15 Years and Counting: University of Baltimore Alumni Continue to Lead the Area’s Top 25 Largest Accounting Firms

Every year since the dawn of the new century—and arguably, for many years prior to that—the University of Baltimore has produced the largest number of graduates who go on to top-level positions in the Baltimore region’s largest accounting firms. UB alumni outpace their colleagues from other area schools in this endeavor, consistently leading in 10 or more of the 25 largest firms, year over year.

During the past 15 years, UB has had about 26 alumni in leadership roles at these firms, according to data published since the year 2000 in the Baltimore Business Journal’s annual Book of Lists. In this period, UB has been a top producer of alumni leaders in accounting, with one or more of its graduates in the position of managing partner or its equivalent. In 2013, the University had its highest number of alumni represented, with 13 in the survey of the top 25 largest area firms. The 2015 edition marks another banner year, with 11 alumni represented, far surpassing the representation of accounting graduates from other institutions.

Taken all together, UB’s record of achievement signifies an understanding between the University’s accounting students and the profession in which they aim to compete: UB is not only teaching the science of accounting—it’s also teaching the business of accounting.

“The numbers absolutely bear it out: We produce leaders in this profession,” said Merrick School of Business Dean Murray Dalziel. “With decades of experience, we’re getting it done when it comes to delivering the right mix of accounting theory and practice.”

Murray Dalziel
Dean, Merrick School of Business
A previously documented link between a company’s debtholders and the behavior of the company’s accountants in crafting a conservative path regarding the reporting of profits and loss has been further strengthened in research conducted in part by a University of Baltimore accounting professor. The result is an article published in the prestigious Journal of Accounting Research, and an award from a lauded corporation.

Associate Professor of Accounting Mikhail Pevzner, Ph.D. received the Black & Decker Outstanding Article award for 2014 for co-authoring the paper, “Debtholders’ Demand for Conservatism: Evidence from Changes in Directors’ Fiduciary Duties,” which was published last December in the Journal of Accounting Research. The faculty is on the Financial Times’s list of top scholarly publications worldwide, and exemplifies research excellence in the accounting field.

Professor Williams was appointed director of the Merrick School of Business’s accounting honors program. Williams was also awarded Yale Gordon Chair for Distinguished Teaching, an annual teaching award.

Several members of the Department of Accounting will offer Maryland CPAs a two-credit CPE program on June 3 to discuss latest developments in regulatory ethics.

Tanyeka Alexander, B.S. ’14 received the inaugural Maryland Association of CPAs (MACPA) Educational Foundation’s Mehta Family scholarship. Alexander was also a 2014 AICPA Accounting Scholar and attended the three-day leadership workshop in Pennsylvania.

Bacary Badiaga, B.S. ’15 won first place in the University of Baltimore’s Laurence Short Academic Award for International Students. A line in his essay pointedly read, “We cannot avoid obstacles in our lives, but we can tackle them and continue to pursue our dreams.”

Ifeoma Nibo, B.S. ’14 was selected as a 2014 AICPA Accounting Scholar and attended the three-day leadership workshop in Pennsylvania.

Elizaveta Nikonorova, B.S. ’15 was selected as the 2014 McGladrey Scholarship recipient as well as a winner of the 2015 MACPA Outstanding Achievement in Accounting Award.

Taylor Wilson, B.S. ’14 was the 2014-2015 recipient of the Merrick School of Business’ Department of Accounting Academic Achievement and Merit Award.
Recent Graduate Believes Faculty’s Practical Approach Helps CPA Confidence

Accounting is the #1 specialization within the B.S. in Business Administration program. For one recent graduate, Taylor Wilson, B.S. ’14, he attributes much of his success in accounting to the Merrick School’s professors.

“I learned a tremendous amount from all my professors,” Wilson said. “The small classroom environment made things extremely personal, which only helped grow my desire to learn more about accounting. I feel ready to tackle the CPA exam because of my experiences with the accounting professors and their practical approach to teaching the field of accounting.”

One of the game-changers for Wilson was the Accounting Honors Program. He emphasizes that the out-of-classroom experiences were instrumental to his professional development. He noted that site visits to institutions such as the SEC, GAO, and PCAOB were beneficial for students who wanted to learn about accounting beyond the textbook. However, he says the best experience was taking an 8-day field study to London.

“While in London, I had the opportunity to sit-in and observe convergence meetings between the IASB and FASB,” Wilson recounted. “While in the city, we also visited the London offices of Deloitte and KPMG. But for me, the pinnacle moment was speaking at Oxford University regarding convergence on impairment. The ability to present to one of the professors of accounting at the Saïd Business School was an unforgettable experience. Without the great accounting program provided by the Merrick School of Business, none of this would have been possible.”

