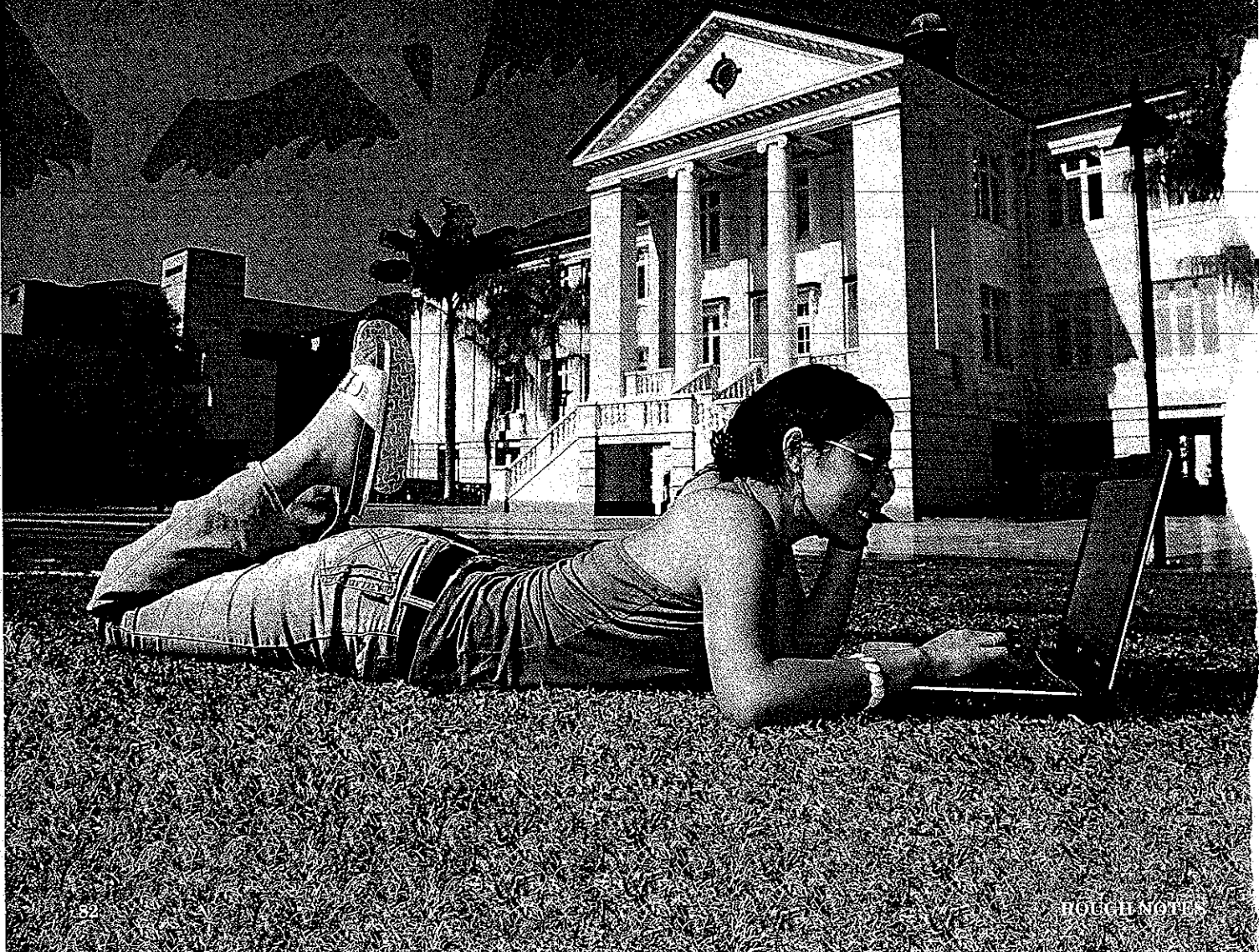


A LONG HISTORY OF SUPPORT FOR EDUCATION

*The Hartford provides support for both
high school and college students*



By Dennis H. Pillsbury

"Historically, The Hartford has always been focused on education," says Patrick Curry, senior staffing consultant with The Hartford Financial Services Group, Inc. "One of the most visible aspects of that focus is our Stag program, which has been in place for over 40 years.

"It started out as an education and internship program that supported our local community of Hartford, eventually evolving into a school-to-work program," he continues.

"However, over the last 10 years, we've been doing our best to prepare local high school students for success at the college level and beyond.

"At the high school level," Pat says, "we participate on the industry advisory boards of High School, Inc., and Pathways to Technology High School. We help connect students to internship opportunities. At the college level, we currently have 30 students on partial scholarships at Trinity College in Hartford; University of Connecticut in Storrs and Howard University in Washington, D.C. Some come back and intern here in the summer, and when it's a good fit, some begin their career with The Hartford after graduation. Additionally, we offer a number of programs for college graduates that offer rapid career development."

