The Accounting Times
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
McCOMBS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
The University of Texas at Austin

FALL/WINTER 2004
www.mccombs.utexas.edu/dept/accounting

From the New Chair, Ross Jennings

Ross Jennings

The Department of Accounting at the University of Texas formally began in 1947 when the College of Business Administration was divided into departments. The history of the Department during the fifty-six years since then is marked by consistent success driven by constant renewal, and we are reminded of that again as we close 2003.

In the most recent survey of accounting academics by the *Public Accounting Report*, the MPA program has been ranked first in the country for the tenth consecutive year. Also, as they did in 2002, the undergraduate and doctoral programs were first in their respective rankings. This level of success is due to the hard work of a talented and dedicated faculty, outstanding students, and generous alumni.

At the same time, we have experienced changes in the leadership of the department, in the faculty, and in the constant flow of students becoming alumni.

This past summer, Dean George Gau asked me to succeed Steve Limberg as chairman of the Department of Accounting, and I was pleased to accept. Steve served as Chair for nearly seven years, the longest term served by anyone since the Department's first Chair, John Arch White, who served from 1947 to 1954. He did an outstanding job of maintaining the quality of the programs we offer and in building on the successes of previous Chairs. On behalf of the faculty I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank Steve for his dedicated hard work for the past seven years.

Steve is in the process of returning to his former interests in tax education and research, and I am sure he will make many contributions in that capacity in the coming years. He will be spending calendar year 2004 on a much-deserved research leave in France. We wish him well and look forward to his return in January 2005.

For those of you who don't know me, I have been a member of the faculty at the University of Texas for 17 years. I teach and do research in financial reporting and in financial statement analysis. While I have been at Texas I have taught students in all of our programs, including the undergraduate program, the MPA program, the MBA program and the doctoral program. In addition, I have been active in Executive Education and in our Executive MBA program in Mexico City. I look forward to meeting many of you and to building on the great successes of my many predecessors.

This is also a time of transition on the faculty. Three of our long-time professors have or will soon retire, and new faculty members

(continued on page 2)

McCombs School Commemorates Deloitte Endowments

Steve Limberg, past Accounting Department chair; Don Wagner, partner, Deloitte; George Gau, dean, McCombs School; and Ross Jennings, current Department chair, unveil a plaque commemorating Deloitte's generous contributions to Accounting education at UT.

Partners from Deloitte joined faculty, staff and students of the Department of Accounting on Monday, Nov. 17, to unveil plaques commemorating the firm's generous investments in accounting education at The University of Texas at Austin.

Through a $1 million gift, the people of Deloitte, one of the world's leading audit practice and consulting services firms, reinforced their commitment to continued academic excellence at the University. Enhanced by a $1 million match from the McCombs Matching Gift Program, the endowment will create a "Super Chair" that will assure the continued presence of outstanding accounting faculty at the McCombs School.

"The gift will perpetuate the legacy of eminent faculty that has distinguished the department since its beginning in 1947," said Ross Jennings, chair of the Department of Accounting. "Building and maintaining that level of quality requires constant attention and renewal," said Jennings.

Don Wagner, Deloitte partner in charge of North Texas and a member of the McCombs Accounting Advisory Council, has been a tireless champion of the cause. "Deloitte is extremely proud of our association with UT, the McCombs School, and the Accounting Department. We believe our endowments will help UT maintain and solidify its preeminent status among the other accounting programs across the country," he said.

The chair is the most recent example of Deloitte's long history of support of McCombs Accounting programs. Other gifts include three faculty fellowships and a professorship established in 1983, as well as an endowed scholarship established in 1985.

(Jennings continued from page 2)

join us to fill their ranks. At the end of the last academic year, Jack Robertson retired. We featured Jack in an article in the last issue of *The Accounting Times* and we wish him well in his retirement. At the end of the current academic year both Anna Fowler and Ed Summers will be retiring. Details of the many contributions they have made to the department will be featured in the next issue of *The Accounting Times*. Together these three professors provided 96 years of dedicated service to accounting students and programs at the University of Texas. We are grateful for their valued contributions and we will sorely miss them, both as individuals as well as their contributions to the success of the department.

