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Chairperson's Corner

By Vincent Xuan

Writing this article for *International News* feels like meeting an old friend; a friend that I always enjoy learning from and staying connected with. Let me take this opportunity to share a personal story.

Back in 2012, inspired by my mentor who is a dedicated volunteer at the SOA, I volunteered to be an assistant editor of the newsletter. The International Section's newsletter was my first choice, as I am naturally curious about the practices and lives of actuaries in other countries. After serving for a few years, I received an email from the lead editor asking if I wanted to take on his job. After some thought, I accepted. This proved to be a great decision. Although the position required more time, those well-baked newsletters made my efforts well spent. Running the newsletter was an eye-opening experience, and I started to think about getting more involved with council activities. Two years ago, I ran for and won a seat on the council. I then took a new role as the treasurer, and then vice chair, and now the chair. Although I passed my torch at the newsletter to the two co-lead editors, Arpita and Qi, I still remain emotionally connected with this publication.

I have found that volunteering with the International Section has been a rewarding and inspiring experience. I've encountered numerous talented actuaries from Africa, South America, Asia, Europe—and many other places on the globe. Their personal experience and professional insights made my job fun and meaningful. I certainly learned tremendously from the other volunteers, and had great opportunities to build my leadership skills as well as my professional network.

I'd like to issue a "Call of Duty" to all of our International Section members. I encourage you to think about the ways you can participate in our section activities. This can be through writing articles for the newsletter, organizing a local social event, hosting a webinar, or contributing to a research project. I welcome your thoughts! Please feel free to contact me (xu.xuan@prudential.com) or our section specialist Jane Lesch (jlesch@soa.org) with any thoughts or ideas that will help grow and enhance our community.

As the new chair, I look forward to the challenges and opportunities of the coming year. We are in a solid position to



further enhance membership value and services, and many new initiatives are already underway. Recently, our new vice-chair Wendy Kwan hosted our first networking event in New York City with the Entrepreneurial & Innovation Section (see her write up in this issue). The event was a blast, and we will continue to expand this well-received networking program to other cities around the world.

Success cannot be accomplished without a dedicated team of council members and staff partners. As a result of our recent elections, I am proud to announce the following new appointments: Wendy Kwan (vice-chair), Susan Mateja (secretary), Yanjie Feng (treasurer), and Arpita Das (council member for a new 3-year term and a co-lead editor for the newsletter). Milanthe Sarukkali, Heather Ingram, Ken Seng Tan, and James Xu will continue to serve as council members for various ongoing initiatives. I look forward to a continued strong partnership with our staff partner Ben Marshall and section specialist Jane Lesch. Finally, I'd like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the wonderful work from past chair Graydon Bennett and council member Quintin Li. Your contributions were invaluable and directly impacted our success over the past year.

This year will provide many exciting opportunities for our section. With your active participation, we can make it a truly prosperous, rewarding and enjoyable place for international actuaries! ■



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