



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Moving the Ball Forward

By Ben Wadsley

Forecasting and Futurism Section members,

2010 was a great year for our section. Through our newsletter, life & annuity symposium sessions, annual meeting sessions and forecasting competition, we have advanced the discussion of forecasting, futurism and most recently complexity science in the actuarial profession.

The credit for this success can only be given to the volunteers and Society of Actuaries (SOA) staff who have worked so hard to help move us toward our section's vision. Every contribution helps—all the way from being on the section council to commenting on an SOA meeting session.

As my time on the Forecasting and Futurism Section Council winds down this year, one thing I'd like to emphasize is that I've gotten much more from my volunteer experience than I've given. Three years ago I meekly entered the council elections encouraged by my mentor, Kevin Strobel. While I was initially looking for not much more than to get the "participation medal," I soon found myself involved in a few projects.

The amazing part happened when the projects turned from extra work into topics that I was truly passionate about. The genetic algorithm application that I was developing on the weekends quickly became a powerful tool that I (and hopefully many others) currently use on a regular basis. The complexity science discussions and research I've done with Dave Snell have changed the way I think about many real-world problems.

The main point behind my story is that for me the decision point of whether or not to be a mere participant in our section made a difference in my personal development as well as (hopefully) the profession. I hope that each of you considers the same call to volunteer and advance thought leadership. Especially with the emergence of complexity science and many other underutilized tools, there are plenty of spaces for new thought leaders.

Moving forward, our vision remains the same—to advance the profession and provide knowledge to our members. We hope you took advantage of the activities that we have offered in 2011 and that you are excited about the others planned to continue this mission.

1. Meeting sessions at three meetings, with topics spanning complexity science, behavioral economics and much more.
2. Forecasting competitions.
3. Exciting research.
4. Virtual sessions/online learning opportunities.
5. Much more!

If you'd like to learn more about any of our activities, visit our website at www.soa.org/professional-interests/futurism/fut-detail.aspx. Also, if you'd like to get involved in any of the above activities, please email me at bwadsley@aegonusa.com.

I'm looking forward to more great things from our section. Please consider joining the game instead of just watching it. Let's keep moving the ball forward! ▼

Ben Wadsley



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