



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

# *School of Accounting* Ledger

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## We want to know your news!

We're always eager to recognize our outstanding accounting alumni for their accomplishments! If you'd like to send us your news or have ideas about stories you'd like us to feature, be sure to let us know! E-mail [sally.gallion@business.fiu.edu](mailto:sally.gallion@business.fiu.edu). Thanks!

### Errata

A photograph on page 10 of the last issue of the *School of Accounting Ledger* was misidentified. The photograph is of firm members from Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant. The firm name was incorrectly spelled in the article.

## Staff:

The *School of Accounting Ledger* is a publication of the College of Business Administration at Florida International University. Its purpose is to inform our accounting alumni, supporters, and friends in the business and academic communities about our AACSB-International-accredited School of Accounting, our accomplishments as well as those of people and organizations who are committed to our efforts.

Editor:	Sally M. Gallion
Writers:	Beverly Z. Welber Melissa Saegert Elicker Regina Tosca
Photographers:	Richard Edward Kunle Okunkonye Alexis Puentes
Design:	Stacie Whaley

# Advisory Board guides School of Accounting to next level of excellence.

“The School of Accounting is like a great football team with a nine and two record,” said Carlos Sabater, Deloitte South Florida and Puerto Rico managing partner, who heads the school’s advisory board. “We are committed to making it the equivalent of a national championship team—that is, one that is famous and that meets those few remaining challenges that keep it from a perfect season.”

The advisory board consists of business leaders who provide practical insight into the school’s curriculum, helping ensure that graduates have the skills they need in the current environment. Members come from a cross-section of the accounting world: national, large regional, and small local firms; industry representatives; public sector practitioners; personnel from the Big Four; and professionals from allied fields, such as law.

## *Board members have enviable opportunity to fine-tune, not start from scratch.*

Fortunately, the board has solid raw material on which to build, including rankings that continue to validate the school’s quality; the consistently high-pass rate on the CPA exam; and the support of Joyce J. Elam, executive dean of the College of Business Administration.



*“Other schools struggle to get enough students to fill a class; we have a waiting list.”*

—**Carlos Sabater**, Deloitte South Florida and Puerto Rico managing partner; chairman, School of Accounting Advisory Board

“Other schools struggle to get enough students to fill a class; we have a waiting list,” Sabater said. “Others worry about their graduates getting jobs. All of ours do. That’s the nine and two aspect. To reach championship status, we are working to extend



*School of Accounting Advisory Board*

the school’s notoriety, spur fundraising, prompt more corporations to offer internships, support research more, and increase the media’s perception of our professors as a valuable resource.”

Antonio “Tony” Giró (MACC ’95, BACC and MIS ’93), senior manager, audit and enterprise risk services, Deloitte, agreed with Sabater that “everything is in place for the school to expand its reputation locally and regionally—an expansion that we see as a strategic objective.”

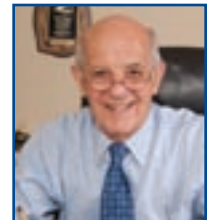


*Anthony “Tony” Giró*

He finds the dialogue between the board and faculty an essential way to keep the school’s stature uppermost in the minds of employers.

“We ensure that practice or real-life concerns get flowed through the curriculum,” he said. “Our involvement gives the school a sounding board for ideas and proposed initiatives to address current needs.”

Like a number of board members, Morrie Hollander, partner, business assurance group, Rachlin Cohen & Holtz, LLP, whose firm hires many School of Accounting graduates, brings those real-world concerns into the classroom.



*Morrie Hollander*

“We guest lecture to share information from the practitioner’s perspective, and we build relationships with student groups, such as Beta Alpha Psi,” he said.

## *Embracing members from across the market opens eyes of graduates.*

Forensic accountant Edward Gannon (BBA ’88), principal and director of litigation consulting, Kaufman, Rossin & Co., represents a new direction with enormous appeal,

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# Building Quality

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pointing to a different career path for students, necessitating curricular changes to prepare them.



*Edward Gannon*

“Post-Enron, there’s more interest in areas like expert testimony, litigation consulting, and business valuation,” he said. “To succeed in these rapidly expanding fields, students need to learn account-

ing basics. They also must understand the real-world implications of financial statement preparation. I see an opportunity for the curriculum to move beyond mechanics and into the ethical aspects of accounting.”



*School of Accounting Advisory Board Meeting, December 5, 2006*

Attorney José Sirven (BBA '78), partner, Holland + Knight, credits his accounting major with helping him in his legal career.



*José Sirven*

“As a business lawyer, I have found my accounting background has helped me because I speak the same language

as my business clients, and I can solve legal issues with accounting concepts,” he said. “Law is yet another potential career path for our graduates.”

With the school poised to hire a director who will deepen the school’s relationship with the business community and with input from its advisory board members, a perfect season hovers on the horizon. ■

## Top women students garner scholarships.

Exceptional students receive valuable financial support each year, thanks to the generosity of firms and individuals. Profiles of two of these students illustrate the point.

### *Graduate student embraces demands of accounting program.*

“I am passionate about education,” said Migdalia De Jesus (BACC '05) currently a student in the Master of Accounting (MACC) program and the 2007 recipient of the Randy Greene Memorial Accounting Scholarship. De Jesus calls herself a “sponge,” wanting to absorb as much learning as possible.

While always interested in accounting, De Jesus’ path to the field was not typical. Her first job, as a travel coordinator for Celebrity Cruise Lines, fed her desire for travel and interaction with people. Following a move to Miami, she became acquainted with the School of Accounting and decided to change course.



