Business Administration Department
Accounting Discipline Advisory Committee
2:15 – 3:12 pm Friday, May 5, 2023
Via Zoom

Attendees:
Jennifer Alvarado
Adolfo Espinoza
Ryan Toma
Isabel Yeung
Christopher Gilbert
Larisa Grigorian
Oliver Hsu
Leah Khoury
Raffi Kurkjian
Anne Renna

- **Question 1:** What key technical skills do entry-level accounting professionals need to be successful in today's job market? Are there any specific software or technology tools that are essential for success?
    - Anne Renna – Solid knowledge of accounting practice and theory as well as Excel. Assess use of AI and machine learning to review high risk transactions. Train students on SAP software.
    - Christopher Gilbert – use textbook tools on data analytics to prepare students for jobs of the future with Tableau. Review AICPA survey CPA Horizons 2025 report.
    - Leah Khoury – Deloitte and PWC see new employees hired after the pandemic struggling with communication. Technical skills are important, but don't get lost in the data. Need baseline accounting theory and knowledge e.g. straight-line depreciation and don't get hung up on data.
    - Raffi Kurkjian – Profession is broader than tax and audit. Know the basics, adapt fast to learn new skills. Excel is very important. Strong writing skills to communicate effectively and efficiently.

- **Question 2**: What are some emerging trends you see in your area of accounting?
    - Oliver Hsu – AI, machine learning, ChatGPT can be dangerous. Make sure students do their own work.
    - Anne Renna – AI can be used to increase efficiency and reduce the risk of not catching something.
    - Leah Khoury – Push for return to office after pandemic. Clear divide between pre and post-pandemic communication skills.

- **Question 3** – How can accounting students who want to differentiate themselves from other job seekers stand out to potential employers? Are there any particular experiences or qualifications that can help students gain a competitive edge in the job market?
  - Leah Khoury – Empower students to leverage whatever experiences they have. Example: working in a restaurant means they are good with people and customer service. Working 3 jobs and going to school means they are good with time management, setting priorities, multitasking. Being multi-lingual is a key skill in a global economy. Give students confidence in themselves. Employers are drawn to people with confidence who know how to present themselves. Help students be realistic about their career path. Practice professional etiquette and send a thank you email.
  - Anne Renna – Help students develop self-confidence. Host interview and resume workshops. Students can differentiate themselves by the questions they ask. Focus questions on the future, e.g. "Where do you see the profession going in the future?" Good to have jobs dealing with people.
  - Raffi Kurkjian – Networking, self-promotion, and talking to people help students stand out. Get involved with CalCPA and professional societies. Become the event coordinator to talk to firms of all sizes. CalCPA has campus ambassador roles for which community college students are eligible. Apply to small and mid-sized firms during Meet the Firms events.
  - Larisa Grigorian – Interviewers are looking for authentic people. Understand basic technical knowledge. Mock interviews help students a lot. Push students to interview with a variety of firms.
- **Request change name of Enrolled Agent I Certificate of Achievement to Tax Fundamentals Certificate of Achievement**.
  - Leah Khoury requested background on why the Enrolled Agent I Certificate of Achievement was so named.
  - The Advisory Committee approved the name change unanimously.
- **Question from Isabel Yeung – Should ELAC develop a data analytics course?**
  - Discussion included developing a single data analytics course or integrating data analytics into existing courses.
  - Isabel Yeung suggested creating a 2-unit data analytics course separate from Computer Science.
  - Oliver Hsu noted data analytics involves math and statistics. It is important that the course focuses on accounting, not on using specific tools like R.
  - Anne Renna – Data analytics is a hybrid of finance and accounting. Since the CPA exam now includes data analytics, the course can be sold. This is a must for the CPA exam with an element of finance.
- Meeting adjourned at 3:12pm.

The ELAC Accounting faculty deeply appreciate the insights and recommendations shared at the 2023 Advisory Committee meeting. Thank you.