



Article from
Product Matters!
October 2019
Issue 114

Chairperson's Corner

By Elena Tonkovski

This Chairperson's Corner marks the end of my three-year stint on the Product Development Section Council. As Ernest Hemingway once said: "It is good to have an end to journey toward, but it is the journey that matters in the end." And it has been quite the journey.

I joined the council not knowing what to expect but eager to learn the inner workings of the Society of Actuaries (SOA) and its councils. Off the bat I was part of monthly calls, was assigned to look after a particular aspect or activity of the council and became part of a very engaged and collaborative team of actuaries. Every time we have a new council member or Friend of the Council join, I smile back on the memory of my own experiences. It took a few calls but soon enough I was able to get into rhythm, to understand what we are trying to do, how we do it and then think about how we can do it better. We also

met in person at least once a year, so I enjoyed the added benefit of making new friends in the industry, whom I hope to stay in touch with. Now, as I am at the end of my term, I am looking back with pride and a much greater appreciation of our Society of Actuaries as an organization and our profession in general.

There is no doubt in my mind that the incoming section council will do a great job delivering on the strategies that we have pursued as well as bring in fresh, new ideas. Among the highest priorities is delivering relevant and thought-provoking content through our various avenues, whether that is sessions at industry meetings, research initiatives, articles in this newsletter, webcasts and podcasts or communication via social media. The council will also continue to seek ways to meet the new and emerging needs of the section membership, whether that be new areas of focus for product development, new regulations or new geographies.

The SOA's Professional Development Committee identified one of the sessions brought forward by the council for an Outstanding Session award at the 2019 Life & Annuity Symposium. The session, titled How Do You Sell Sprouts?: What Behavioral Science Can Teach Us About Tackling Under-Insurance, presented by Matt Battersby and moderated by Larry Fischer, generated great enthusiasm among attendees for its creative approach to



addressing a social problem. We are looking forward to generating more enthusiasm with the upcoming sessions we have organized for the 2019 SOA Annual Meeting & Exhibit in Toronto. With this issue of the newsletter, we are again pleased to offer a wide range of interesting topics to our readers, thanks to all the contributing authors and editors. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the section members and friends who, through their dedication and passion for volunteerism, continue to provide energy to the section.

Finally, I would encourage you all to volunteer. We welcome different backgrounds, foster different perspectives and encourage different levels of engagement as we work toward common goals. I have yet to meet a single volunteer who has not found their time on the council beneficial, and in fact many past council members remain friends of the council long after their official council membership journey has drawn to a close. ■



Elena Tonkovski, FSA, ACIA, is AVP and actuary, Global Products, for RGA. She can be contacted at etonkovski@rgare.com.

