Statement of Personal Development

In application of the CII Fellowship Program

January 2018

This document is prepared as part of the requirements for the CII Fellowship Programme.

Overview

After delivering my first class, as a part-time Insurance lecturer, in 2016, I decided to pursue the Fellowship. Despite the stress I endured to attain the CFA charter and ACII, the pressure of standing in front of a classroom of professionals, was nothing I experienced before. This pressure motivated me to set an ambitious plan to complete the Fellowship requirements in 2016, with aim to deepen my understanding of the insurance concepts further and perform better in class.

However, managing two jobs and a family took its toll on me, and I found it increasingly difficult to stay focused on achieving this goal. On the positive side however, I invested many hours into studying a wide range of technical material particularly focused on Insurance Law and Finance in order to prepare for my classes and exams.

Fellowship Plan

At the outset of 2017, I decided to resume work on the Fellowship with target to earn my qualification prior to year-end. I submitted my CFA charter as a major achievement, given the long hours of learning I invested over a period of two years to earn the same. On average, the Charter required 300 hours of studying for each of its three levels. My hopes were that the CII would accept my CFA charter as a major achievement, and with that I could direct my focus toward the SPD and BEP submissions.

The years from 2013 to 2015 were focused on preparing for the CFA exams. My technical knowledge heightened during that period; however my personal life was truly tested as I tried to maintain a full time job, intensive study schedule and a family. I learnt, the hard way, to say no to tasks that were not important and dedicating my time only to things that contribute to my goals and family. Additionally, I discovered how honest, open conversations, can help earn the support of key people in my life. Sharing details of my tight schedule with my boss and family was invaluable to my progress. I learnt that although success is very personal, it requires group effort and support.

The years that followed my CFA charter, were focused on Insurance, as I completed my ACII requirements, and took a series of exams to earn my credits. My CPD submissions primarily revolve around the CFA, ACII and lecturing preparations as those areas had the biggest impact on my learning.

Changes to the plan

Once my major achievement and CPD were accepted, my goal seemed more achievable. However, I soon realised that my initial plan was overly optimistic and that I had underestimated required time to complete the BEP case studies and my SPD. In addition, travel for work increased, such that it became increasingly difficult to schedule my study and I started to feel that I was losing valuable time.

I felt overwhelmed, to the extent that I lost the real purpose behind my initiatives and became more focused on task completion rather than learning. It was at that point, that I learnt the importance of re-evaluating outstanding tasks to consciously decide what is actually essential. I learnt practically the importance of scheduling, time management and multi-tasking in addition to staying positive by reading motivational material.

Self-learning and awareness

I am a firm believer in the importance of learning and earning qualifications, both academic and professional. However, during the interim of my Fellowship application, I found that my development escalated exponentially in tandem with my lecturing classes. Part of the learning comes from the long preparation hours; however development on the personal front, in my view, is much greater. My presentation and public speaking abilities improved; in addition, my confidence increased, allowing me to deliver the material better. I've been exposed to numerous embarrassing situations, when I was unable to answer students' questions in class, however these experiences helped me gain better grounding and I am now better able to handle such situations as they inevitably repeat. My experiences taught me that the human mind is capable of learning anything, and the tasks that first appear overwhelming, with proper time management and dedication are all achievable.

On a personal front, I attended a leadership course focused on coaching and mentoring. The theoretical background along with practice sessions inspired me greatly and left me feeling like I have more to offer as a professional and individual. The course contributed to my improved self-image and elevated my confidence levels further.

Key skills and knowledge

My career shift from Insurance to Banking required a lot of adjustment given that the two industries vary on many fronts. Joining Treasury exposed me to the world of international markets, a dynamic and rapidly changing environment that requires quick and accurate decisions. I acquired a lot of technical knowledge on the job, in addition to being faced with many ethical decisions, due to the intense nature of the role. Studying the BEP material and preparing the case studies added a wealth to my knowledge and influenced my mind set as a Treasury Dealer allowing me to make informed decisions and raise doubtful matters as they arise particularly when it comes to client orders and potential conflicts of interest.

My role as a Director with the XXXX XXXX, gave me the opportunity to travel to numerous technical and leadership courses in the EMEA region. The learning that I accumulated from these courses was immense. The diversity of the topics and the speakers left a great mark on my personality. In addition, interactions with colleagues and experts in my field added valuable years to my character and learning.

Apart from sharing knowledge and information in class, I found that mentoring and coaching skills are invaluable. Interacting with students from different backgrounds exposed me to the importance of managing expectations and personalities. I developed negotiation; problem solving and most importantly listening skills that I feel have contributed to my more composed personality in class.

Intentions for the future

The Fellowship is only the beginning of my learning intentions for 2018. I have decided to pursue Associate in Risk Management (ARM) degree, which is focused on risk, an area I have touched upon while preparing for the Fellowship but did not study in depth. Given the connection between risk and insurance, I find that it will greatly add to my knowledge.

I will also pursue a life-coaching qualification that requires me to practice coaching others for around 70 hours. I believe this will contribute to my growth as a person and professional.

Finally, I intend to continue attending leadership and technical courses, to gain more international exposure and connections.

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