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Chairperson's Corner

By Deb Tully



I am honored to take on the chairperson role for the Society of Actuaries (SOA) Retirement Section Council, a group of dedicated volunteers committed to giving back to and advancing the role of the retirement actuary. I am stepping into big shoes following our outgoing chairperson, Randy Dziubek, whom I cannot thank enough for his dedication and leadership in this role over the past year. Recently, the council welcomed new members and bid farewell to exiting members, who have given so much in their tenure on the council. We also bid farewell to Andy Peterson as he transitions from his role as senior retirement staff fellow to a new and exciting SOA role as senior director, International. There is not enough time and space in this newsletter to describe how much Andy has contributed to the actuarial profession through his retirement role. I am honored to have had the opportunity to have gotten to know and work with Andy through my involvement with the Retirement Section Council. As we welcome new contributors and council members, we look forward to the contributions they will make and the new perspectives they will bring on projects and initiatives that we take on over the coming years.

As I began to consider the right topic for my first Chairperson's Corner article, I continued to circle back to one central concept: professional volunteerism. The beginning of my actuarial career was admittedly self-focused—diving into client assignments, studying for actuarial exams and advancing within the profession. But somewhere along the way, I gradually started volunteering through the various actuarial professional organizations. Not surprisingly, one volunteer opportunity led to another, and before I knew it, volunteering had become an important part of my actuarial identity.

There is not one single formula for volunteering. There are so many opportunities across all the professional actuarial organizations. If you've never volunteered before, I encourage you to throw your name in the hat to help at a professional meeting or join a project team. If nothing else, you will meet someone new in the profession, and that person may prove to become a close friend and colleague in the future. The people you meet through volunteering may be the gateway to your next professional opportunity or the mentor you've been searching for throughout your career.

And with each new person you meet, you will be exposed to another perspective. Retirement actuaries have many different roles and many different perspectives. We work on private and public plans, small and large plans, at large and small consulting firms, and in-house as plan sponsors. When all these perspectives come together to solve problems for the profession, that is when the good stuff happens. And when you can bring each of those different perspectives back to how you practice as an actuary on a day-to-day basis, you will bring your professional game to a whole new level.

My fellow colleagues of the Retirement Section Council bring a diverse set of perspectives that I wouldn't have been exposed to if I hadn't raised my hand to volunteer when a friend and colleague, Julie Curtis, former Retirement Section chairperson and current SOA board member, tapped me on the shoulder and encouraged me to run for a seat on the council. The thoughtfulness and care in discussions and decision-making that come from the unique perspectives around the table make our profession stronger. This year's council is currently working on several initiatives including, but not limited to:

- Exploring effective communication of defined-benefit plan risk to various stakeholders;
- evaluating the retirement actuary's role in an evolving defined-contribution world; and,
- continued enhancement and availability of tools and resources available to retirement actuaries to allow them to execute their responsibilities more effectively.

We continue to explore new project ideas and are always looking for volunteers to participate in moving these projects forward. I encourage anyone interested in learning more

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about the Retirement Section Council and possible volunteer opportunities to reach out to me or any council member. We will eagerly share our perspectives and find ways for you to contribute.

Had I not started volunteering in the profession, I would not have had the opportunity to get to know and learn from actuaries like Randy, Andy and the entire Retirement Section Council and volunteers supporting the council. Nor would I have had the opportunity to contribute my perspective on initiatives outside of my traditional "day job." So, with my first Chairperson's Corner, I ask you to consider volunteering if you

haven't before, or if you already volunteer, consider expanding your role into another volunteer opportunity. You may be surprised by the impact you can have on the profession and the impact it may have on you. ■



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