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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

You Have Your Accounting Degree. What's Next?

Montvale, N.J., May 11, 2009 – They've spent years studying finance, auditing, and budgeting. They've joined the student chapters of professional associations like the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA®) and networked with key practitioners in their community. As many thousands of graduates enter the workforce this month with an accounting degree in hand and a variety of relevant experience under their belts, many ask: "What can I do now?"

Despite the fragile economy, employment of accountants is expected to grow by 18 percent between 2006 and 2016, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which is faster than the average for all other occupations.

Most accounting positions "fall into four categories: accounting in private industry, public accounting, government jobs, and jobs in nonprofit organizations," said Sandra B. Richtermeyer, Ph.D., CMA, CPA and incoming Chair-Elect of the IMA Board of Directors, 2009-2010. Many of those positions involve internal accounting, internal or external auditing, tax preparation, and compliance-related responsibilities.

In addition to securing a job, accounting graduates will benefit greatly by connecting with local chapters of professional associations, such as IMA, for example. Professional associations offer the chance to network with peers in the industry as well as stay on top of accounting trends.

"Some graduates are hesitant to get involved with an association their first year out of school, but those who join see the benefits immediately," said Dr. Richtermeyer, who is also chair of the Department of Accountancy at Xavier University's Williams College of Business. "Meeting new contacts at various career stages can help graduates benchmark where they want to be in five to ten years."

Those not graduating in the next few years can get a head start in gaining experience by obtaining internships, getting involved on campus, or volunteering with nonprofit organizations. In addition, says Dr. Richtermeyer, select a minor that complements studies in accounting, such as information technology. Acquiring foreign language skills or learning about entrepreneurship can also help students stand out from their peers.

About IMA®

With a worldwide network of about 60,000 professionals, IMA is the world's leading organization dedicated to empowering accounting and finance professionals to drive business performance. For more information about IMA, please visit www.imanet.org.

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