From the School of Accounting—Rita Grant, Director
Welcome Back! The fact that the administration calls January through April Winter Semester is certainly truth in advertising this year. I hope your semester goes smoothly in spite of the snow days the first two days.

Winter semester has several events that can have a significant impact on your academic career and your ultimate career. The one we all pay attention to is registration for Spring/Summer 2014, Fall 2014, and Winter 2014. Registration will take place shortly after Spring Break in March. **Now is the time to schedule a meeting** with your faculty advisor to make sure you are not only meeting your degree requirements but making choices that put you in the strongest position possible to secure the job you hope to get. I strongly recommend you make an appointment with your faculty advisor as soon as possible. If your advisor is on sabbatical (Professors Kessler and Ratliff-Miller), feel free to contact someone else on the faculty for help.

A word of advice for undergraduate students: do not leave ACC 311 for your last semester. We had a couple students who hoped to graduate in December be disappointed because they did not get a high enough grade in ACC 311 to meet the 2.5 grade point average required in upper-level accounting courses to graduate with a major in Accounting. ACC 311 is a very demanding course. You want to leave yourself with time for a repeat if at all necessary. Also, please note that ACC 333 will be offered in Fall 2015 and not in Winter 2016. This is due to sabbatical leaves.

For students who are in ACC 212 or ACC 213 and planning on majoring in Accounting: take ACC 240 as soon as possible. It is a prerequisite for both ACC 310 and ACC 340. ACC 310 is a prerequisite for ACC 311. That means you need a minimum of 3 semesters to finish out the major. Careless planning can insure an extra semester at our lovely institution. Also, watch for an invitation to Backstage Pass (February 26, 2014). This is a great event to get information on opportunities in the accounting profession.

For current MSA students or undergraduates planning on starting the MSA in 2014 or 2015: pay careful attention to when courses are offered. Some courses have switched when they will be offered because of sabbatical leaves. ACC 620 will not be offered Winter 2015. It will be offered Fall 2014 and Summer 2015. Please plan accordingly.

Winter Semester is also a great time to work on the other things that can attract an employer to you. Consider what interests will show your interest in the accounting profession (Beta Alpha Psi, IMA Student Chapter, Student IIA, and ALPHA). Information about all organizations can be found on the School of Accounting website. Consider a Study Abroad. Employers look for this kind of experience as an indication that you are willing to put yourself outside your comfort zone. Are you developing leadership skills? Volunteer to be an officer or chair an event for any of your organizations. How are your interview skills? Our Pre-Recurring event in September will be here sooner than you think. This semester is an ideal time to call Career Services (331-6708) and schedule a simulated interview. If you do it this semester, you have time to work on any improvements that are suggested.

Tips for Success on the CPA Exam

Jill Schutte—MSA Student

Plan ahead. Decide when you want to begin taking the exam and stick to the plan. I chose to complete the exam before graduation. If you want to wait until after graduation, create a plan that allows you time to complete all of the sections within the 18 month testing window.

Coordinate your graduate classes with the CPA exam. For example, if you are taking Accountants Legal Environment (ACC 612) and Entity Taxation (ACC 615) in the fall semester, sit for REG in January. Begin using a set of CPA study materials while taking the class, it may improve your grade in the class as well as prepare you for the exam. Also, while it is not necessary, it will be beneficial to take International Accounting (ACC 617) before taking FAR because some of the information in FAR is covered in the international accounting class.

Note that you need to take a governmental accounting class before you can sign up for the CPA exam, so consider taking it as an undergraduate class (ACC 308) or plan to take Advanced Accounting (ACC 618) as soon as you begin the master’s program.

Research the review programs and find one that works for you. The review programs generally have similar information, but the structure may be different. Talk to other students who have used that review system to learn more about it.

Devote enough time for studying. I would estimate that I studied between 300 and 500 hours for each exam. The CPA exam contains a lot of information and the questions can be challenging. Continue to practice the multiple choice questions and simulations until you fully understand the material.

DO YOU NEED HELP?????

ACC 212 & 213 Tutors Available

School of Accounting Graduate Assistants are available to tutor ACC 212 & ACC 213 this semester, Monday-Thursday in 2018 SCB on a walk-in basis. See your instructor to get the tutor schedule, pick one up in the SOA office at 3030 SCB or the tutor room, 2018 SCB. Bring your textbook and other pertinent class materials with you. Take advantage of this resource to stay on track.

