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Message from the Chairperson

by *James R. Trefz*

Welcome to this issue of the *Stepping Stone*! As the incoming chair of the Management and Personal Development Section, I would like to thank you for being one of the nearly one thousand people who have joined our Section since we first began only two years ago. We believe this Section has an important mission: to create opportunities for the members of the SOA, and our membership in particular; to develop skills in the areas of communication, management, and leadership — skills which are vital to our effectiveness as actuaries in today's business world. Your membership indicates that you understand the importance of these so-called soft skills and that you are interested in supporting our efforts to have a positive impact on the SOA. Again, thank you.

One of the ways we seek to fulfill this mission is to sponsor sessions at SOA meetings which provide the opportunity for growth in areas such as communication and leadership. As always, the Council is looking for good session topics. The best source is the membership. So speak up to one of us with ideas you may have for future meeting sessions.

Earlier this year we had our first "Emerging Leaders" seminar, meant to provide the opportunity for new or near FSAs to hone their soft skills. We will be refining this seminar and offering it again.

The Council has recently become concerned about one aspect of the

Professional Development requirement. It appears that many people are interpreting the requirement in a way that does not sufficiently emphasize the importance or support the development of a candidate's general business skills. We are working with the appropriate people within the SOA structure to try to address this issue.



Jim Trefz

We have had the annual changing of the guard on the Council. I would like to say a sincere thank you to the departing members, Greg Childs and Vince Mace, for the fine work they have done over their stay on the Council, and a special thank you to Lisa Tourville for her strong leadership as chair for the past year. I would also like to welcome our new members, Lori Stevens and Alan Finkelstein. They will be strong additions to an already highly effective (and very fun) group.

We thank you for your support, and we love to hear from you with your ideas about how we can more effectively serve our mission. So speak up!

James R. Trefz, FSA, MAAA, is COO of Extradordinary Markets at AEGON USA, Inc. in Cedar Rapids, IA. He can be reached at jtrefz@aegonusa.com.