

2017-2021  
**SOA STRATEGIC PLAN  
EXPOSURE DRAFT**



The SOA is gathering input from its members on this draft 2017–21 Strategy Map. Feedback can be provided at **[sptf.feedback@soa.org](mailto:sptf.feedback@soa.org)** or by completing a short survey at **[SOA.org/strategicplan/](http://SOA.org/strategicplan/)**.



# Introduction

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The Society of Actuaries (SOA) uses a strategic plan to guide our decisions as we pursue our mission.

The strategic plan focuses the SOA's initiatives and investment of resources to meet our stakeholders' needs. The proposed strategic plan for 2017 through 2021 is being released to SOA members for comment during July and August 2016.

The plan reaffirms that the mission of the SOA is to advance actuaries as leaders in the measurement and management of risk. By doing so, the SOA can achieve its vision of actuaries as highly sought-after professionals who provide solutions to complex financial issues. The SOA seeks to accomplish this goal by helping our members, candidates and stakeholders build **knowledge** and **perspective**. This will increase both the **insight** of actuaries into business and societal issues and the **influence** of individual members and the profession as these challenges are discussed and decisions are made.

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The proposed plan makes several recommendations that will change the focus of the SOA to ensure we can fulfill our mission and achieve our vision:

- **Incorporate predictive analytics** into education as a key new skill set for actuaries.
- **Respond quickly to the changing economic and financial environment** to maintain actuaries' expertise in and relevance to emerging issues.
- **Inform the public's understanding of key societal issues** by leveraging SOA research.
- **Promote effective relationships** with other actuarial organizations to meet stakeholder needs.
- Reflect the **changing global economy** by ensuring members have relevant global perspective and provide targeted support of our non-North American members and candidates.

# 2017-2021 Draft Strategic Plan

**Mission:** Through education and research, the SOA advances actuaries as leaders in measuring and managing risk to improve financial outcomes for individuals, organizations, and the public.

**Vision:** Actuaries are highly sought-after professionals who develop and communicate solutions for complex financial issues.

  
**Stakeholders**

Candidates – Members – Employers/Clients – Policymakers – Regulators – Public

<p>The SOA's credentials are prestigious, relevant, and globally recognized.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The SOA keeps actuaries at the forefront of evolving methods for solving complex business problems.</p> <p>2</p>	<p>The SOA provides trusted and objective actuarial research, analysis and insight on important societal issues.</p> <p>3</p>
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**Strategies**

**KNOWLEDGE & PERSPECTIVE**

<p>Deliver actuarial education that anticipates stakeholders' changing expectations.</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Provide valued services to global stakeholders, tailored by region and based on well-communicated principles.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Support actuaries in obtaining relevant global perspectives and knowledge.</p> <p>6</p>
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**INSIGHT & INFLUENCE**

<p>Construct research programs on key industry and societal issues to systematically educate and inform stakeholders.</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Cultivate a diverse membership and position it to succeed in existing, expanded, and new roles, initially emphasizing predictive analytics.</p> <p>8</p>
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**Organizational Capabilities**

<p>Continuously identify, analyze, and prioritize responses to environmental changes in a timely manner.</p> <p>9</p>	<p>Resource models and decision-making processes are efficient and sustainable.</p> <p>10</p>	<p>Effective relationships with other organizations accomplish mutually beneficial stakeholder objectives.</p> <p>11</p>
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# Our Mission and Vision

The SOA has more than 26,000 actuaries as members and 36,000 candidates working to achieve an SOA credential. Our mission—our reason for existing—and vision—what we intend to accomplish over the timeframe of this strategic plan—are our promises to and aspirations for members, candidates, their employers, and the public we serve. They are based on these core tenets:

