Happy New Year to each of you. As we head into 2020, I wanted to share my thoughts and perspective on the tasks ahead of us.

First, for 2020, I am your president. I will do my best to lead the IAA, but I need your support, input and direction. It is not my agenda; it is yours. Please keep me informed of your ideas, concerns, suggestions – and if something goes well, you can pass that along, too! I am hoping for frequent and natural engagement with both volunteers and Member Associations. No one can or should lead in a vacuum and e-mails are quite easy – please make frequent use. And, communication is a two-way street. I am committed to keeping you informed on developments, small and large. I have found that meaningful and critical dialogue often begins with just a short note.

We have another interesting year ahead of us and it will require both change and choices. We must be a strategically driven organization, and to do that, we must choose how we plan to pursue our vision. As important as what we decide to do, is what we decide not to pursue. Thoughtful choices lead to better direction and focus. As we make these choices to ‘Impact, Assure and Advance’, we cannot forget the underlying ‘why’ expressed in our mission. Let us each commit to the ‘why’, and then support efforts on improving the ‘how’. Structure (or, the ‘how’) must change as we and the world around us change. But, the ‘why’ is what we should keep as central and constant.

My last point is also about change, but not internal…it is looking outward. Our profession has had a great past with many opportunities. But the world is changing. Are we? Will we? Will you? We need new thinking, new skills and new roles. This will take a coordinated effort by our profession and we need to ‘get on with it’. While we are each part of the IAA, we are more importantly part of our global profession, and without proper direction, protection and oversight, it is surely at risk. Let’s embed actuaries in banking and big data and be part of the important conversations around climate risk, sustainability and an aging society. We have the skills and the science – and we can and will have an impact.

In closing, while Gábor has the now famous ‘Love Actuary’ t-shirt, I also have love for our profession. It is a unique profession, not just in skills, but in passion. That is true for all of our many dedicated volunteers. So, let’s use our passion for good, remember the ‘why’, commit to change, and be bold in making choices. With this approach, our profession will be best positioned to continue to make a difference, even in the current challenging environment.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.” I would add, also “without change”. So, onward we go into 2020 with a renewed IAA and a bolder and better profession!

Tonya Manning
IAA President 2020