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WORLDWIDE ASSET AND
LIABILITY MODELING

edited by

William T. Ziemba

University of British Columbia

and

John M. Mulvey

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	viii
List of contributors	ix
Preface	
<i>William T. Ziemba</i>	xiii

PART I. INTRODUCTION

1. Asset and liability management systems for long-term investors: discussion of the issues	
<i>John M. Mulvey and William T. Ziemba</i>	3

PART II. STATIC PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS FOR ASSET ALLOCATION

2. The importance of the asset allocation decision	
<i>Chris R. Hensel, D. Don Ezra and John H. Ilkiw</i>	41
3. The effect of errors in means, variances, and covariances on optimal portfolio choice	
<i>Vijay K. Chopra and William T. Ziemba</i>	53
4. Making superior asset allocation decisions: a practitioner's guide	
<i>Chris R. Hensel and Andrew L. Turner</i>	62

PART III. PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT MODELS

5. Attribution of performance and holdings	
<i>Richard C. Grinold and Kelly A. Easton</i>	87
6. National versus global influences on equity returns	
<i>Stan Beckers, Gregory Connor and Ross Curds</i>	114
7. A global stock and bond model	
<i>Lucie Chaumeton, Gregory Connor and Ross Curds</i>	129

PART IV. DYNAMIC PORTFOLIO MODELS FOR ASSET ALLOCATION

8. On timing the market: the empirical probability assessment approach with an inflation adapter	
<i>Robert R. Grauer and Nils Hakansson</i>	149

9. Multiperiod asset allocation with derivative assets
David R. Cariño and Andrew L. Turner 182

10. The use of Treasury bill futures in strategic asset allocation programs
Michael J. Brennan and Edwardo S. Schwartz 205

PART V. SCENARIO GENERATION PROCEDURES

11. Barycentric approximation of stochastic interest rate processes
Karl Frauendorfer and Michael Schürle 231

12. Postoptimality for scenario based financial planning models with an application to bond portfolio management
Jitka Dupačová, Marida Bertocchi and Vittorio Morriggia 263

13. The Towers Perrin global capital market scenario generation system
John M. Mulvey and A. Eric Thorlacius 286

PART VI. CURRENCY HEDGING AND MODELING TECHNIQUES

14. An algorithm for international portfolio selection and optimal currency hedging
Markus Rudolf and Heinz Zimmerman 315

15. Optimal insurance asset allocation in a multi-currency environment
John C. Sweeney, Stephen M. Sonkin, Salvatore Correnti and Amy P. Williams 341

PART VII. DYNAMIC PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS WITH ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

16. Optimal investment strategies for university endowment funds
Robert C. Merton 371

17. Optimal consumption-investment decisions allowing for bankruptcy: a survey
Suresh Sethi 397

18. Solving stochastic programming models for asset/liability management using iterative disaggregation
Pieter Klaassen 427

19. The CALM stochastic programming model for dynamic asset-liability management
Giorgio Consigli and Michael A.H. Dempster 464

Contents vii

20. A dynamic model for asset liability management for defined benefit pension funds <i>Cees Dert</i>	501
21. Asset and liability management under uncertainty for fixed income securities <i>Stavros A. Zenios</i>	537

PART VIII. CASE STUDIES OF IMPLEMENTED ASSET-LIABILITY
MANAGEMENT MODELS

22. Modelling and management of assets and liabilities of pension plans in the Netherlands <i>Guus C. E. Boender, Paul van Aalst and Fred Heemskerk</i>	561
23. Integrated asset-liability management: an implementation case study <i>Martin Holmer</i>	581

PART IX. TOTAL INTEGRATIVE RISK MANAGEMENT MODELS

24. The Russell–Yasuda Kasai model: an asset/liability model for a Japanese insurance company using multistage stochastic programming <i>David R. Cariño, Terry Kent, David H. Myers, Celine Stacy, Michael Sylvanus, Andrew Turner, Kanji Watanabe and William T. Ziemba</i> ...	609
25. The Home Account Advisor TM : asset and liability management for individual investors <i>Adam J. Berger and John M. Mulvey</i>	634

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xi

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Preface

Few problems are as important and complex to institutions and individuals as the management of their assets in such a way that their liabilities can be covered and their goals achieved. The assets must be invested over time to achieve favorable returns subject to various uncertainties, policy and legal constraints, taxes and other requirements, and liability commitments. Most investors, be they individuals or institutions, do not diversify properly across markets or across time, particularly in relation to their liability commitments. There are many motivations for studying asset liability management, including:

- (a) the results may be useful to set guidelines for institutions and individual investors concerning their asset allocation mixes; the models integrate various decisions over time with the constraints, preferences and uncertainties inherent in the investment problem; and
- (b) the models consider temporal dependence of asset returns and liability commitments, path dependent preferences, short and long term tradeoffs and provide for realistic measurement of risks and their tradeoff with investment returns considering the effects of taxes, transaction costs and other problem features.

To study this area, I organized a week-long set of research seminars under the general theme 'Worldwide asset and liability modeling,' on May 15–20, 1995 at the Isaac Newton Institute for Mathematical Science on the campus of the University of Cambridge. This research program was followed by an institutional investor workshop on Saturday May 20th. This week's activities formed part of the six month Financial Mathematics Seminar held at the Newton Institute from January to June 1995. I organized this part of the program under the general direction of the financial mathematics seminar organizers Mark Davis, Stewart Hodges, Ioannis Karatzas and Chris Rogers. This volume consists of twenty-five papers arising from this program. Most of the papers appearing here were presented in Cambridge with a few added to round out the volume.

The research papers in this volume utilize several approaches and integrate a number of techniques such as single period mean-variance, multi-period models using stochastic programming with and without specific decision rules, dynamic stochastic control, stochastic dynamic programming and simulation. These papers discuss a variety of models that have been implemented, are close to being implemented, or represent new innovative approaches that may lead to future novel applications.

The volume also discusses issues concerned with the future of asset-liability management modeling. This includes models for individuals and various financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies. This will lead to custom financial engineering products. These models hold much promise for the future to provide users with organized, diversified systems to help manage their financial affairs in an increasingly complex financial world. The models force diversification

and attention to extreme events and hence help minimize the possibility of financial disasters while at the same time providing good advice in ordinary circumstances balancing the various complex elements of the investor's situation.

The seminar in Cambridge took place in the efficient and most pleasant facilities of the Isaac Newton Institute on the campus of the University of Cambridge. The staff of the Institute, particularly Anne Cartwright, Florence Leroy, the Associate Director John Wright and Director Michael Atiyah were most helpful before and during our pleasant stay in Cambridge. Financial mathematics seminar chairman Chris Rogers was most supportive and helpful throughout this activity. My work in the practical use of asset and liability allocation models has been supported, encouraged and improved by my consulting association since 1989 with the Frank Russell company. Special thanks go to my Russell colleagues Chris Hensel and Andy Turner for their encouragement and our joint work. The Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada has supported my research in stochastic programming including financial theory and asset-liability applications at the University of British Columbia since 1969. This support was very helpful with this project as well.

I was pleased to have John Mulvey join me as a co-editor of this volume. Besides co-authoring the introduction with me, John adds his special insights gained from years of outstanding research and consulting to improve the papers in this volume as well as contributing several outstanding co-authored papers based on his own pioneering work. Our editor David Tranah has been most helpful and patient in the preparation of this volume. Finally special thanks go to my wife Sandra Schwartz for much encouragement and help on the seminar in Cambridge and in the preparation of this volume.

William T. Ziemba
Vancouver