- Education and research are the heart of the SOA. The SOA serves stakeholders by delivering high-quality, relevant education and research, insight and analysis.
- Actuaries’ value to the public is, simply put, improving financial outcomes through the measurement and management of risk. Actuaries do this as individuals, through the organizations we serve, and as a profession, providing insights through research that add to the public good.
- The SOA’s responsibility to members and the profession is to ensure stakeholders continue to seek out members for their skills in measuring and managing risk and to hold members to high ethical standards. This will require that the SOA continues to develop actuaries’ skills and promote actuaries’ insights to our stakeholders.
- In developing this proposed strategic plan, the Strategic Planning Task Force (Task Force) learned that for actuaries to be highly sought-after leaders, they must incorporate new techniques. For example, predictive analytics can be combined with traditional methods to develop solutions to the complex financial issues facing employers and the public.
- And finally, it’s not enough simply to create the solutions. We will enable our members to communicate them effectively so that employers and the public are able to understand and act upon actuaries’ insights and recommendations.



## MISSION

**Through education and research, the SOA advances actuaries as leaders in measuring and managing risk to improve financial outcomes for individuals, organizations and the public.**



## VISION

**Actuaries are highly sought-after professionals who develop and communicate solutions for complex financial issues.**

# Our Promise To Stakeholders

In addition to members, the SOA serves a broad base of stakeholders: candidates for membership; employers of members and candidates; the general public who benefits from the work of actuaries; the regulators who govern the financial systems served by actuaries; and the policymakers and influencers who shape the economic and regulatory environment.

**The SOA makes three promises to stakeholders. We will:**



## **Deliver prestigious, relevant and globally recognized credentials.**

SOA credentials indicate that SOA members have demonstrated a deep foundational knowledge of actuarial science. They assure stakeholders that SOA members have, and continue to maintain, the highest standards of expertise, insight and professionalism.



## **Keep actuaries at the forefront of evolving methods for solving complex business problems.**

To meet the needs of stakeholders, actuaries must continue to sharpen both their technical skills and their ability to turn data and model-driven findings into business solutions.



## **Provide trusted and objective actuarial research, analysis and insight on important societal issues.**

The actuarial profession's expertise is driven by a unique understanding of risk and its financial implications, which allows actuaries to provide insights on current issues such as longevity, financing of health care/health insurance, retirement systems, and the effects of global climate change.



# Knowledge & Perspective

Knowledge is the focal point of the SOA. Every SOA credential (ASA, FSA and CERA) establishes foundational knowledge necessary to qualify to practice. The credential assures employers and other stakeholders that our members have demonstrated understanding of high-quality, relevant and practical educational content which emphasizes cutting-edge techniques, professional standards and lifelong learning.



Globalization, increasing regulation, changing technology and the rise of big data drive the need for new skill sets. In particular, actuaries need to understand how to use new analytical techniques to make the most of data. An actuary's ability to turn data analyses into action—by constructing recommendations and solutions—is critical to their success in a world of big data. Therefore, SOA **education**, credentialing and professional development, focus beyond analytical techniques to help actuaries turn knowledge into insight, insight into recommendations and recommendations into solutions.



The SOA is an international organization with members in more than 80 countries. Much of the SOA's credentialing education, publications, professional development offerings and research papers are created primarily by volunteers in the U.S. and Canada and, therefore, are focused on the needs of those members. With 15 percent of members and 22 percent of candidates outside North America, the SOA must **support international members, candidates and other stakeholders**. The SOA is committed to providing those stakeholders with appropriate support. Appropriate support acknowledges that many stakeholders reside in countries with vibrant actuarial organizations. The SOA's objective is not to supplant those organizations but to provide the services SOA members need to effectively serve stakeholders in their local market.





## Perspective builds on actuaries' knowledge by establishing context and a deeper understanding that can turn analysis into insights which change business and make lives better for the public that relies on actuaries to measure and manage risk.



