

# SOA REACHING OUT TO ACADEMIA

**THIS MONTH'S** SOA at Work column describes two aspects of an important new SOA initiative. Over the past two years, the SOA's Board of Directors has identified a need to strengthen the academic base of the actuarial profession. They've understood that for any profession to thrive—to attract new members and retain its relevance in a competitive world—requires a strong academic base for cutting-edge research and teaching the next generation. The Board has also recognized the need to build strong relationships between the academic world and the profession.



To that end, I want to mention the SOA's University Outreach initiative. Through this program SOA members and staff visited universities across the United States and Canada to talk with students and faculty about the actuarial profession, opportunities available to students, and ways the SOA can help students join the profession. At every visit, we've found a receptive audience that's excited about the profession and eager to learn how they can join it. We've gotten this reaction at schools with strong existing actuarial science programs and at schools that have never had such a program. We also come away from the visits with new ideas for how we can work with the schools, with a sense of what students find most exciting about the profession, and confidence that the future of the profession is in good hands as long as we can continue attracting students of the very high caliber we meet.

We also have a reminder in the column this month about the SOA's new Ph.D. stipend program, aimed at encouraging promising candidates to pursue a career in teaching and research in actuarial science. We hope that by helping to fund graduate level study, we can begin to build the future academic base of the profession. This is a long-term goal, but one well worth pursuing for the future of the profession. ■

— SOA Executive Director Greg Heidrich

## UNIVERSITY OUTREACH PROGRAM CONTINUES TO GROW

The University Outreach program is estimated to have reached more than 1,500 students, advisors and faculty members to date at colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. The team visited more than 15 colleges and universities in 2009. Some of the schools included University of Texas at Austin, University of Chicago, Georgia State University, Pennsylvania State University, Spelman College, Temple University, University of Connecticut, Université Laval, Concordia University, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université de Montréal, University of Toronto and Columbia University. Attendance exceeded expected numbers and participants expressed appreciation about the opportunity to learn about the actuarial profession, with 96 percent of program evalua-

tion respondents saying the information was valuable.

As background, this outreach began in 2007 when SOA education staff visited universities with traditional actuarial programs. These visits were designed to provide information on the actuarial profession to potential and current actuarial students. In 2008, Education's university visit program expanded to include collaboration with the SOA Communications and Marketing staff and offered the opportunity for a practicing actuary, often an alumnus, to participate in the visit. This combined program brought together the expertise of both teams and resulted in additional visits in 2008. For more information on the University Outreach program, please visit [www.riskisopportunity.net](http://www.riskisopportunity.net). **A**

## SOA OFFERING DOCTORAL STIPENDS

Do the ivy halls beckon? Are you thinking about supplementing your actuarial credential with a doctorate? Do you know a talented student who is currently thinking about getting a Ph.D. and an actuarial credential? The SOA offers stipends for students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. and an actuarial credential (or for those already holding an actuarial credential interested in pursuing a Ph.D.). Last year we

had 50 applicants for five stipend awards. This year five new stipend awards will be available. For more information, including the application, requirements and deadline, go to [www.soa.org](http://www.soa.org) and click on education and university/college resources. You can also find out more by checking out the article in the August/September 2009 issue of *The Actuary*. **A**

## JOINING A PROFESSIONAL INTEREST SECTION JUST GOT EASIER

You can now join one of the 19 SOA-sponsored professional interest programs with the click of a button right from your computer. Section membership is now available online at [www.soa.org](http://www.soa.org). Just click on professional interests, about professional interests and join a Section. The professional inter-

est groups, known as Sections, have been formed around common issues related to an area of practice or special interest. Members of the SOA and fellow industry professionals can join one or more Sections, which encourage and facilitate career and personal development. **A**

## SOA EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### ECONOMIC SCENARIO GENERATION FOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Dec. 8

Webcast

### DENTAL TREND: DRILL DOWN YOUR TREND THROUGH PRODUCT AND NETWORK

Dec. 8

Webcast

### REFOCUS

Feb 28–March 3

Las Vegas, NV

### INVESTMENT SYMPOSIUM

March 22–23

New York, NY

### RETIREMENT INDUSTRY CONFERENCE

April 11–13

Washington, D.C.

### ERM SYMPOSIUM

April 12–14

Chicago, IL

### THE LIFE INSURANCE CONFERENCE

April 13–15

Washington, D.C.

### LIFE AND ANNUITY SYMPOSIUM AND SEMINARS

May 17–19

Tampa, FL

View all Professional Development opportunities by visiting [www.soa.org](http://www.soa.org) and clicking on event calendar.

## NEW PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WEB PAGES ON SOA.ORG

The SOA recently unveiled the new Professional Development (formerly Meetings & Events) Web pages on *SOA.org* to better meet member needs. The reorganized Web pages clearly display the range of career-enhancing events, meetings and other opportunities available for professional development. These pages provide a more intuitive resource where members can access information quickly and efficiently. **A**

## THE ACTUARIAL PROFESSION IN THE NEWS

**BusinessWeek Cites SOA Publication** *BusinessWeek* used a quote from an SOA publication in an article which describes how policymakers are looking at ways to mitigate the effects of market cycles and ensure that retirees don't outlive their savings.

**US News & World Report Features SOA Research** The publication cited SOA research in an article about retirees becoming more conservative and frugal.

**Financial Times Quotes FSA** The *Times* interviewed Rudy Karsan for an article on technology in the future.

**OnWallStreet.com Features SOA Co-Sponsored Research** The site mentioned research by the SOA, LIMRA and the International Foundation for Retirement Education in a piece on retirees' worries about finances.

**National Underwriter Cites SOA Research** The publication posted an article based on a survey by SOA, LIMRA and the International Foundation for Retirement Education in a piece on retirees' worries about finances.

To view all of these articles, visit [www.imageoftheactuary.org](http://www.imageoftheactuary.org) and click on Actuaries in the News. **A**

## New Professional Development E-Courses

Take advantage of these additional opportunities to grow your knowledge on a variety of important and valuable subjects, while earning continuing professional development (CPD) credit, from the convenience of your computer.

The new e-course topics include:

- decision making and communication,
- enterprise risk management,
- financial economics,
- financial reporting and operational risk,
- fundamentals of actuarial practice,
- health systems overview,
- investment strategy,
- pricing, reserving and forecasting,
- regulation and taxation and
- social insurance.

Learn more and register today at [WWW.SOA.ORG](http://WWW.SOA.ORG).