



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Take a Look Back

by Jennifer L. Gillespie

It strikes me that we focus quite a bit of energy on setting New Year's resolutions, but we don't take nearly as much time to look backward. I challenge you to look back over the last year and think about what you've accomplished and how you've developed. Be sure to think broadly and give yourself credit in many areas: Did you learn about a new product, like Medicare Part D? Did you improve a process, say Sarbanes-Oxley reporting? Did you take on a new role, like Enterprise Risk Manager? Did you train a new actuarial student? Did you pass an actuarial exam or receive your credentials? Did you adapt to the culture of a new company? Did you make a presentation to a new type of audience? Did you make progress on your work/life balance? I'm sure you can find many signs that you are moving forward. However, if your personal progress list is shorter than you'd like, or if it is too focused in one area, you may have uncovered some goals for yourself for the upcoming year.

It is the goal of the Management and Personal Development Section to provide you with tools for building your personal progress list. First of all, there are great articles on a variety of topics in each issue of *The Stepping Stone*. I think each of us can take away specific information or approaches that are immediately useful whenever we read a new issue. We will continue to recommend great speakers on topics like effective negotiating techniques, navigating corporate politics or enhancing your presentation skills for SOA events. In addition, during the next year we plan to participate in bringing you sessions during the SOA meetings on topics including, but not limited to: Effective Leadership, the Personal Actuary, understanding and applying Myers/Briggs analysis, and a hands-on approach to presentation skills enhancement.

As I complete my year as chair of this section's council, it is a good time to look back at what the section council has accomplished together during that time. We continued on the path of collaborating with other sections. With all the recent research pointing out the gap in "soft skills" between what employers want and where actuaries are, such opportunities have increased. We have worked collaboratively on SOA meeting sessions, on Webinars and on stand-alone technically focused seminars. We hope that meshing information sharing on a technical topic with communication skill building will help actuaries move forward in their career development. During the last year, members of this council have also contributed to the work of the Image Campaign and supported the work of a Board of Governors task force on business skills. While we still have a long list of things we'd ideally like to be able to deliver to our membership, I think we can proudly call it a successful year. Thank you to everybody who supports the work of the Management and Personal Development Section! □



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