Member Spotlight for October 2021 – Emma Casehart

Where do you work and what is your position?

I work at Allstate as an Assistant Actuary where I supervise a team of two focused on ratemaking for northeast states. Over my three-year career, I've worked on multiple products including property, auto, and specialty lines.

Why did you decide to become an actuary?

I decided to become an actuary because of my high school economics teacher! We were discussing how governments decide to add safety measures to intersections. One of the methods discussed was comparing the statistical value of a human life to the cost of installing the safety measure. I asked my teacher and the class "How do they determine the dollar value of a human life?" and he quipped back that I should be an actuary with that thought process. When I got home, I looked up the profession and I realized it would be a great fit for my interest in math and communication! I was drawn to property and casualty ratemaking because of how dynamic and fast-moving the field is.

What aspects of the field do you love?

I love that my work responds to the concerns of real people. Outside of the industry, it can feel like insurance is not exciting, or not relevant to someone's life. I like knowing that the work I do ensures affordable and equitable access to protection people need. I also enjoy collaborating with the different areas inside my company like contract, legal, and claims. Getting the chance to learn from other professionals about how my work touches their day-to-day job has been rewarding. Without their input and insight, my job would be significantly more difficult!

What is the best career advice you have ever received?

The best advice I've ever received is to know your personal brand. Whether you are aware of it or not, your colleagues have preconceptions about you that affect your relationships with them. Once you know those perceptions, you can develop a plan to highlight your strengths and position yourself to pick up projects that fit your skillset. With knowledge of your personal brand, you can better highlight your strengths to your managers and coworkers.

Do you have any advice for those just starting out?

Don't be afraid to ask questions. The best actuaries I know approach every problem with a beginner's mindset and question the fundamental assumptions underlying a methodology. For a long time, I held back my questions because I feared being seen as inexperienced. I grew more confident when I saw some of the most experienced actuaries in the meeting asking similar questions to what I was too scared to ask. The adage you may have heard in school is true: if you have the question, someone else probably does too.

What is your favorite CAS memory?

My favorite CAS memory is the committee dinner after the first meeting of the Candidate Liaison Committee. I flew into D.C. in the morning from Chicago and had a return flight in the evening. After a full-day meeting with a packed agenda, the committee volunteers and staff went out to eat. It was great to take a break and get to know the other actuaries and people who make our Society possible. I'm looking forward to getting back together with my fellow committee members soon!

What is a fun fact about yourself that many people don’t know about?

I have recently become a birdwatcher! I already enjoyed long walks and watching birds has been a fun addition to my hikes. Appreciating the nature all around me, even in the heart of Washington, D.C., has provided moments of calm in my day.