However, just as a generation ago Jack and Anna and Ed took over from their predecessors, including C. Aubrey Smith, Glenn A. Welch, John Arch White, and Charlie Zlatkovich, new young professors are preparing to lead our programs into the future. Our most recently hired professors, Gerhard Barone and Jeffrey Hales began their careers at Texas a year ago and joined a group of outstanding assistant professors including Michael Clement, Shane Dikolli, Linda Krull, Karen Sedatole, and Connie Weaver. This spring we will be looking for another new faculty member to join this talented group. For more than fifty years this constant renewal of the faculty has allowed us to maintain and improve our accounting programs for generations of students.

And those students are part of the renewal process. Each year we welcome a new group of highly talented students into our programs and each year we grant degrees to students who entered several years before. Among those graduates, many seek to maintain and develop their relationship with the Department throughout their careers, and the success of the Department rests heavily on those relations. Our alumni serve as dedicated members of our advisory council, as loyal liaisons between the Department and their employers, as recruiters of our students and as generous financial contributors to our programs. These relationships are a vital ingredient in our success. The generosity of our alumni allows us to attract talented faculty, who design and offer high quality programs, which in turn attract excellent students, who graduate and become generous alumni, and on and on. A good example of this relationship is featured in the article in this issue on the contributions of Deloitte to a new professorship and chair in accounting.

Let me close by wishing each of you a prosperous and safe 2004. Here in the Department of Accounting we will once again renew our faculty and review our curriculum so that we can continue to offer outstanding educational programs to our students. We will also continue to look for opportunities to build closer relations with our students-turned-alumni long after they graduate so that we can insure that the next generation of students will also receive an accounting education of the highest quality.

A Note from Steve Limberg

The privilege of serving as Chair of UT's Department of Accounting has been a special honor. The satisfaction of working so closely with outstanding students, faculty, alumni, and departmental friends cannot be overstated. You define a Chair's experience and you have made mine especially fulfilling. Indeed, I will forever be grateful for your support as I step down as chair and return to the faculty.

The Department is extremely fortunate to have Professor Ross Jennings assume the Department Chair. We are all very enthusiastic about our longstanding colleague taking the helm. His qualifications are stellar, including master instructor, scholar, and outstanding leader. With your support—the type that so enriched my years as Chair—the Department's future is brighter than ever under Professor Jennings' superb leadership.

Steve Limberg

Number One for a Decade!

McCombs PPA and MPA programs have held the number one ranking for ten years in a row according to *Public Accounting Report,* a leading accounting profession trade journal. Our undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degree level programs were also all ranked first for the second year in a row. PAR bases the rankings on the largest national survey of accounting academics. Below is a rundown of the top five schools in each category:

Top Five Undergraduate Programs

School	2003	2002
University of Texas	1	1
University of Illinois	2	2
Brigham Young University	3	3
University of Southern California	4	5
University of Notre Dame	5	4

Top Five Graduate Programs

School	2003	2002
University of Texas	1	1
University of Illinois	2	2
Brigham Young Univ.	3	3
Univ. of So. California	4	4
University of Michigan	5	6

Top Five Doctoral Programs

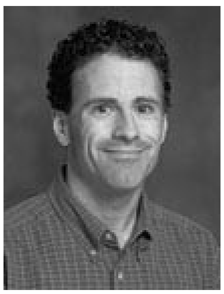
School	2003	2002
University of Texas	1	1
University of Michigan	2	4
Stanford University	3	2
University of Chicago	4	3
University of Illinois	5	5

Koonce and Colleagues Study Prior Estimate Accuracy

Lisa Koonce

Is there a link between a company's quality and the accuracy of the estimates included in its financial reports? Professors Eric Hirst, Lisa Koonce, and recent PhD Kevin Jackson have been studying the possibility, and how it could affect stockholders.

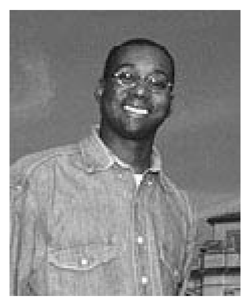
Estimates of forward-looking information such as warranty obligations and bad debts are part of a company's financial statements currently required by the SEC. "Since the estimates are essentially judgment calls on the company's part," says Koonce, "there is strong evidence that some companies skew them in order to put a positive spin on their financial picture." She and her colleagues wondered, "What if companies were required to disclose more information about these estimates to show whether or not they were indeed accurate?" They experimented to see if such detailed disclosures would give investors the data they need to ascertain the quality of the company and make wise investment decisions.



