

Interview

# THE YOUNGEST ACTUARY EVER (SO FAR!)

BY SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

**ANDREW LIN** became an FSA 17 days before his 21st birthday. As a result, he is the youngest ever FSA to date. Read his story and how he plans to make a difference in the actuarial industry.

**Q: Did you have career plans before deciding on an actuarial career? If so, what were they?**

**A:** I always wanted to find something that's interesting and challenging, where I can apply my quantitative and analytical skills. The actuarial career seemed to be a good choice, but I wasn't really sure that I wanted to become an actuary when I started taking the exams. I just had some free time and I thought the material from the exams would be helpful to me in the future, regardless of what I would end up doing. After two internships, one in life insur-

ance and one in annuities, I found that I really enjoyed that type of work, so I decided that is what I would do after college.

**Q: How did you become interested in an actuarial career?**

**A:** My uncle is an actuary, and he told me about the actuarial career back in high school. I always liked math and economics,

so I started taking the exams even though I didn't know I wanted to become an actuary. As I took more exams and learned more about the profession, I became more and more interested. The two internships during college helped me determine that was what I wanted to do after I graduated.

**Q: What part of an actuarial career interests you most?**

**A:** Risk management and investment. To me this seems like the most dynamic and quantitative field, and it's the FSA track I took and the area that I'm currently working in (annuity hedging). After the financial crisis, I think there's more opportunity than ever for people who are trained to manage financial risks, especially for younger people like myself. I am eager to apply my skills and talent to make a difference in this area.

**Q: How long did it take you to complete the SOA exams?**

**A:** It took me four years to complete the exams. I started in the beginning of my senior year of high school (Exam P). I took an exam every sitting after that; never took two exams in a sitting, but also never failed any. I finished my last exam at the end of 2008, then went back to finish the FAP final assessment and do the FSA modules. I didn't feel the need to rush through the exams, but I have always had the habit of learning extra things on my own, and the exam material truly interested me. Passing the exams was just kind of a bonus for me.

**Q: Describe your experience with the SOA exams process. What is your opinion of it?**

**A:** I enjoyed the challenge from the exams, and I enjoyed learning and reading through

the material. I used the suggested textbooks for all the exams rather than the study manuals because I believed it would be beneficial for me. I think it's definitely paid off now as it helped me truly understand the concepts and remember what I learned. I can't say there wasn't a time when I felt tired and frustrated in the exam process, but it takes dedication to be successful in any field.

**Q: Did the SOA exams prepare you well for future employment?**

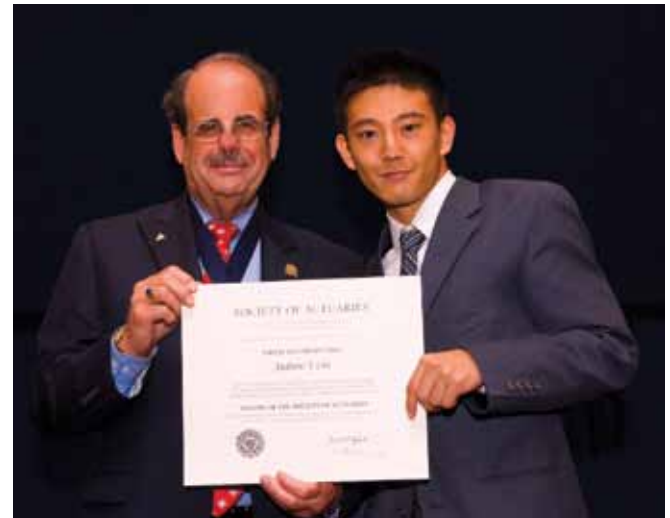
**A:** I can't really say how well the exams prepared me for my future employment, but as for now, what I learned from preparing for the exams is helping me tremendously. Even though I am still doing mostly analyst type of work, I am able to see the big picture with the knowledge I gained from the exams, so I have a better idea of what I am doing and how the things I do help my team and the company.

**Q: Prior to completing the SOA exams, were you aware you'd be the youngest ever FSA?**

**A:** I wasn't aware of that until late last year. I knew I would be one of the youngest, but since I knew there were a lot of very bright individuals in this field and I was just taking the exams one at a time, I didn't expect to break the record.

**Q: What do you think about being the youngest ever FSA?**

**A:** I am very proud of the achievement, but I know getting the FSA designation is only



**Cecil Bykerk, SOA president at the time, presents Andrew Lin with the FSA certificate.**

the beginning of my actuarial career. I want to continue to learn and develop, and I hope I will continue to have the opportunities to use my talents and apply what I have learned in the future.

**Q: How do you plan to make an impact on the actuarial field?**

**A:** There is a lot I want to do, but I'm not yet certain how to start. I have always felt that the actuarial field has remained uncharted territory—I wouldn't have known about it if my uncle wasn't an actuary. I think making people more informed about the career is necessary to attract talent to this field. So that's one aspect I would like to change; too little information is circulating about the actuarial field. In addition to that, after the recent financial crisis, there are some great opportunities for the actuarial profession to expand and contribute. I strive to become a leader in my field of expertise and help not only the profession, but society as a whole. I am also considering volunteering for the SOA. I am interested in knowing anything that I can do to help the profession. ▣