

September 7, 2007

Dear Accountancy Board Colleagues and Fellow CPAs:

I am happy to report that the 2008 Practice Analysis project remains on schedule with the successful completion of the data collection phase. We now have solid data to support the development of new Uniform CPA Examination content and skills specifications. The survey completion rate from supervisors of entry-level CPAs was 66% - an outstanding result for which we are very grateful.

### **Data Collection**

The collection of practice analysis data was a two-step process. First, CPAs were asked to register by answering a few demographic questions online so that supervisors of entry-level CPAs – the principal target group of the survey – could be located. (No existing database identifies CPAs in this supervisory capacity.) Second, CPAs meeting required criteria were sent a link and invited to complete the survey in an online environment.

The data collection effort started off slowly at the end of April, when about 9,000 invitations to register were mailed to CPAs. (About 3,000 of these invitations were based on state board provided data and 6,000 on AICPA membership information.) The response to this mailing was not as good as anticipated. We then e-mailed, in June, invitations to register to an additional 90,000 CPAs, all of them members of the AICPA. The response rate from this much larger group was no better but the sheer number of invitations produced a pool of registrations sufficiently large for our purposes. Once identified as supervisors, CPAs were sent links to the survey and invited to complete it. The survey completion rate from this group – the supervisors of entry-level CPAs – was truly excellent, as I have already mentioned.

As you may recall, the 3,000 invitations to CPAs identified by state boards were sent in an attempt to obtain input for a comparative sample of non-AICPA members who supervise entry-level CPAs. To this end, many state boards expended much effort to gather data and, as a result, we were pleased to receive licensee data from twenty-two states. All these data (excluding only the CPAs who proved to be members of the AICPA and those with addresses outside the U.S.) were used to invite practice analysis registrations.

The response rate to our invitations to register from CPAs identified by state boards was better than the response rate from CPAs identified on the basis of the AICPA database. However, only about 20% of the state board-identified licensees proved to be supervisors of entry-level CPAs and, therefore, qualified to complete the survey. This meant that there were too few non-AICPA member survey participants to yield sufficient data for the planned comparative sample. (Unfortunately, our timeline did not allow us to obtain a second sample from state boards.) Even though sufficient data were not received for the planned comparative sample, we will analyze the completed surveys from state board –identified CPAs and consider any differences in responses between them and the CPAs who are AICPA members for use in developing new Content and Skill Specification Outlines (CSOs/SSOs).

The data collection experience has made it very clear that there is a need for a comprehensive database of the CPA population, including both members and non-members of the AICPA. We hope resources can

be mobilized to develop such a database in time for the next practice analysis study which is, after all, only a few years away.

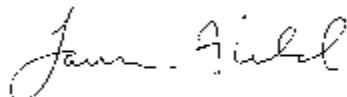
All of us on the Practice Analysis Oversight Group (PAOG) express gratitude to the CPAs who responded to practice analysis invitations – either as registrants only or as registrants and survey responders. Their participation in the practice analysis study is an important contribution to the future of the CPA Examination and, by extension, to the profession as a whole.

### **Next Steps**

With the successful completion of data collection, the practice analysis remains on schedule and we are now concentrating on the development of the new Content and Skill Specification Outlines (CSOs/SSOs). Survey data are being compiled and analyzed for use by subject matter experts in drafting the new specifications. Once approved by the Content Committee, the PAOG, and the AICPA Board of Examiners (BOE), the new specifications will be made available for comment. The three-month comment period is scheduled to begin in May 2008. Any questions raised and comments received during this period will be considered by appropriate BOE bodies and the BOE itself. With final approval, the new specifications will go into effect as the blueprint for the CPA Examination. Sufficient notice will be given to future CPA candidates in advance of the effective date.

I will continue to report to you regularly on the progress of the current practice analysis. Meanwhile, if you have questions or comments, please direct them to [PracticeAnalysis@aicpa.org](mailto:PracticeAnalysis@aicpa.org)

Sincerely,



Lawrence Field  
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Practice Analysis Oversight Group (PAOG)