



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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## CHAIR'S CORNER

by Barry L. Shemin

I consider it an honor to be able to serve as Chair of the Life Insurance Company

Financial Reporting Section for the upcoming year.

One of the reasons I consider it an honor is that this section has a history of excellence and dedication in the Section Council. And I specifically want to thank Mike Eckman for his leadership over the past year in keeping the Section on a steady course.

I also consider it an honor because, by almost any measure, the Section is a very successful one. At nearly 4000 members, we are one of the Society's largest sections; we organize a significant number (usually around 15) of the sessions at the Society's Spring and Annual meetings; we sponsor several well-attended Seminars each year and we publish this newsletter, *The Financial Reporter*, which, from all the feedback I have received, is viewed as an extremely valuable publication by its readership. We do all this while maintaining reasonable dues and a very strong financial situation.

One might infer from the foregoing that I intend to spend my year as Chair making sure we maintain the current level of success. And that would be correct, at least as a minimum standard of performance.

But I think we can do even better.

One area where I think we can do better is in the participation by members in the activities of the Section. The

Section Council puts in a lot of time, and there are a few others who make significant contributions, like our newsletter editor and our Web coordinator. But there is plenty of room for more members to be more involved.

One of the problems is that members do not have an easy outlet to express their opinions or to volunteer for service. The blast e-mail asking for suggestions for Spring Meeting sessions was a very small start to what I hope will be a broader effort to provide you with easy ways to let the Section Council know what kinds of activities you would like us to sponsor. We could also use ideas about seminar topics and areas for research the Section could sponsor.

Periodically the Section is given the opportunity to nominate a representative on Society or Academy task forces. When this happens, we don't have an organized method of soliciting volunteers and usually resort to informal networking. Sometimes this works well, but not always. I hope we can develop mechanisms for members who want to become more involved to let us know.

Another area where I think we can do better is using the Web site as a tool for enhancing the value of the Section to its members. This whole area is evolving rapidly in the world at large, so there is no shortage of ideas and examples. Although the Society, like every other organization, has technology limits, I hope we can develop and put into place a few good ideas. Here, too, your suggestions would be most welcome.

A third area where we have the capability to do more is in our research activities. We have the financial wherewithal to sponsor additional research, but our activities so far have been limited to

funding already developed ideas which others have brought to our attention. I hope that we can begin to develop some ideas based on the priorities and needs of our membership.



Barry Shemin

A final area where I hope we can increase the Section's role is in helping our members get comfortable with new financial reporting systems which are coming over the horizon. These include Embedded Value and Fair Value Accounting, both of which appear to be headed to the U. S. from Europe. Although the timing is uncertain, I believe financial reporting actuaries will need to learn much more about these new systems.

So I do think there is a lot that can be accomplished to build on this already strong foundation. While we are working on new communications ideas, I encourage you to send an e-mail to me at [bshemin@jhancock.com](mailto:bshemin@jhancock.com) or to Lois Chinnock, our very capable staff representative at [lchinnock@soa.org](mailto:lchinnock@soa.org) if you have ideas about any of the subjects mentioned in this article, or if you would like to volunteer to get involved in Section activities.

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