Eric Hirst

Using UT MBA students as surrogate investors, the researchers distributed four versions of a fictional company's financial reports: those that were accurate, those that were inaccurate, those that gave more detailed information about the accuracy of prior estimates and those without this extra information. The study participants were asked to make various investment judgments based on these reports. Their results showed that participants were better able to discriminate between the accurate and inaccurate disclosures when the additional information about the accuracy of prior estimates was provided, and therefore could make more informed investment judgments. This behavior occurred even though it was possible for study participants to gauge the accuracy of the estimates without the additional information.

Highly-detailed disclosure statements about the accuracy of prior estimates would be a boon to the typical investor, who might not take the time to "do the math" using information from less detailed reports. With the particulars in front of them, investors could go from a "what you see is what you get" assumption to a clear picture of whether or not a company is opportunistically managing its estimates.



Kevin Jackson

"Our paper suggests that the SEC or the FASB require detailed reports to force companies to clean up their estimates," says Koonce. "Since our results show that it will be in the company's best interest to be completely up front in their estimations, the incentive should definitely be there," she says.

Spring 2004 MPA/PPA Commencement Ceremony

We're looking forward to the 2004 MPA/PPA Commencement Ceremony, to be held in the Bass Concert Hall on campus. The ceremony will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Friday, May 21. We hope you can join us when we honor our graduates next May!

Student Profile: Kendall Bowlin

New PhD student and Harrington Fellow Kendall Bowlin comes to Texas via Memphis, Tennessee, where he was an auditor at Ernst & Young for four years. Work on the audits of financial services firms, not-for-profit organizations, and manufacturing companies was exciting, he says, "especially the last year, due to all the highly publicized corporate failures. I enjoyed my work at E&Y because I believed that what I was doing was important." His area of expertise was the electronic payments industry.

Originally from Florence, Mississippi, Kendall received his BBA with a major in finance in 1998, and his Master of Accountancy in 1999, from the University of Mississippi. He chose accounting as a precursor to law school, but in the end decided to stick with it. Kendall came away from "Ole Miss" with much more than a solid academic background—it was there he met Elisabeth Roberts, his future wife, who received her PharmD there. She is now a pharmacy supervisor for one of Walgreen's two Austin districts.

The McCombs Accounting program's solid reputation drew Ken to enroll this fall. Faculty research expertise was also a deciding factor. "Due to the size of the program, the faculty has a broad range of interests and research methods expertise," he says, that will give him the opportunity to scope out the topics of research that most interest him. So far, the program has lived up to his expectations. "It's everything that I had hoped--everyone has been very open and helpful."

Kendall is also one of seven doctoral fellows brought to the University by the Donald D. Harrington Fellows Program. As an award recipient, Ken will receive a grant that will allow him to focus on studying rather than on work. "Having the fellowship this fall has allowed me to take additional classes, which will hopefully translate into earlier graduation," he says. He joins the ranks of recent Accounting Harrington Fellows, Jennifer Winchel (2002) and Kirill Novoselov (2001).

Settled down to life in Texas, Kendall and Elisabeth like to spend time spiffing up their house in Round Rock. Cooper, Dixie and Mollie, their Labrador retrievers, are a rambunctious threesome that rounds out the family. Ken plays tennis and Ultimate Frisbee, and enjoys reading Mississippi authors like Larry Brown, Barry Hannah, and William Faulkner.

Kendall and Elisabeth Bowlin cheer on "Ole Miss" at the 2003 Cotton Bowl.

High School Students Get an Inside Look at Accounting

ACAP campers board a bus for a field trip to Ernst & Young's Austin office.

Twenty-eight Texas high schoolers from El Paso to Mesquite explored their budding interest in accounting at the tenth annual Accounting Career Awareness Program (ACAP) last July. The week was filled with mini-courses in financial planning, budgeting, savings and investments, and credit taught by McCombs Accounting professors and professionals from Ernst and Young (E&Y) and the National Association of Black Accountants (NABA), who co-sponsored the camp. Interviews with E&Y accountants, tours of their Austin office, and talks given by UT's CFO, Kevin Hegarty and E&Y partner, Brad Lindholm, provided a true-to-life sampling of the world of accounting professionals. At week's end, student skits and presentations about what they had learned at reflected an enthusiastic "thumbs up" for the ACAP experience.

