From the Director—Steve Goldberg

I hope your semester is going well. In tough economic times, jobs and internships are still available. Opportunities will be even greater when the economy starts to grow again.

As indicated in the General Ledger many good things are happening at the School of Accounting. Articles in this issue address: (1) tutoring availability by Graduate Students for accounting students, (2) a new course, BUS 380 Writing for Accountants, addressing the needs of accountants and satisfying the WRT 305 requirement, (3) our growing and successful alumni mentoring program available to students interested in learning more about accounting career opportunities, (4) scholarships available to accounting majors, (5) the Backstage Pass event to learn about career opportunities in accounting, and (6) an update on our very successful chapter of Beta Alpha Psi.

In addition, we will have open forums in the next month for graduate and undergraduate students to help us understand what is working well in the accounting programs and suggestions for improvements. Email invitations will be sent. These meetings provide you with an opportunity to give us feedback on scheduling, curriculum and other matters. Please join us. Also, please mark your calendars for Thursday, October 22 GVSU’s Accounting Alumni & Friends organization sixth annual reunion.

My office is always open if you have concerns or suggestions, please let me know.

Alumni Mentor Program

Three years ago, the GVSU Accounting Alumni & Friends Organization started a Mentor Program. The program was developed to help guide students who have not yet decided their course of study or who may have an interest in the accounting field but do not know what options are available. The first year 5 students were paired with professionals from various types of accounting backgrounds such as public accounting, internal audit, corporate tax accountants, governmental accountants and corporate financial analysts. Year two, our alums were able to pair up 10 students with mentors and this fall we are pleased to have increased the program to a group of 24 mentors and students. We couldn’t do this without our terrific alumni and friends who find time in their busy schedules to help because they feel this is a worthwhile project. The program kicked off this fall with a pizza social where the students and mentors met for the first time.

Plans are in the works to continue the mentor program in the Fall 2010 semester. During Winter 2010, applications will be sent via email to students enrolled in ACC 212 and ACC 213 with instructions about how to apply for the Fall 2010 program.

Communication is the Key

What do you imagine is one of the most significant concerns an employer has about their accounting hires? Would it be whether or not you know the difference between debits and credits, can read a financial statement or IRS regulations? You might be surprised to know that hiring people with the ability to communicate well orally and in written form is at the top of the list. Those grumpy professors that deduct points on your accounting papers for grammar reasons are doing you a big favor by monitoring your communication skills, not just your accounting work.

Communication skills were a hot topic at the recent School of Accounting Strategic Planning sessions. The feedback from employers attending the workshops indicated their biggest concern for new hires is both written and oral communication. There was unanimous agreement that an employee’s ability to write clearly and grammatically was a top priority. In order to address this concern, BUS 380, Writing for Accountants was offered the first time this fall. It is a three credit course and is being taught by Professor Roger Gilles, a well-regarded faculty member from the Writing Department. He has worked with the School of Accounting to design a course that meets the need for today’s accounting professional. BUS 380 addresses communications for professional accountants and therefore expands material covered in WRT 305. Students taking the course will be given WRT 305 credit. It will also count towards your BBA degree requirements as one of your 300/400 level business courses. Prerequisite is WRT 150. The course will be offered again in Winter 2010, TR 8:30-9:45, taught by Professor Gilles. Space is limited so sign up quickly.

Tutoring Available

Still can’t tell the difference between a debit or a credit? Financial statements got you pulling out your hair? What about Manufacturing Overhead or ABC Costing? Does it sound like a foreign language to you? If you need help with ACC 212 or ACC 213, make sure you are taking advantage of the ample tutoring that is offered through the School of Accounting. Our Graduate Assistants are available 40 hours each week to help you with 212 & 213.

