

NEWS RELEASE

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AICPA RECEIVES MORE THAN 360 ACCOUNTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AFTER SUCCESSFUL STUDENT LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

Durham, N.C. (July 8, 2008) – The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants received more than 360 minority accounting scholarship applications following a successful workshop entitled “Lead the Way, Make a Difference, Become a CPA” to promote diversity within the accounting profession held May 29-31 in Peachtree, GA.

The workshop emphasized the importance of obtaining the CPA credential and highlighted the flexibility and various career paths of the accounting profession. Session topics focused on the importance of networking and mentoring. Professionals with an array of expertise in public accounting, private industry, and academia took part in discussion forums and gave speeches focusing on the development of strong leadership skills.

“The theme ‘Lead the Way, Make a Difference, Become a CPA’ emphasized the opportunities the profession provides, and confirms the Institute’s commitment to attracting a diverse pool of talent to a profession vital to the world’s economy,” stated Genevia Gee Fulbright, CPA, and chair of the AICPA Minority Initiatives Committee. “I am especially proud of this year’s workshop participants and presenters. The student attendees were exceptional and welcomed real-life examples of what a career as a CPA would entail.”

The Leadership Workshop is a component of the AICPA Minority Initiatives Committee’s strategy to promote diversity in the accounting profession.

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Attendees were recipients of the 2007-2008 AICPA Scholarship for Minority Students and outstanding students selected by affiliated organizations; CPA state societies, the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting; the National Association of Black Accountants, National Council of Philippine American Canadian Accountants, INROADS, Management Leadership for Tomorrow and other outreach groups.

“We are grateful for all the support and hard work of our strategic partners in making this conference a true success,” said Ostine Swan, CPA, AICPA senior manager for diversity, work/life and women's initiatives. “The students who participated made great contributions and really helped get the word out about the availability of scholarships as evidenced by all of the new applications we received.”

“As a Hispanic immigrant, this conference has made me more confident of the positive value of my diverse background and experiences. Attending the conference has motivated and inspired me to work as hard as I can to succeed in becoming a CPA and to contribute to my community as much as I can,” stated Diego Castiblanco, junior, Georgia State University.

Alumni from past workshops assisted with activities and offered students advice on passing the CPA exam and entering the workforce.

“The impact the Accounting Scholars Leadership Workshop has on the future of the CPA profession -- and on the business environment as a whole -- is incredible,” said Peggy Dzierzawski, conference chair and member of the Minority Initiatives Committee. “To be able to look out into a room full of future leaders who are ready and eager to forge ahead is inspiring.”

The students were charged with brainstorming fresh ideas and marketing strategies for recruiting the next generation of accounting students and future CPAs. Capitalizing on their enthusiasm they wrote and performed the following songs, “Save the Day. Be a CPA,” “Those Other Majors Don’t Know U.S. GAAP,” which was their take on Justin Timberlake’s “I’m Bringing Sexy Back,” and “I Have Nothing Without My CPA,” taken from Whitney Houston’s “I Have Nothing.”

The program concluded with an awards ceremony and speech by William Ezzell, CPA, president of the AICPA Foundation. “Having the opportunity to participate in the Leadership Conference was an exciting experience for me,” Ezzell said. “Seeing first hand the quality and enthusiasm of students we hope will become future leaders of this great profession was very reassuring. These young people surely have the capabilities, and my hope is we helped them add to their confidence when it comes to taking the next step and becoming CPAs.”

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The primary mission of the AICPA's diversity programs is to assist minorities in becoming CPAs and encouraging their advancement and retention within the accounting profession. Accounting enrollments are up almost 19 percent to more than 203,000 students across all degree programs, according to the AICPA's 2008 Supply and Demand study. Minorities comprised 26 percent of Bachelor's enrollments: 11 percent Black/African American; 8 percent Asian; 6 percent Hispanic/Latino and 1 percent American Indian/Alaskan Native.

About the AICPA

The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (www.aicpa.org) is the national, professional association of CPAs, with more than 350,000 CPA members in business and industry, public practice, government, education, student affiliates, and international associates. It sets ethical standards for the profession and U.S. auditing standards for audits of private companies, non-profit organizations, federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination.

The AICPA maintains offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Durham, N.C., Ewing, N.J., and Lewisville, TX.

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