Welcome to the first edition of WarrenWords

This newsletter is named in honour of Dr. L.A.H. Warren (1879-1949). Dr. Warren not only helped introduce the actuarial program in 1912, he served as the first head of the Department of Actuarial Science when it was established in 1937 and remained in that capacity until 1949 when he retired.

We are deeply grateful to him for initiating the program and getting it established, recognized, and respected throughout North America.

Our aim with WarrenWords is modest. We want to bring you into the loop and to share with you, in particular the graduates and friends of the program, some of the current activities and developments at the Warren Centre and to do so in a way that is engagingly written and visually appealing. We are indebted to the Warren Chair Committee for making this newsletter possible. Initially, it will be an annual publication; ideally, you will hear from us more often.

I hoped you enjoy our inaugural issue. Your comments are encouraged.

Jeffrey S. Pai, PhD, ASA, PStat
Director and L.A.H. Warren Professor
Warren Centre for Actuarial Studies and Research
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Jeffrey Pai is a native of Taiwan with a PhD in Statistics and an Master’s in Actuarial Science, both from the University of Connecticut. He joined the Warren Centre in 1996 and became its Director in 2009.

A Message from the Dean

The actuarial program at the University of Manitoba will mark its 100th anniversary in 2012. It is more than just a milestone, or an example of longevity, or the distinction of being the second oldest actuarial program in Canada and the fourth in North America.

With it comes a rich and colourful history, the story of a two-course program, introduced in 1912, that evolved to become the Warren Centre for Actuarial Studies and Research in 1986, an internationally recognized leader in actuarial education and a respected source for actuarial talent. It is, and always has been, an actuarial education with a difference: it is one a few actuarial programs in North America attached to a business school.

As we reflect on the past, we look to the future. The actuarial profession continues to grow and expand from its traditional role. It continues to be ranked as a highly desirable profession. A 2010 Wall Street Journal survey placed it as Job #1. The Warren Centre itself was recently designated a Centre of Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries, the world’s largest actuarial professional body. To add to our bragging rights, there are only three such centres in Canada and just twelve in all of North America. We are in rarefied company and our future looks bright.

Glenn Feltham, PhD
Dean, Asper School of Business
CA Manitoba Chair in Business Leadership
There is much good news to share with you:

- The Warren Centre was designated a Centre of Excellence by the Society of Actuaries. (see Dean’s Message)
- Enrolment increased by 40 per cent over that of 2009. There are now 91 students in the program.
- Three distinguished actuarial scholars visited the Centre this year. (see Warren Chair Report)
- There are now four faculty members, plus two adjunct professors and two sessional lecturers. (see faculty and staff listing)
- In April, Mike Byrne rejoined the Centre as Executive-in-Residence. (From 1997-2004, Mike served as the first Warren Chair.)
- Warren Chair professor, Sam Cox, had his paper “Natural Hedging of Life and Annuity Mortality Risks”, written in conjunction with Yijia Lin, chosen the best paper in the North American Actuarial Journal for 2007. (NAAJ, 11(3):11, July 2007.) The honour was announced in 2010.
- Great-West Life introduced two career scholarships valued at $5,000 each.
- The Actuarial Club was busy in a variety of ways such as organizing the 49th Fish Dinner and promoting the actuarial program to prospective students. Ten Club members also attended the national Actuarial Students’ Association annual conference in Quebec City.

A Progress Report from the Warren Chair

During the past year, the activities of the Warren Chair continued to promote actuarial research and education and thereby further the mandate of the Warren Centre.

With financial support from the Warren Chair Committee, visits by three actuarial scholars were sponsored. These visits help to enhance the prestige and profile of the actuarial program at the University of Manitoba and to expose the actuarial faculty and students, and the local actuarial community, to some of the world’s leading actuarial scholars.

University of Iowa
Professor Elias Shiu, a Manitoba graduate and former faculty member, was the first visiting lecturer. During his January 2010 visit, he gave two talks; one to the Actuaries Club of Winnipeg on “Asset-Liability Management Issues”; and another at the University on “Asset-Liability Management for Interest Rates.”

Professor Hans Gerber of the University of Lausanne visited the University in March. Hans spoke to students, faculty and local industry actuaries at a seminar at the University. He also gave a talk at the spring meeting of the Winnipeg Actuaries Club.

Professor Mike Sherris, of the University of New South Wales, visited us in late August. Mike spent a good deal of his campus visit working with faculty member, Hal Pedersen, on longevity risk management. Great-West Life hosted a seminar and reception for Mike where he gave a talk based on his research.

