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# Chairperson's Corner

by Michael O'Connor

**T**his chairperson's corner will address many of the upcoming challenges for the Investment Section, how it might affect you, and how we will call upon you to help. There are a number of changes going on at the SOA, many that I am sure you are aware of. Specifically, the roles for the SOA sections are broadening to include many of the roles and responsibilities that used to reside in the practice areas. While there are some activities and functions that are still being developed further, many of our roles are now very clear. The biggest changes are in the following areas:

- Thought leadership and strategy. The sections will be more involved in evaluating challenges and opportunities for the profession and the members of the section. The sections will be more closely involved with the Board of Governors to ensure the SOA strategic direction is in sync with these needs. I am happy to say that Mary Hardy is our section's partner on the board.
- Advocacy. We will seek out new opportunities to be an advocate for the actuarial profession, and we are currently evaluating different opportunities to do this.
- Research. The Investment Section will be responsible for many of the finance research activities of the SOA. We will work with the Risk Management and Financial Reporting sections to coordinate this activity.

To respond to these challenges, we have taken the following steps:

- Revised our mission statement and sent it to the Board of Governors for approval during their June meeting. One reason for reviewing our mission statement was to look at ways of establishing a strong and distinct identity for the Investment Section. Our new mission statement is:

*"To provide section members with the needed content and resources to incorporate the most up-to-date information and investment decision making techniques into their actuarial, risk management, and investment management work for insurance companies, pension fund sponsors, and providers of investment products to the financial services industry."*

Your views of this new mission statement would be greatly appreciated.

- We are considering a change in our section's charter to allow non-SOA members to join. A few sections have already done this

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The complete material can be downloaded from the SOA Web site in the Finance Research projects section at: <http://www.soa.org/ccm/content/areas-of-practice/finance/mod-econ-series-coor-int-rate-scen/>. Because of the complexity of the calculations and the statistical nature of the information outputted, an Excel add-in, @RISK, is needed to utilize the workbook. @RISK is available for purchase at [www.palisade.com](http://www.palisade.com). The workbook includes default values of appropriate parameters. However, these can be changed by the user for purposes of updating for new or additional data, sensitivity testing of parameter values and other user needs.

For users that do not wish to purchase @RISK, the research team has included an appendix in the form of an Excel spreadsheet that contains hundreds of scenarios of financial and economic variables generated as output from the model. The appendix, which is approximately 30 megabytes, may either be downloaded from the SOA Web site or is also available as a CD-ROM by writing the SOA office.

As with all projects, the SOA Investment Section Research Team would love to hear your feedback on this project and thoughts for future efforts. Please feel free to contact me at 847-706-3578 or [ssiegel@soa.org](mailto:ssiegel@soa.org) with your ideas and suggestions. ☺

CHAIRPERSON'S CORNER

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and our primary motivation for this is to recruit investment professionals to join our section. We think this would bring significantly more value to our current members, allow for more breadth and depth of session content at meetings, and allow actuaries to have greater visibility with investment professionals.

- Revising the Investment Actuary Symposium. This seminar will be held in New York in the spring of 2006 and we will start our planning process for this symposium within a couple of weeks. This symposium will have multiple tracks of sessions that will appeal to a wider range of attendees than we have had in the past, such as portfolio managers, risk managers, ALM practitioners and others who have a need for up-to-date information on investment related topics. We view this symposium as our signature event for the year and we will be interested in recruiting members for speaking at this event!

Some of the key issues that we are working on include:

- Getting more input from our members, so we are in the process of developing a survey (yes, another dreaded survey!). This will be a key tool that we will use to get input from all of our members.
- Developing the value proposition for non-SOA members to join our section and determining what that might mean for our current members, for future activities, and so on.

How can you help?

There are a variety of ways that you can help respond to these issues! In one way or another, we need more volunteers for committee work, for research activities, for session ideas, and definitely for speaking at the many sessions that we sponsor. With our section's increased responsibilities, we need more volunteers to help us.

This is clearly a time of transition for the Investment Section, and we welcome your input, thoughts and volunteerism to help us meet the many challenges that lie ahead of us. Thanks for your support. ☺



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