

# *Preparing for the* **FUTURE**

**By Amber Reaves**

The Institute of Management Accounts (IMA®) student chapter at the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM) presents many opportunities for business students. Although our primary focus is to teach others about the benefits of IMA and careers in the business profession, we also provide useful information for any student entering the workforce.

Taking a look back over the past school year, I am confident that our IMA student chapter worked diligently to enhance our members' knowledge of the skills needed to be successful in the workforce. The chapter invited four guests from area businesses to come speak about their experiences in the workforce and share insights into what it took to get to where they are in their careers.

The first opportunity to provide information for students entering the workforce came when our chapter invited Amanda Nall, the owner of the local franchise of H&R Block, to speak about her experiences in her voca-

tion. Nall began her career at H&R Block as a receptionist but was eager to learn more about the tax profession. After working her way up the corporate ladder, she eventually became a franchise owner of two branches of H&R Block. Nall also discussed what H&R Block has to offer for potential employees. Because of her visit, two members of our IMA student chapter worked for her during the most recent tax season, giving the students opportunities to gain experience, hands-on knowledge, and networking. By offering this venue for college students to learn about a potential path for the future, the chapter

provided a chance for members to see some of their training put into practice by real people in real situations.

Another individual who spoke to our chapter was Deborah Bays, a CPA. Most accounting majors seek to take and pass the CPA exam. Although the exam is intimidating, students work hard to gain the knowledge needed to pass it. Bays described her experiences taking the exam and was able to offer advice and tips about the CPA

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exam. She didn't begin her career with the license, but she was motivated to go back and study for the exam. She cautioned our members against waiting to sit for the exam. She recommended that we take it straight out of college. Bays said the declining economy will make the demand for accountants very high for years to come, and having a CPA license will make us more marketable.

The next opportunity the chapter presented was an educational meeting about résumés, finding a job, and interviewing techniques. Part of that meeting involved Craig Kaminicki, the owner of a local CPA firm, who spoke to attendees about what he focuses on when hiring people. He explained that the first items he looks for on a résumé are core competencies that may set a candidate apart from other people. If a company is looking for a particular skill that you possess, that skill will be the first thing they see. Kaminicki told us that including our accomplishments on our résumé shows what we have achieved for other groups or companies. Holding a board position within the student chapter, such as president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer, is great because it shows dedication and responsibility. Chapter members can also volunteer for fundraising activities, community service projects, and membership recruiting. Kaminicki said that companies look to hire people who will be an

asset to them and who will make a difference. He said proofreading the résumé several times, front and back, helps avoid any mistakes. Last but not least, he said to add a cover letter and to follow up with the employer.

Kaminicki also discussed several ways to find jobs, including looking on the Internet, reading newspapers, and recruiting. He said the best way to find a job was through recruiting. Recruiters provide the opportunity to create relationships and develop a network of contacts. It gives students a chance to present themselves in person and make a positive impression.

The last and most helpful topic Kaminicki covered was interviewing techniques. His first advice on interviewing was to research the company. Further, he said it's helpful to anticipate the questions that may be asked by looking up potential interview questions on the Internet and practicing your answers to them. Kaminicki also went into the different types of interviews to expect and prepare for, including one-on-one interviews and group interviews. He encouraged us to be confident in our interviews. Learning about résumés, finding a job, and interviewing techniques will help our members become more confident in their ability to face the job market.

Our most recent guest was Jerry Woodall, an auditor from Arkansas Legislative Audit, who talked to students about the benefits of working for Legislative Audit and of the positions that will soon be available there. Numerous issues were explained, including salary, vacation, and retirement. Woodall told us that 25 new positions will be available starting in July of this year, half of which will be filled within the first year, and the other half later. Julie LaFleur, a former UAM student and recent graduate who was hired by Legislative Audit along with three other UAM alumni, joined Woodall to talk about the advantages of working for the company and how she enjoyed her job there.

By providing educational and informational meetings for UAM students, our chapter has enhanced the knowledge and skills needed to add confidence and meaning to each student as prospects in the workforce. The IMA student chapter hopes that each student is able to use this advice to their benefit to become successful business people who can return to UAM and speak to future IMA chapters about their journey to success. **SF**

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