Letter from the Chair

Steve Goldberg, Chair GVSU Accounting & Tax

I hope your academic year has gone well and closes on a high note. The Department of Accounting & Taxation has had a busy and successful year. Highlights of the year include continued strength of the accounting programs (BBA, MSA, and MST), reaccreditation, strong internships and job placements, continued superior performance of Beta Alpha Psi, and the annual awards banquet. Fall '06 ('05) enrollments are 429 (396) accounting BBA, 93 (56) MSA, and 45 (56) MST students. The Accounting & Tax Annual Awards Banquet takes place on Friday, April 20. All accounting and tax students, alumni and members of the business community are invited. A record forty scholarships and awards will be presented. Congratulations to all recipients! We are always interested in your input. Please let me know of any concerns, suggestions or thoughts on what is working well or not so well. I hope you have an enjoyable spring and summer.

New Faculty

We have been fortunate to hire two new faculty beginning in August 2007. Paulette A. Ratliff-Miller is a CPA and has a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Paulette is currently an Assistant Professor of Accounting at Arkansas State University. Lara L. Kessler has a JD from Vanderbilt University. Lara is finishing her MSA at GVSU. She has been a lecturer at Southeastern Louisiana University and was a member of the U.S. Air Force's JAG (Judge Advocate General's Corp). We thank our two visiting instructors, David Centers, and Emily Drogt, for a great year and are pleased that they will continue in the department.

Re-accreditation

In October, 2006, the Seidman College of Business and the Department of Accounting & Taxation hosted a peer review team for the purpose of reaffirming AACSB International accreditations. The department is separately accredited from the college. The college's and department's accreditations were extended with overall extremely positive comments from the review team. The team observed a high level of collegiality among accounting faculty, positive interactions with students, a strong and impressive Beta Alpha Psi chapter, good relations with alumni and the Grand Rapids accounting profession, and an MST program that helps us serve the needs of the community.

Curriculum

In the wake of Enron, Arthur Anderson, and WorldCom, there is increased recognition of the importance of the roles of ethical considerations and proper corporate government for business decisions. AACSB International, the and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) are encouraging increased ethics in accounting curriculums. At some point in the near future, it is expected that at least one ethics course will be required to be licensed as a CPA. In response to these developments, we introduced in Fall 2006 the course Ethics For Accountants as an elective in the MSA program. By the 2008-2009 academic year, a course in ethics for accountants will be required and available in both the BBA and MSA programs.

Beta Alpha Psi

Joe Trombka, President

The Kappa Beta chapter of Beta Alpha Psi had another strong showing in the 2006-2007 school year. The support of Faculty and Staff, along with dedication from students in the Accounting program allowed the chapter to continue to grow and thrive at GVSU. Beta Alpha Psi continues to promote academic and service achievement while providing members with professional development and an opportunity to form lasting friendships.

The Kappa Beta chapter was fortunate to have strong participation from area accounting firms. Office visits at area firms like BDO Seidman, Rehmann Group, Crowe Chizek, and several others gave members the opportunity to learn what takes place in the daily life of an accountant as well as network with professionals for the future. Our speaker list was just as impressive with the likes of Peter Secchia, Dean H. James Williams, and Nancy Sabolish from Beene Garter all taking time from their busy schedules to talk to the membership about their various experiences. These were all great experiences for the members and we look forward to working with area firms and continuing to find exciting speakers as our chapter continues.

As always, service to the community is an important part of Beta Alpha Psi, and this year was no exception. We continued our strong partnership with Second Harvest Gleaners, sending out large groups several times throughout the year to help feed the hungry. We also added new volunteering opportunities such as the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum Christmas events and Relay for Life with accounting firm, Pricewaterhouse Coopers. Beta members also continue to be academic leaders by volunteering to tutor fellow accounting students.

Beta Alpha Psi members volunteering their time around the Christmas season at the Grand Rapids Children's Museum. This was one of our many new volunteering programs as we look to add more in future years and provide more service to the community.
IRS Fraud Conference

GVSU students work with IRS agents to bust simulated tax cheats

Cocaine dealers, embezzlers, bar owners who keep two sets of books, and other tax cheats—these are the kinds of shady characters agents from the Internal Revenue Service were at Grand Valley State University to track down on February 23.

Fortunately, it was all a simulation. The Student Fraud Conference is aimed at giving university business students a look at the inner workings of a fraud investigation through the eyes of an IRS Special Agent and presenting forensic career opportunities to students with an accounting degree. The conference allows them to solve hypothetical financial crimes. The coordinator of the event from the IRS side this time around was William Smith, Supervisory Special Agent for the Grand Rapids Post. Smith teaches GVSU’s graduate-level forensic accounting course as well.

“This conference provides a unique opportunity for our students to see that their accounting education is relevant to a wide variety of careers,” said David Cannon, assistant professor of accounting at Grand Valley.

Working in teams of five, students set out to investigate and solve cases in four hours that typically take the Internal Revenue Service’s criminal investigators 18 months to unravel. Some of the hypothetical investigations involved business owners skimming funds from their company, a bar owner who kept two sets of books, a multi-filer tax scheme and a drug trafficker.

The students used the tools available to federal law enforcement officers, including use of surveillance, subpoena, and search warrants. At the end of their scenarios, the students met as a group to discuss their investigation, while receiving an evaluation from their coaches.

The IRS’s Criminal Investigation Division in Michigan, the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants and Grand Valley’s Seidman College of Business participated in the conference. In addition to GVSU accounting students, students participated from Calvin and Hope colleges and several GVSU Criminal Justice students also took part.

Internships...the path to a career

Whoever thought working was so much fun? Our 25 GVSU accounting interns make working and learning a fun endeavor this semester at many different accounting firms and industry locations. Nearly all students work fulltime plus overtime preparing tax returns, auditing different companies and assisting corporate controllers. A large majority of our winter semester interns’ work locally which includes the lake shore area, however, some interns obtain positions elsewhere i.e. metro Detroit, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Chicago, Lansing, and Northern Michigan. If you are interested in an internship position, please contact Dori Danko 331-7397 and dankod@gvsu.edu.

Niemeyer Award and Faculty Bio

With each edition of the General Ledger we have included a brief faculty bio. Steve Goldberg, professor of Accounting and Chair of the department was recently awarded the Niemeyer Award. The Niemeyer Awards are the University’s most prestigious academic awards. Faculty selected for the Niemeyer Awards are honored for their excellence, in teaching, scholarship and service. Nominations are made by faculty and awardees are elected by the Deans’ Council.

Steve has been chair of the department for 4 ½ years during which the department successfully achieved reaffirmation of accreditation and experienced significant increases in accounting students in the BBA, MSA, and MST programs. He receives excellent teaching evaluations and has made significant contributions to the accounting literature. In recent years, he has taught International Accounting and Ethics for Accountants in the MSA program. He has over 90 publications including more than 40 journal articles. Steve has served as chair on the GVSU Research and Development Committee for ten years and served on the boards of directors of two not-for-profit organizations in the community.

Prior to GVSU, Steve was on faculty at Purdue University for seven years and was a visitor at Georgia Tech for one year. He worked in public accounting for two years and in industry for 14 years with over ten years being in international controllership positions mostly for Motorola at locations in the U.S., Germany, and Malaysia. Steve has a BSC from DePaul University, an MBA from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D., from University of Wisconsin. He has four children and one grandchild (soon to be living in Grand Rapids).