Academic Support Services

The Academic Support Services office in 101 EC includes a walk-in Writing Center (331-2922, www.gvsu.edu/wc); Walk-in Faculty Support (331-6190, www.gvsu.edu/pcsasc); Math & Stats Center (www.gvsu.edu/tutoring/math; www.gvsu.edu/tutoring/stats) and the ability to request tutoring for other classes online. (www.gvsu.edu/tc). Contact them for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

School of Accounting Scholarship deadline: February 13, 2014, 5:00 p.m. Application at myScholarships www.gvsu.edu/scholarships

Backstage Pass—February 26, 2014

Annual Accounting Awards Banquet—April 18, 2014 (ALL Accounting majors are invited)
Study Abroad in London

What do Big Ben, The Tube, Westminster Abbey, and Grand Valley State University all have in common? All will be in London at the end of July 2014! Ever want to hear those beautiful British accents ALL THE TIME, ever want to see a Shakespeare play at the Globe, ever want experience why London is the most wonderful city in the world…join the Seidman Faculty led London Study Abroad program for the summer of 2014 and find out “what the fuss is all about.” Last year 15 GVSU students went over the pond and studied in London. Our program allows a student to earn 6 credits; three credits are earned the first four weeks of second six week summer session at the lovely new GVSU business school building. Another three credits are earned after our group heads to London for the last two weeks of the summer session. The program works very well for a student that is not able to venture abroad for the entire six-week session.

In London, we stay at the beautiful Regent’s College campus in Central London and study the culture of London and UK businesses. Our student group naturally bonds with each other while living in the dorm and we have an amazing experience learning about different cultures and historical sights in London. By the end of the trip you will be saying “brilliant, and smart” with a subtle British accent, and riding the Tube like a pro! Last year’s students visited a host of locations including: Lloyds of London, BDO, the London Metal’s Exchange, the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, Oxford, Brighton, and so much more. Don’t just dream of going to London – join us; we would love to have you along for our amazing trip! For more information, please contact Dori Danko at dankodi@gvsu.edu or 331-7397 for more information. Cheers!

IMA Student Chapter

Eight students from Grand Valley’s IMA Student Chapter attended the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) Student Leadership Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina from November 14th to the 16th. The students networked not only with other students from across the country but with several companies looking for interns. Our students attended conference sessions ranging in topics such as leadership skills, career paths for accountants, public speaking, data analytics and many others. If you are interested in finding out what IMA can offer you, contact faculty advisors David Centers or Paulette Ratliff-Miller.

Kappa Beta Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi

Victoria Roslund, President

Beta Alpha Psi is an Accounting Honors Society that offers students a variety of opportunities to help them prepare for a successful career in accounting. Early in the fall, Beta hosts a pre-recruiting event that gives students face time with both accounting firms and other companies before the recruiting season commences. The fall semester also consists of numerous firm visits to local public accounting firms, including BDO, Deloitte, Beene Garter and many others.

In the winter semester, meetings are focused on accounting careers outside of public accounting. Members have the opportunity to hear from Professors, Non-profit professionals, and members of prominent companies in the Grand Rapids area including Amway and Spectrum Health. Hearing the stories and thoughts of these highly experienced individuals will give students exposure to alternative career paths and allows them to broaden their perspective. The executive board of Beta Alpha Psi will proudly represent Grand Valley State University at the Regional meeting in Indianapolis, and the National meeting in Atlanta, GA this year. These meetings allow students to learn from other Beta Alpha Psi chapters around the country and also hear from prominent speakers. Our chapter, as well as the students themselves, benefit from these meetings on a yearly basis.

In addition to the professional opportunities, Beta Alpha Psi affords members the opportunity to learn from their peers and contribute to the community here in Grand Rapids. Beta Alpha Psi helps improve the community through various service projects. A few examples of the projects Beta pursues are Habitat for Humanity, Comprenew, and Beta’s biggest project, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA). VITA gives accounting students the chance to experience preparing individual income tax returns on a volunteer basis. These opportunities supplement the professional experiences that Beta Alpha Psi provides students with and helps give members a well rounded experience.

Important Calculator Policy

The SOA has a policy that you can only use basic calculators in class: no programmable calculators, no calculators with built-in functions and no cell phones. You are responsible to provide your own acceptable calculator.