Additionally, review sessions for ACC 212 are scheduled nearly every Friday this semester. These sessions are facilitated by faculty who are currently teaching ACC 212. Tutoring is also offered through the Tutoring Center for ACC 212, 213 & 240. Your instructor can provide information about these tutoring opportunities or stop by the School of Accounting office, 489C DEV. Come for help sooner rather than later and don’t get so far behind you end up taking a loss this semester.
Grand Valley’s chapter of Beta Alpha Psi – the national accounting honors society – is having a busy fall semester. The chapter has experienced explosive growth, with upwards of 75 new pledging members. It has been wonderful meeting and getting to know each other. Also, Beta hosted its annual pre-recruitment night. This is one of the most important recruiting events both for Grand Valley students looking for jobs and for employers looking for talent. Finally, visits to eight local CPA firms are planned for the semester.

Pre-recruiting night took place on Thursday, September 10. Nineteen employers were represented, often by four, five, or six recruiters and employees. Three of the “Big 4” accounting firms were present, along with sizable delegations from big regional firms BDO, Crowe, Plante Moran, and UHY. Many smaller regional and local firms were also present. The private side of accounting was represented, with Perrigo attending again this year. Beta members circulated through the large (but barely big enough) room secured for the event, dressed in their finest clothes and eager to learn more about the firms. Most of the attendants brought their resumes, hoping to make a good impression and land an interview.

Other valuable career and networking opportunities facilitated by Beta are the fall office visits. Beta plans to visit eight public accounting firms’ local offices this semester. These visits are a great opportunity for students to learn more about the firms. Each firm has a unique culture, client base, and area of expertise. Many students use these visits to decide which sort of firm appeals to them the most. The visits are also great for networking, meeting successful accountants, and learning about their careers.

In summary, Beta is enjoying a busy and productive semester. Beta has experienced phenomenal growth, as Grand Valley students have been attracted to the valuable career enhancing opportunities it provides. We look forward to continuing to grow as a chapter and as members of this worthwhile organization.

Accounting Scholarships

Are you currently enrolled in a 300 level accounting class or higher and have 3.5 or higher GPA in your accounting classes? If so, don’t miss the opportunity to apply for one of ten different accounting scholarships offered through the School of Accounting. Scholarships range from $1,000 to $4,000 and are available to both undergraduate and graduate accounting students.

The application process is easy. You only have to apply once and you will be considered for all the scholarships for which you are qualified. The scholarship applications will be e-mailed to accounting majors in January 2010 and will be due the first week of March. Don’t miss this great opportunity! Make sure you apply on time and your resume is up-to-date. If you have any questions, please contact Assistant Professor Lara L. Kessler, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, at kesslar@gvsu.edu.

Backstage Pass

Mark your calendars! The School of Accounting is proud to announce the second annual Backstage Pass on March 1st, 2010 from 4:30-6:30. Backstage Pass is a fun and entertaining way to learn about career opportunities in accounting. Accountants from both local and national firms will put on skits, network with students, and provide giveaways and raffle prizes in addition to free pizza and soft drinks. You will hear about jobs, travel, social life, and other opportunities that an accounting education can provide. You will learn how accounting is not just number crunching and how an accounting education is a great way to develop business skills desired by employers and graduate schools.

Backstage Pass is an invitation only event. You must be an ACC 212, ACC 213, ACC 240, or ACC 310 student. In addition, you must have a B average or better in your accounting classes. Study hard and keep your grades up. You don’t want to miss this event! Invitations will be e-mailed out in late January.

Accounting Alumni Scholarship Golf Outing

The GVSU School of Accounting Alumni & Friends Organization (AAFO) proudly continued the golf outing tradition that celebrated the 10 year anniversary of the Don Klein Golf Outing in 2008. On September 23rd the AAFO hosted the 11th Annual Accounting Scholarship Golf Outing at the Meadows Golf. Net proceeds from the outing fund scholarships for accounting students. Don Klein carried on tradition by meeting and greeting players on the 9th hole. Beta Alpha Psi students and alums helped with registration and hole events. Players returned to the clubhouse to enjoy a picnic lunch in the gazebo and many went home with prizes won by demonstrating their golfing skills or from the raffle. Thank you all for helping to make this event a success.