Celia Thompkins, former NABA president and current ACAP chairperson, was the driving force in organizing the summer program for minority high school students in 1993. Once a three day program for Austin students run by a volunteer board, the now week-long camp welcomes applicants from across the state and is a partnership between UT, E&Y, and NABA. As the camp grew, so did the caliber of the students, says Thompkins. "There has been a steady increase in GPA and a new minimum GPA requirement for prospective campers." Students who apply must also write an essay about why they want to attend. "More than 95% of ACAP students meet the admissions requirements for UT," Thompkins says. ACAP solidifies many campers' vision of a future in business; in fact, 70 percent go on to become McCombs business majors.

McCombs Accounting Students Bring Home Prizes in National Tax Competition

Undergraduate tax competition team (left to right): Mark Chain, president, Deloitte Foundation; Brynn Scott; Jeff Wu; faculty sponsor Anna Fowler; back row: Kirstine Kemper and Carolyn Cavazos.

McCombs graduate and undergraduate teams brought home scholarships and awards totaling $7,000 after participating in the Deloitte National Tax Competition Nov. 21-23 in Orlando, Florida. In the regional competition held in October, the teams ranked in the top six nationwide among 60 teams from 40 colleges and universities across the country. They were pitted against five other teams in each division chosen to advance to the finals.

McCombs graduate participants were Timothy Brown, Kelly Chen, Daniel Griffith, and Sam Velasquez. The undergraduate lineup was Carolyn Cavazos, Kirstine Kemper, Brynn Scott, and Jeffrey Wu.

The national competition presented each team with a complex hypothetical case study concerning the history of a married physician's personal and professional business transactions. During the allotted five hours, the students pored over real-world examples of letters, memos, and forms to extract data relevant to the case's specific tax issues, and then submitted their written solution to a panel of Deloitte judges for evaluation.

Graduate tax competition team (left to right): Mark Chain, president, Deloitte Foundation; Tim Brown; Kelly Chen; faculty sponsor Anna Fowler; back row: Dan Griffith and Sam Velasquez.

"The exercise honed the students' skills in spotting and resolving the tax issues," said Anna Fowler, faculty sponsor. "Such expertise will be indispensable in their future internships and careers in taxation."

Both of the McCombs teams received honorable mention, winning $2,500 per team for the McCombs School and $250 scholarships for each team member. Central Florida received first place in the graduate competition, with Brigham Young University coming in second. In the undergraduate competition, Brigham Young ranked first, William and Mary, second.

First-place winners received a $1,000 scholarship per team member, and their school was awarded $10,000. Second-place teams received $500 per student and $5,000 for their school.

"The McCombs team did an excellent job, took the competition very seriously, and represented the Accounting department well," Fowler said. The students enjoyed the perks of a trip to Orlando and a plush hotel, but most importantly, they were enthusiastic about the learning and networking experience the competition provided.

Graduate team member Daniel Griffith said, "It was a great opportunity to test our skills against students from other schools. It also provided me with an opportunity to review and rehash subject matter from my UT courses."

Undergraduate Carolyn Cavazos added, "I had a wonderful time getting to know and working with my teammates."

The event is one of several initiatives sponsored by the Deloitte Foundation, a non-profit arm of professional services firm Deloitte, to stimulate student interest in tax accounting as a course of study and prospective career. The foundation also supports university tax programs by providing educational case materials, financial contributions, and enhanced visibility to the profession.

Keep in Touch!

Keep *Accounting Times* readers informed of developments in your life and career (promotions, moves, career changes, family, and other items of interest) by e-mailing us at accounting.times@mccombs.utexas.edu or write to Dorothy Brady at:

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We'll share your news in the Spring/Summer 2004 *Accounting Times.*

Heartfelt Thanks

Gifts from alumni and friends of the Department of Accounting are integral to our success, enabling us to provide student scholarships, encourage student participation in programs and organizations, support faculty development, and initiate curricular innovations.

The following graduates and friends contributed to the Department of Accounting between September 1, 2002 and August 31, 2003. We are sincerely grateful for their generosity, which plays a vital role in sustaining the national preeminence of McCombs Accounting.