In a global economy, some level of **global knowledge** is part of the perspective required of most actuaries, even those focused primarily on their own domestic markets. In preparing the strategic plan, the Task Force learned from business leaders that it is important for most actuaries to have some global context relevant to their jobs: from the global market for pharmaceutical development, to global financial markets, global reinsurance markets, international regulatory capital standards, and international accounting and reserving standards. The SOA will work to provide members and candidates with the global understanding appropriate to their roles.

# Insight & Influence

Actuarial methods, techniques and perspectives enable analytical insights that make creative solutions to complex problems possible. SOA members can turn that insight into influence as individuals, in their own careers, and as a professional group, through the work of SOA research to inform and educate key industry and public stakeholders.

**To do this, we must continue to sharpen actuarial skills and knowledge, diversify the profession and ensure that actuarial insight is brought to bear on the problems facing industry and society.**

In interviewing business leaders and actuaries for the development of the plan, the Task Force learned that big data, predictive analytics and other techniques driven by the rise in data and developments in technology are changing how companies use data. For actuaries to continue to have highly attractive careers and a strong profession, we must work to **position actuaries to take advantage of new opportunities**, first and foremost, in data analytics. This positioning ensures that actuaries have the skill sets needed to take on these opportunities and that employers and others know which actuaries' skill sets can address these new challenges.

The SOA benefits from being an international actuarial organization, with members concentrated in North America and Asia. But within the U.S., where two-thirds of our members reside, the profession does not have the diversity of backgrounds to assure we maximize our contributions to our stakeholders. To continue to serve our employers and the public well—and to take advantage of opportunities in a multicultural society—**the SOA must work to encourage talented students with diverse backgrounds to pursue actuarial science.**

Finally, the influence of actuaries individually is stronger when the profession itself contributes to the understanding of and develops solutions for industry and societal problems. To do this, the SOA will continue to conduct **research in support of industry issues and research that contributes to the public understanding of important societal issues.** The SOA supports research for the industries that traditionally employ actuaries, most notably experience studies. The SOA also publishes research that provides actuarial insight into important societal issues, such as health systems, longevity risk, pension plan funding and global climate change. A key objective is to keep SOA research and the profession's knowledge relevant, enabling actuaries to be strongly engaged in efforts to tackle critical industry and societal issues.

# How The SOA Works

## A strategic plan succeeds when an organization aligns its capabilities to achieve its goals.

The SOA benefits from the time and talent of 3,700 volunteers around the world. Our volunteers bring life to the mission and vision, develop and administer credentialing exams, educate members through meetings and articles, oversee research projects, and serve on committees, task forces, Section Councils and the Board of Directors. In addition, member dues and revenue generated by education are used to support research and promote the profession and for other activities on behalf of stakeholders.

The Task Force heard comments from members, employers, policymakers, regulators, key volunteers and others that the SOA needs to act more quickly to respond to changing environments. We listened, knowing that slow, organic changes may not keep the profession at the forefront of today's fast changing environments. To that end, **the Task Force set three objectives for the organization.**

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The first is to develop a process to systematically and continuously identify, analyze and respond to changes emerging from the environment on a timely basis.

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Secondly, to support the response to these changes, the Task Force also noted the SOA should ensure that its human and financial resources are sufficient and sustainable and its decision-making processes are efficient and effective so the SOA can meet the objectives of the new plan.

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Finally, the SOA continues to work to foster effective relationships with other organizations. The SOA Board has invited several major actuarial organizations based in Canada, China, the U.K. and the U.S. to present to the Board to learn more about how they can work together. The SOA Board will now shift to focus on how the SOA and other actuarial organizations can collaboratively work to benefit the stakeholders of each organization.

Please visit [SOA.org/strategicplan/](http://SOA.org/strategicplan/) to complete a short survey and provide insights on the Strategy Map. Or, send comments to [sptf.feedback@soa.org](mailto:sptf.feedback@soa.org) in July-August.

The Task Force will review member comments in September and propose a final version of the Strategy Map to the Board at its October 2016 meeting. The final map will be available on the website shortly thereafter.



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