



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

By Azita Bassiji

In preparation for writing the Chairperson's Corner for the May issue of the *Pension Section News*, I went back and reviewed all the May/June issues of the *Pension Section News* dating back to 2009. It is rewarding to see that a number of projects and activities of the Pension Section Council which we talked about back then have come to fruition. It is also great to see that some of the activities and projects have progressed to the next stages.

The Pension Section Council, through its three committees, is responsible for continuing education, research and communication to our membership.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE IS CONTINUING TO EXCEED ITS GOALS!

Over the last several years, in response to our membership, the number of sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by the Pension Section Council has increased during the Society of Actuaries' annual meetings held in the fall. The sessions usually have themes associated with them and it allows our membership to deep dive on a particular topic. The feedback from attendees has been positive and we plan to continue to deliver meaningful sessions for our membership's continuing education. We are planning to hold approximately 20 sessions for the 2014 Society of Actuaries' annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Over the last several years, the Pension Section Council has offered and continues to offer several webcasts throughout the year. In 2013, the Pension Section Council offered the second largest number of webcasts among all Society of Actuaries' sections. From time to time, there is an additional need for just-in-time training on pension related issues. The Continuing Education Committee works tirelessly to offer additional webcasts. The schedule of the 2014 webcasts and the intended topics are available on the SOA website. Keeping the needs of our Canadian membership in mind, we have offered Canadian specific webcasts or have added Canadian perspective in our webcasts. We plan to continue this effort.

Just as the Society of Actuaries' released exposure drafts of the RP-2014 Mortality Tables Report and the Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2014, the Canadian Institute of Actuaries, through its Pension Experience Subcommittee of Research Committee, released the Final Report: Canadian Pensioners' Mortality in February 2014. In preparation for the release of these reports, the Pension Section Council held a webcast on April 16, 2014 to review the technical details of the development of RP-2014 Mortality Tables and Mortality Improvement Scale MP-2014, and provides a Canadian perspective on differences between the U.S. and Canadian reports. We recognize that more education is required. Our membership needs to be equipped to inform plan sponsors. Therefore, an additional webcast was held on April 29, 2014 to further practitioners' knowl-



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edge on the broader topic of longevity and provide practitioners with a “tool kit” to use in discussions with plan sponsors.

The efforts that started in 2013 in educating and marketing pension actuaries in the area of investment will continue in 2014. We will once again sponsor a the Investment “Boot Camp” in some major North American cities and plan to publish a curriculum for pension actuaries who desire to further their development in the area of liability driven investment.

EXPANDING OUR KNOWLEDGE!

Private plan sponsors continue their effort in de-risking, through plan design changes, settlement of obligations, and better matching of their assets and liabilities.

Continuing the momentum that started several years ago with *Retirement 20/20*, the Research Committee has arranged for several pieces of research on variations of defined benefit and defined contributions pension plans:

1. “Hybrid Pensions: Risk Sharing Arrangements for Pension Plan Sponsors and Participants,” published in February of 2014;
2. “Embedded Options in Pension Plans: Valuation of Guarantees in Cash Balance Plans,” published in January of 2014; and
3. “Market Consistent Valuation and Funding of Cash Balance Pensions,” published in November of 2013

Additional research expected to be released later this year or in early 2015.

1. Optimizing Application of Risk Management Concepts to Pension Plans;
2. Pension Plan Design & Risk Management;
3. Pension Risk Transfer: Evaluating Impact and Barriers to De-Risking Strategies (jointly sponsored by Committee on Finance Research);
4. Target Benefit Plans in Canada; and
5. Communicating Financial Health of Public Plans (initiated by Social Insurance & Public Finance Section)

KEEPING US INFORMED!

The Communication Committee keeps us informed of the webcasts, research and issues which we need to be aware of and for which we have to make time. It also raises our awareness of important issues by arranging for articles in *Pension Section News*, *Pension Section Update*, *Pension Forum* and podcasts. You can take advantage of the podcasts on your ride to work!

ADDITIONAL PLANS FOR 2014

We plan to explore plan sponsor and other stakeholders' views on sufficient, efficient and sustainable delivery of retirement plans. Through their lens, we may be better equipped to focus our research and education in the upcoming years.

CHANGES TO THE PENSION SECTION COUNCIL

I would like to welcome Julie Curtis, Larry Pollack and Carol Bogosian to the council. In 2014, Carol will serve as the treasurer and Larry as the secretary. Monica Dragut will continue to serve in a dual role as an elected member of the council and as the Continuing Education Committee chairperson.

I would also like to welcome Aaron Weindling in his role as council vice chairperson, John Deinum in his role as Research Committee chairperson, Martin McCaulay in his role as the editor of the *Pension Section News*, Ray Berry in his returning role as the Communication Committee chairperson, and Ian Genno in his returning role as board partner.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank outgoing members for their contributions to the work of the council. Thank you to Faisal Siddiqi, chairperson, Charlie Cahill, council member, Eric Freden, council member and Communications Committee chairperson, and Cindy Levering, Research Committee chairperson, for all your hard work. ■