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Retirement systems practice area makes progress on strategic issues

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During the past year, the leaders of the SOA Retirement Systems Practice Area have identified several strategically important issues. As we end the 1995-96 program year, we are glad to report that much progress has been made in several areas. Here is a sampling of the practice area's work.

Research is important to day-to-day practice

Standardized tables of turnover/retirement rates have not been published since the 1950s. Researchers have finished a report that consolidated data from several consulting firms and plan sponsors, and analysis of the aggregated data has resulted in a preliminary report. The *Retirement Rate Turnover Experience Study* will be released early next year.

In response to pension legislation included in GATT, the SOA is constructing a mortality table based on the experience of a large variety of uninsured pension plans. About 14.3 million life-years of exposure are on the database. The *Uninsured Pension Plan Mortality Table* (GATT) will be available to the IRS before their year 2000 deadline for naming a standard table.

Little research has been done on asset valuation methods since the 1970s. Finalists from the RFP are being considered for the *Asset Valuation Methods* project to survey methods in use, discuss the purposes

served, and review their effectiveness.

This project is being coordinated with the development of an ASB standard on asset valuation.

Macrodemographic model for retirement

The first step in the study of the feasibility of developing a model to analyze retirement and other public policy proposals is to study existing models. In doing so, this research also helps advance another strategic goal of the practice area: to improve relations with other organizations and professions, including economists. The breadth of the study creates a bridge between economists' models and actuarial models. The POG includes an economist, who is the executive director of the Pension Research Council, as well as representatives from the SOA Computer Science and Pension Sections, Conference of Consulting Actuaries, and the American Society of Pension Actuaries.

We believe future projects will allow us to expand even further our relationships with economists and demographers.

Social Security — Retirement and Disability Income Committee

The SOA Foundation is now distributing the consumer education brochure "On the edge of change: Putting Social Security back in balance," based on work completed by this committee.

By the end of October, about 65,000

brochures had gone out to members, companies, libraries, schools, and other individuals.

The committee conducted two seminars in May and June on Social Security funding status and effects on private plans. Tapes and transcripts are available.

Members of the committee, Faye Albert, and three representatives from Mexico are discussing how U.S. and Canadian actuaries can help set up information systems for Mexico's new social security system, which begins January 1, 1997.

Professional development

The Professional Development Committee is studying how to better deliver continuing education through technology. This will allow members easier access to CE credits. The Pension Section members were surveyed on delivery methods and possible topics for CD-ROM.

This is just a short list of the activities this year. As we enter our next program year, we welcome all SOA members' input on the issues you believe are important in this area and your suggestions on initiatives.

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Process begins for 1997 board elections

The Committee on Elections is beginning the preparation of the first ballot for the 1997 election.

On that ballot, Fellows are asked to nominate FSAs for Board of Governors' positions. To aid them, a list is provided of those who are eligible for election

and have met specific criteria for committee and other service to the profession.

In addition, Fellows who have the experience, interest, and time to serve on the Board of Governors may submit their names for consideration. Anyone

who would like to do so is invited to summarize his or her accomplishments and background in a letter to Barnet N. Berin, chairperson of the Committee on Elections, and send it to the SOA office before December 2.