Wilson, a former Beta Alpha Psi chapter president, will begin working full-time for Deloitte in Tysons Corner, VA, as an audit associate starting in September 2015.

School partners with CPA Exam Prep Firm

As part of an increased emphasis on preparing students for the rigorous CPA Exam, the UB Accounting Department has recently established a partnership with Becker Professional Education. With this agreement, UB joins a select group of schools nationwide that offers students a discount on Becker’s CPA Exam Review Course.

Greg Gaynor, assistant professor of accounting is the Merrick School’s Becker Professional Education coordinator and sees this relationship as another service that will lead to accounting graduates’ success in the field.

“All of us in the Department of Accounting are pleased to be working with Becker,” said Gaynor. “We are proud of UB’s tradition of developing successful accounting graduates and believe this partnership is an asset to the success of future CPAs.”

Voices from the Field

“I am totally impressed with the quality of UB’s accounting honors students. These students are well prepared to be future leaders of our profession.”

—Tom Hood, CEO of Maryland Association of CPAs

“The small classroom environment made things extremely personal, which only helped grow my desire to learn more about accounting. I feel ready to tackle the CPA exam because of my experiences with the accounting professors and their practical approach to teaching the field of accounting.”

—Taylor Wilson, B.S. ’14
Tanyeka Alexander, B.S. ’14 was the recipient of a 2014-15 AICPA/Accountemps Student Scholarship from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. At the time of the award ceremony, Alexander was interning in the tax department of the Baltimore headquarters of the CliftonLarson Allen accounting firm. She was the only student from Maryland to receive the award. Over 1,100 students nationwide applied for the scholarship; 10 were selected.

The $10,000 award is given each year to undergraduate and graduate-level accounting students who plan to pursue their CPA license. The recipients have demonstrated academic excellence, while showing exceptional leadership.

One of Alexander’s professors remembers her as a student that is really impacting the accounting field.

“We are extremely proud of Tanyeka. She excelled in the classroom, participated in extra-curricular activities, and gave back to the community,” said Jan Williams, associate professor of accounting.

“It was exhilarating to have the AICPA recognize her for her hard work in preparing to become a future CPA. Tanyeka exemplifies the caliber of students we are diligently striving to encourage and develop in the Merrick School of Business.”

Additionally, Alexander received the inaugural Mehta Family Educational Scholarship from MACPA during the academic year.

On April 24, 2015, the Theta Iota Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi participated in the annual UB Community Service Day by volunteering at the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge.

Hope Lodge provides cancer patients and their caregivers a free place to stay while they get treatment at local hospitals. The Lodge provides a nurturing atmosphere where guests can connect with other patients. Our group “spring cleaned” the kitchen of the Lodge and organized the food pantries to help the staff keep that unique home-like environment.

“We really enjoyed volunteering at the Hope Lodge and plan to go back next semester,” said Elizaveta Nikonorova, B.S. ’15, chapter secretary for Beta Alpha Psi.

Members of the Theta Iota Chapter of Beta Alpha Psi at the UB Community Service Day 2015.
1st Annual Back to UB Night

On November 5, 2014, the Business School was filled with energy and excitement. Students were professionally dressed, shaking hands, and meeting accounting professionals who were once in their shoes. The occasion? The UB Accounting Honors Program and Beta Alpha Psi hosted the 1st Annual Back to UB Night.

Accounting alumni were invited to campus for an evening of networking and professional engagement with our accounting students and each other. The event began with a networking reception and was followed by a panel discussion. The panelists included five of our distinguished alumni, Sandy Cook, B.S. ’99, M.S. ’03, senior manager at Grant Thornton; Dominic DuBois, B.S. ’98, partner at McGladrey; Nathan DiNatale, B.S. ’95, principal at SC&H Group; Tom Hood, CEO at the Maryland Association of CPAs; and Robert Stovall, B.S. ’89, COO at Clear-View Consulting.

Dean Murray Dalziel welcomed everyone to the event and Taylor Wilson, B.S. ’14 and former Beta Alpha Psi president, served as moderator for the evening. Students listened with great anticipation as the alumni answered questions about their career paths and challenges. Several shared their thoughts about the accounting field they wish they would have known about prior to launching their accounting careers.

Associate Professor Jan Williams, director of the accounting honors program, was pleased with the success of the event.

“Our students are always energized about meeting new alumni and hearing their success stories. It gives them a sense of what they can accomplish in their future careers. They believe if the alumni can do it, they can too.”

Going forward, Back to UB Night will be an annual event giving our accounting students an opportunity to meet and network with our accounting alumni.


For more information or to explore partnership opportunities with the Department of Accounting and the Merrick School, please contact Christina Hardy, director of external relations, chardy@ubalt.edu or 410.837.6152.