The results of research I undertook with colleagues at other universities appeared in four scholarly publications in 2010. I presented research results at the University of Waterloo, Catholic University of Peru, and Temple University. I participated in the Insurance, Mathematics and Economics Conference at the University of Toronto in June.
and the Actuarial Research Conference at Simon Fraser University in July. In addition, I served as an external reviewer for several graduate students and candidates for promotion at other universities. I continue to serve as a consultant to the Society of Actuaries Centre of Actuarial Excellence Evaluation Committee. In October, I was in New York for the annual meetings of the Society of Actuaries and the Financial Management Association. In November, Professor Jeffery Pai and I participated in the 6th International Microinsurance Conference in Manila.

The Warren Chair Committee has been very helpful in providing guidance and leadership to our activities. The industry representatives on the Committee, Monique Maynard and Jim Grant, are both graduates of our actuarial program. They represent the Chair donors and our industry supporters and frequently provide insights based on their familiarity with the program and its graduates.

As always, Dean Glenn Feltham supported the Chair in a number of ways. One of the most significant was with the appointment of Mike Byrne as Executive-in-Residence. Mike, a graduate of the program, was the Centre’s first Warren Chair and, prior to that, held several senior positions in the insurance industry. Mike helped enormously with student placement, our CAE application for accreditation, and serving on the Chair Committee.

Hat's off to Conrad Orloff. In 1939, he established the University’s first scholarship in actuarial science. It was a gift in return for the education he received, an annual award of $125 to the student taking the actuarial science option and ranking highest in the fourth year of the program. Orloff, a 1929 graduate of the program was, at the time of his gift, an actuarial consultant with Marsh, McLennan in Chicago. But unknown to Orloff, he established what became a tradition: a steady stream of financial support for actuarial studies from alumni that, in turn, generated donations from businesses and government alike. Here are some recent – and generous – examples.

Orest Dakow, a graduate of the actuarial program and a native of Wynyard, Saskatchewan, set up an actuarial bursary bearing the family’s name in 2007. Like Orloff, it was to show his appreciation for the education he received at the University of Manitoba. “I would not have been able to attend college without the scholarship I received, so I thought I would reach out to the kids in my community who often cannot afford to go to university because they have to move away from home.” Dakow said. Following graduation, Dakow had a long and successful career with Great-West Life. The company donated $100,000 to the Dakow Bursary Fund in 2010.

Great-West Life also introduced, this year, two annual Actuarial Career Scholarships of $5000 each, while Manulife Financial continued to sponsor the Manulife Actuarial Scholarship of $3500.

The value of these scholarships cannot be underestimated. “The competition to attract students to the program is fierce,” states Marci Elliott, Director of Development for the Asper School of Business. “The School needs financially strong scholarships in order to compete with the offerings of other schools.” As well she notes, “These scholarships remove financial burdens from students allowing them to focus wholly on their studies and exceptional academic achievement.”
I ❤️ New York Life

He has written regularly for The Manitoban. He has served as a Commerce representative on UMSU Council, is a past council member of the Commerce Students’ Association and a former executive member of the Actuarial Club.

Evan Borisenko, an actuarial science major who will graduate this December, also has a keen interest in businesses, how they are run, what makes them tick, who is running the operation. To address this healthy curiosity, he would attend Career Days on campus to talk, in some depth, to company representatives about the firms they represent. Adding to his well-rounded make-up, Borisenko recently launched a student book club which, perhaps surprisingly, is outside the box: it has nothing to do with business or actuarial topics. Classic English literature is the subject of choice. Middlemarch trumps mortality tables.

Evan, now 21, was first exposed to actuarial science and the actuarial profession when he was a student at St. Paul’s High School in Winnipeg. He attended a presentation on the subjects by a representative of Great-West Life and, being mathematically inclined, decided that it was the career path for him. In addition to his considerable and wide-ranging extracurricular activities, Evan has excelled as a student. For instance, he has won prestigious awards. To name but one, he was one of the ten recipients of $5,000 Futures Fund Scholarship for outstanding Leadership. The award is sponsored by The Caldwell Partners.

Borisenko likes the intimacy of the actuarial program. Because of the relatively small enrolment “We all know each other, we are a close-knit group, and there is a good interaction between students and the faculty.” He also appreciates the Warren Centre’s international reputation for quality and recognizes the efforts of current Centre leadership to enhance that reputation. The status quo won’t cut it. As he ended his formal studies, he had many employment options to consider. But it will be a career in the life insurance industry where he plans to make his mark. He will be moving to New York City to join New York Life, “the Company you keep”, where he worked during the summer of 2010. His first rotation will be in individual life pricing.

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Feedback

Do you have recollections you would care to share about your student days in the actuarial program? Where were your classes held? Who were your classmates? Any anecdotes to note? Do you have photos? Any outstanding library books? Or parking tickets?

What do you think of this newsletter?

Your responses are encouraged and would be most welcome. Please let us know by contacting:

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