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Chairperson's Corner: Actuary of the Future— Mission and Vision

By Laura Wiland

In the corporate world, the sole purpose of a mission statement is to serve as a company's goal/agenda; it outlines clearly what the goal of the company is, while a vision statement is used to communicate a company's goals and aspirations in a single, concise sentence or paragraph.

While attending the Society of Actuaries (SOA) Leadership Conference in November, I realized that there isn't a clear understanding of our section's mission and vision, or at least there isn't unilateral agreement on what our mission and vision is. Are we serving actuaries of the future in the sense that we should be focused on attracting and educating actuaries new to the profession? Or are we serving actuaries of the future in the sense that we should be focused on identifying what the actuarial profession will look like in the future and how actuaries will function in that environment?

For at least the past 12 months, the Actuary of the Future (AOF) Section Council has been focused on attracting and educating actuaries new to the actuarial profession. We hosted webcasts with various universities across the United States, led by a panel of working actuaries with different education and career

backgrounds, and we also produced several podcasts where we interviewed different actuaries on their career progressions, discussed the importance of mentorship in shaping the future of the profession and explored nontraditional opportunities for actuaries.

As I stepped back and looked at the bigger picture of what we have been trying to do, I realized that there was a lot of overlap with other SOA initiatives that already exist to attract and educate actuaries new to the profession. Two that quickly come to mind are Candidate Connect and University Outreach.

- Candidate Connect is an initiative to build and strengthen relationships with those weighing their education and career options.
- University Outreach was developed to connect with college students, their advisers and faculty. This program provides an opportunity for students, faculty and advisers to talk directly with a practicing actuary to learn about career opportunities and to discuss the actuarial education system with professional staff from an organization like the SOA.

While I think the AOF can continue to work alongside these SOA initiatives, I'm not sure it makes sense for the AOF to overlap with them.

That means the AOF Section needs to focus on defining our section's mission and vision, and we think the best way to do that is to hear from our Section members. By the time you read this article, the membership engagement survey will be closed (open from January 23 to February 12), but hopefully you were able to respond to that survey and provide the AOF Section Council with invaluable information about how we can best serve you. The AOF Section Council met in Chicago on March 1 to review the results of that survey and to redefine the section's mission and vision for 2019 and beyond. I believe there are numerous ways we can serve our members, and I am confident that our face-to-face March meeting will result in new initiatives that our members will appreciate and value.

I look forward to the next 12 months and plan to update the membership on our mission and vision in the fall newsletter. Please reach out to any committee member or send an email to the AOF (sections@soa.org) if you have ideas on how the section can better serve its members. ■



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