We have made every effort to compile a complete and accurate list of donors—our sincere apologies if your name was inadvertently omitted.

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Lyceum Features Top Guns

Each fall, some of the most influential names in the accounting world address the PPA Lyceum, including top senior officials from public accounting, the federal government, professional associations, and industry. Among those who informed, entertained, and impressed fourth year PPAs with their experience and insight this year were The Honorable David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the United States; Charles D. Neimeier, past acting chair, Public Company Accounting Oversight Board; William F. Bizzell, chair, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants; and Martin McClintock, partner, International and E-Commerce Taxation, Deloitte.

As a professional journalist and author of *Pipe Dreams: Greed, Ego, and the Death of Enron,* Robert Bryce was a notable exception to the accounting professionals who addressed the students this year. At right is a wrap-up of his presentation, in which he warned his audience of the probable occurrence of another Enron.

Alumni News

MPA

Paul S. Bartley, MPA '90, was recently named chief of staff for the International Broadcasting Bureau, a U.S. government agency that oversees non-military international broadcasting such as the Voice of America and Radio and TV Marti.

James V. Long, MPA '71, was honored last May at the International World Congress of 33,000 Senior Financial Executives held in Orlando, FL.

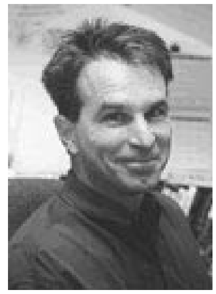
BBA

Jason Stone, BBA '99, formed Fandango Publishing Company and recently released *The Texas Golf Bible,* an 800-page travel book that covers every course in Texas. Fandango plans to continue with a Golf Bible series.

Dr. Mike Shaub, BBA '77, is the Emil C. E. Jurica Professor of Accounting at St. Mary's University in San Antonio. He and his wife Linda (Wadley), BS 77, have been married 26 years and have five children.

Alan Lee Lipman, BBA '76, began a new position as chief operations officer/executive director for Congregation Beth Israel in Houston. Previously, Alan was director of finance and administration for the Jewish Community Center of Houston.

Speaker Wrap-Up: Watch Out for Another Enron, Author Says



Robert Bryce

by Amy Corenblith

Enron will happen again, said Robert Bryce, author of *Pipe Dreams: Greed, Ego, and the Death of Enron* and the first non-CPA speaker of this semester's Lyceum series.

"We're not going to cure human greed," Bryce said. Pointing to a continuous stream of financial scandals since the 1920s, including the S&L debacle of the '80s and the Long-Term Capital Management fiasco in 1998, he told students that "it's going to happen again, and it's not going to take that long."

Still, Bryce offered his take on the Enron scandal and suggested his own remedies to prevent future corporate accounting failures. In his presentation, "The Enron Meltdown in 45 Minutes or Less," Bryce explored the faulty business transactions and shady cast of characters that brought Enron to bankruptcy.

He outlined "The Bad Bets" Enron made, including their failed broadband service, water industry and power plant in Dabhol, India. Bad deals were rewarded up front, Bryce said, so executives furiously made deals, even if they would become unprofitable and were not well thought out.

"Profits didn't matter," Bryce said. "Teamwork didn't matter. The size of the deal mattered."

In what he called "the worst case of executive piracy in American history," Enron insiders sold massive amounts of stock before the company's demise and misled employees and stockholders.

The infidelity of Enron's top executives set the tone for the company, Bryce maintained. In the "Rogues Gallery" portion of his presentation, Bryce outlined the bad business practices and personal affairs that many of Enron's high-ranking officials took part in. Ken Rice, head of Enron's ill-fated broadband business, purchased multiple $30,000 motorcycles, while Rebecca Mark, CEO of Azurix, an Enron subsidiary, traveled extensively around the world on Enron's dollar. Enron squandered money, Bryce said, and these wasteful practices contributed to the company's fall.

Other factors that Bryce blamed for Enron were the coziness of their Arthur Andersen auditors to their management teams and the lack of controls on derivatives.

"Warren Buffet once called derivatives 'financial weapons of mass destruction,'" Bryce said. "If Warren Buffet is worried, we should all be worried."

He suggested regulating derivatives and granting more funding to the SEC as possible roadblocks to future accounting scandals.

Publisher's Weekly magazine named Bryce's book one of the best nonfiction books of 2002.

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