Actuarial Research Conference (ARC) to hear more than 20 research presentations and enjoy networking with peers.

The conference kicked off on Wednesday evening with an after-hours grand reception at Museum London, at the edge of the Thames River in downtown London, away from the campus. The networking opportunities continued with an additional reception on the Western campus late on Thursday afternoon.

Each full day of the conference featured a luncheon in the beautiful Great Hall at Somerville House on campus. A final reception and gala dinner was held on Friday evening at Great Hall as well.

The more technical research portion of the program featured four plenary sessions and 74 additional presentations during six concurrent sessions, all over the course of the final three days. Among those, the Society of Actuaries (SOA) sponsored and organized sessions on the emergence of InsurTech, socio-economic drivers of international differences in mortality improvement, climate change research, and the sustainability of health care as it relates to food systems. The SOA also sponsored the Thursday luncheon, featuring a speech by immediate Past President Jerry Brown, FSA, MAAA, on the research activities of the SOA.

The conference was marked by a distinctly international flavor. Aside from representatives traveling from across the globe, the content included plenty of international research. There were presentations on pay-as-you-go pension systems in Colombia, road accident benefits in South Africa, the proposed University Pension Plan for Ontario, portfolio optimization under Solvency II, the sustainability of the U.S. Social Security system, and international developments in longevity. However, many of the presentations were on universal issues addressed by the universal language of mathematics.

The International Section of the SOA was also a sponsor of ARC this year. During one of the plenary sessions, International Section Council member (and research liaison) Dr. Ken Seng



ARC attendees gather for lunch in the Great Hall at Somerville House on the Western University campus.



Members of the Actuaries Climate Index Working Group (from left to right) Ronora Stryker, ASA, MAAA, Caterina Lindman, FSA, FCIA, Tatjana Miljkovic, Ph.D., MBA, and Steve Kolk, FCAS, MAAA. Steve and Caterina gave a joint presentation on the ACI and the impact of our food systems on health and climate sustainability, while Tatiana outlined research results on the modeling of obesity prevalence in the U.S.



Tan gave an update on the section’s global activities, not only in research but in providing services and value to members in every region of the world through networking events, professional development activities, university assistance, and ongoing communications efforts. He also noted the global work of the SOA’s Ambassador Program and its upcoming re-launch to follow later this year.

The conference was organized and hosted by a Western planning committee chaired by Dr. Bruce Jones, FSA, FCIA. The



ARC Organizing Chair Dr. Bruce Jones and Organizing Committee Member Dr. Xiaoming Liu are joined by Dr. Ken Seng Tan, SOA International Section representative, during the ARC kickoff reception at Museum London.

Dr. Santiago Montenegro, President, Colombian Association of Pension and Unemployment Fund Administrators, delivers his keynote address on day two of the conference.

committee and volunteers ensured that the conference was convenient, comfortable, affordable and worthwhile—by all measures, a roaring success! ■



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