Programs for college students at The Hartford include:

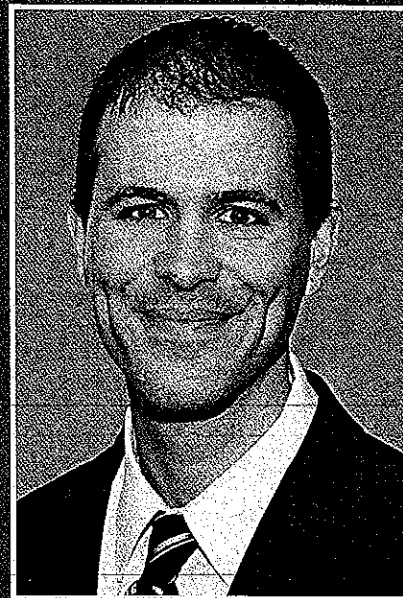
- **Actuarial programs in both property/casualty and life.** The programs provide 130 hours of study time (per sitting) during work hours. The programs also provide seminars, study materials and dedicated study rooms.

- **Complex claims program.** The students serve as account representatives handling a variety of claims, including asbestos, toxic tort and environmental hazards. The program provides thorough training that includes traditional classroom sessions as well as on-the-job training.

- **Leadership development program for business and technology analysts.** This program offers high-performing college graduates the opportunity to rotate through The Hartford's Enterprise IT organization. They will complete four to six six-month assignments that involve project management, analysis, business and IT strategy and/or development.

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—Peggy Anson, Vice President-Talent Development and Engagement
The Hartford Financial Services Group



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—Shirley Woods, Assistant Vice President-Sales Training & Practices
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- **Financial development program for financial analysts.** This program provides exposure to financial planning, analysis and reporting divisions through rotational assignments. It also includes extensive insurance industry and leadership training, a senior management advisory program, individual coaching, and opportunities to interact with all levels of senior management.

- **Group benefits sales program.** This program begins with a six-month training program that leads up to a career in business-to-business sales and conservation within an assigned territory for customers with fewer than 1,000 employees.

To date, more than 1,600 students have gone through the Stag program, and many program graduates are now full-time employees with The Hartford.

Another chapter in the history


With this long history of support for education, it should hardly come as a surprise that The Hartford has joined forces with another long-standing education program sponsored by the Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America (IIABA) Project InVEST. Shirley Woods, assistant vice president-sales training and practices at The Hartford, serves on the InVEST board. "I was really excited when I was approached last year to join the board and it's been a wonderful experience. The Hartford is supporting InVEST with a full Valedictorian sponsorship. It's vital that we do everything we can to bring more young people into the industry. InVEST provides students with the training to become effective employees. It meshes very well with our Stag program.

"One of the things that impresses me most," Shirley continues, "is that InVEST is not a one-size-fits-all type of program. The program is flexible. It is designed to provide support for whatever educational offering works best at the local level based on the needs and opportunities that exist in that community. We have an excellent working relationship with the local Big 'T' that we believe will help us expand the insurance education offerings into additional schools in the area, while our relationship with the national association will help us develop new relationships across the country."

The growing emphasis on financial literacy at all levels of education has given a boost to programs like the

Stag program and InVEST. However, finding teachers who are willing to add to their workloads is not always easy. "The best way to get teachers involved is to find people who already have relationships with the teachers," Shirley maintains. "And that's where the agents really shine. These are people who are involved in their communities and have the respect of the community leadership. Many of them are involved in the PTO.

"The industry has a terrific message. It's really a matter of getting it out there. Teachers are amazed at the many different opportunities there are within the insurance industry. When they see the benefits and opportunities that exist, it almost always piques their



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interest. When that is coupled with the InVEST curricula that include not just classroom learning, but guest speakers from the industry and the opportunities for job shadowing and internships, teachers are impressed by the opportunity for a win/win that benefits the students and the educational institution. And once we find a passionate teacher, he or she often becomes the best salesperson with other teachers."

Diversity

Peggy Anson, The Hartford's vice president-talent development and

engagement, adds that the relationship with the IIABA has been impressive in another arena. "The educational effort has emphasized the need for greater diversity within the insurance industry," Peggy says.

Peggy joined the Big "I" Diversity Task Force two years ago and "it has impressed me a great deal. We have undertaken several efforts, including developing a strategic approach to further diversify the agency structure around the country by providing access and opportunity for minorities to become knowledgeable about business opportunities in the hopes they will want to build their own agencies."

At the same time, she adds, the task force is looking at ways to get a more diverse population interested in the industry at an early age. And, guess what, that brings us back to education. "There is an intriguing opportunity here to expand and improve our industry," Peggy notes. "Our ongoing relationships with historically black colleges and universities are just one small part of this effort. We also are working with the National Urban League's Black Executive Exchange program. We want to make sure that we are being more affirmative in reaching underrepresented populations."

The War for Talent has just begun as the Baby Boomer generation heads toward a retirement that may have to be postponed because of recent unfortunate losses in their 401(k) and other retirement plans. But, as has been noted in previous articles, there still is a growing need to bring talented young people into the insurance industry.

Estimates are that the industry will need to add about 9,000 people per month over the next decade, and many of these people will be replacing employees from key areas such as underwriting and claims and investments. InVEST has the potential to reach millions of young people across the country and make insurance interesting to them well before their first experience is the negative one of "Why does my auto insurance cost so much?"

Other industries will also be competing for the best and the brightest. We need to get in there and show young people that insurance isn't boring. And, more important, we need to show them that insurance really does help people, and a career in insurance can give them the opportunity to spend their work lives helping their friends and their community better manage risk. What could be better? ■