



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Competition cont'd

of deciding who are qualified to practice, and certifying them, would continue to lie with the Academy, or the Canadian Institute, or the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries. Those bodies would rely, of course, on the university to offer the courses needed and to examine proficiency with appropriate rigor in those courses. Similarly, standards of practice and discipline would remain with the national public interface bodies, which have the right to expect that the underlying principles would emerge from the learned organizations.

Everyone matriculating in our university would be required to take certain core courses covered by examination parts 1, 2, 3, and possibly part 4, and would thereafter take courses in his/her major area. Students would be encouraged to take elective courses, including some in other colleges.

Just as in today's academic world where students earn doctorate, master's, bachelor's and associate degrees, students in the actuarial university would earn various levels of degrees from the colleges of the actuarial university—fellowship, associateship, enrolled pension actuary, and possibly others.

The key to this structure is recognizing the distinction between being certified as qualified to practice and acquiring the education that permits that qualification. Law, accounting, and medical schools provide educations and grant degrees, but they do not certify anyone to practice.

Some casualty actuaries have raised the concern that the formation of such a university would cause the casualty actuary to lose recognition or identity. One has only to look at schools such as Wharton within the University of Pennsylvania to realize that an outstanding college within a university has much public recognition and identity. Furthermore, qualification standards established by the national public interface bodies would continue to be specific as to practice areas. Dividing the subjects currently covered by the SOA into several colleges may be more traumatic to life actuaries than establishing a casualty college as a part of a university structure would be to us.

We casualty actuaries have much more in common with our brethren in the SOA than we do with accountants, economists, MBAs, and others who think they can do actuarial work

better than actuaries. I would urge cooperation between us and hope that someday the educational aspects of our profession can achieve a structure similar to a university as outlined.

David G. Hartman, not a member of the Society of Actuaries, is Senior Vice President and Actuary, Chubb Group of Insurance Companies. He is Past President of the CAS.

1,100 view SOA's first teleconference

by Barbara Choyke

More than 1,100 persons at 25 sites across the United States participated in SOA's first teleconference January 26.

The program on "Minimum/Maximum Tax Deductible Contributions" offered participants five hours of core continuing education credits toward the required 10 hours needed to maintain their enrolled status. It was organized in cooperation with the American Academy of Actuaries, American Society of Pension Actuaries, and the Conference of Actuaries in Public Practice.

The planning and production of this educational program took a year. A crew of more than two dozen was at work when the session was broadcast before a live audience at the American Hospital Association's (AHA) headquarters in Chicago. The Society contracted with AHA to have it provide production, logistical, registration, and broadcast support.

Audience members at other sites were able to call in questions to telephone operators who passed the questions on to the moderator. Attendees responding to a questionnaire rated the program quality high.

Those wishing to view this program at home may order a VHS video tape and workbook from the Society. To earn continuing education credits, viewers may submit a test accompanying the video tape.

For more information, contact Cherie Harrold, Seminar Department, at 312-706-3545.

Congratulations to the teleconference faculty: Barnet Berin, Christopher Bone, Edward Burrows, and James Holland.

Barbara Choyke is SOA Director of Continuing Education.

Editorial

Blacksmiths, revisited

by M. David R. Brown

In the November 1988 issue of *The Actuary*, I commented on a letter signed by several hundred Society members protesting the Board decision to award credit for some early Society examinations to candidates with sufficient standing in appropriate college or university courses. My comment was that opposition to this idea appeared to reflect the widespread (but far from universal) self-satisfaction with the status quo within our profession. I went so far as to compare the attitude that "the world owes us a living" with that of the blacksmiths, whose once flourishing trade has largely been eclipsed.

This comment provoked a number of letters to the editor, mostly from members who had signed the original letter. Some of these aggrieved letter writers felt that I had impugned their motives and had stooped to name-calling. To them, I can say only that I profoundly respect their right to hold and express their opinions, however strongly I may disagree with them. If they felt insulted by my comments or their tone, I apologize.

I am sure that all of us, although we may have differing views, have as our central focus the best interests of the Society and the profession. The major point that I attempted to comment on in that editorial was my belief that our present early examinations are drifting towards irrelevance, that they may attract too many candidates who will have difficulty in coping with the future of the actuary and too few with the potential to do so successfully; further that they may be only prolonging the travel time of students through our education and examination process without adding value to that process.

EA Continuing Education

The Society of Actuaries has been approved as a sponsor for continuing education programs for enrolled actuaries by the Joint Board for the Enrollment of Actuaries. This recognition is retroactive to September 7, 1988.