She describes the MACC program as “rigorous and difficult,” but revels in the challenge because it makes the reward all the sweeter.

“You can’t study accounting and be ambivalent about it,” De Jesus said. “You have to really want it.”

At the same time, she says that what she loves about the school is its emphasis on balance and on setting priorities. A self-described bookworm, De Jesus explains that it is easy to miss out on other opportunities when you get “too immersed in the books.” For her, having a balance enables her to participate in the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting

*“The fact that someone recognized my effort carries more weight and is an honor to me.”*

—**Migdalia De Jesus**, MACC student

(ALPFA), Golden Key, and Beta Alpha Psi, among others.

She also has parlayed an internship in the school’s controller’s office into a full-time accounting position, giving her an ideal opportunity to apply classroom learning to on-the-job responsibilities.

While she appreciates the monetary value of her award—which will help pay for her graduate work—she says the real gratification comes from knowing that the scholarship committee found her accomplishments worthy of recognition.

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## Reception brings new School of Accounting faculty members and community together.

As part of its focus on strengthening the relationships between the School of Accounting's faculty and the area's business community—including the many alumni who have opted to stay in South Florida—the school hosted a “New Faculty Reception” early in the fall, 2006, semester to welcome five new faculty members. Though the atmosphere was relaxed, the event was designed to fulfill a number of serious objectives.

“We wanted to provide opportunities for our professors to mingle with key individuals from area accounting firms and vice versa,” said Mireya Fonseca (BBA '00), assistant director, external relations and resource development, who focuses her attention on the School of Accounting.

Along with the “Meet and Greet Luncheon” and other subsequent events, the gatherings have enabled professors to become more familiar with the firms so they can guide students toward good career options.

“We also wanted area firms to get to know our faculty and programs better,” Fonseca said. “This familiarity will help them recognize the high quality background we provide to our students and give them contacts for expertise among our faculty.”

*Pictured below from left: Juan Carlos Morales, (KPMG), Nicole Mannarino, (Rachlin Cohen & Holtz), Sharon S. Lassar, associate professor, and Ray Saller, (Rachlin Cohen & Holtz)*



*From left: Cristina Sousa-Morales, Fern Munk (KPMG), and Cherie Hennig, professor of accounting and faculty director, EMST program*

Guests included adjunct professors, members of the school's advisory board, and representatives of Rachlin Cohen & Holtz, LLP; Ernst & Young; KPMG, BDO Seidman; Kaufman, Rossin & Co.; Pricewaterhouse; and Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant. Executive Dean Joyce J. Elam; Annabelle Rojas (MBA '98, BBA '87), director of external relations and resource development, who suggested the event; Christos Koulamas, interim director of the school; and Fonseca represented the college. ■

## New faculty members bring expertise, publication credentials.

### **Abhijit 'Ovee' Barua**

Assistant Professor  
PhD, Accounting, Louisiana State University  
MBA, Finance, Institute of Business Administration, Bangladesh



MCom, Accounting, University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

BCom, Accounting (Honors), University of Chittagong, Bangladesh

Abhijit 'Ovee' Barua's areas of expertise include financial accounting, financial reporting issues, and capital markets. A working paper he recently wrote has been accepted for publication. Before joining academia, he worked for Procter & Gamble (P&G), gaining firsthand experiences in different areas of financial and managerial accounting.

### **Kathryn J. Jervis**

Assistant Professor  
PhD, Business Administration (Accounting), University of Connecticut  
MS, Accounting, University of Rhode Island



BA, Mathematics and Elementary Education, Rhode Island College

Kathryn J. Jervis focuses on not-for-profit financial reporting, particularly hospitals; corporate financial reporting; not-for-profit management; and pedagogy and curriculum development. Her research has been widely published; she serves on the editorial review boards for two journals, and she is a member of Beta Gamma Sigma honor society.

### **Sharon S. Lassar**

Associate Professor  
Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Florida  
PhD, Business (Accounting), University of Southern California



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“The fact that someone recognized my effort carries more weight and is an honor to me,” De Jesus said.

## ***Association president nets two awards.***

For Krystel Ramos, achievement is embedded in her family fabric. Her parents, Cuban immigrants, set early benchmarks around education and have been important role models for her over the years.

“Despite the fact that they spoke no English when they came to this country, they worked hard to get through college and earn master’s degrees,” she said. “Part of what motivates me is my desire to make them proud.”

It’s hard to believe they’d be anything but. Smart, savvy, and steadfast in her pursuits, the accounting senior was awarded both the Kaufman, Rossin & Co. and the Perez Family scholarships, each for \$1,000. Ramos said she was

“ecstatic” and “surprised” when she was notified.

Her fellow students, professors, and parents might feel differently. From a young age, Ramos seemed destined for success. She had an active high-school life, filled with activities, academic pursuits, and her first interaction with the College of Business Administration, when she took honors classes in a summer scholastic program. She fell in



*“Being in the association has been valuable in the transition from student to professional.”*

**—Krystel Ramos, BACC senior**

love with the atmosphere and the academic rigor. While she applied to other schools, when the acceptance from Florida International University arrived in the mail, her choice was made.

Though she has scaled back somewhat on her extracurricular activities to focus more on schoolwork, her definition of “taking it easy” involved running for president of the Florida International University Accounting Association (FIU-AA), a post to which she was elected last year.

“Being in the association has been valuable in my transition from student to professional,” Ramos said. “It has given me important access to executives from the leading local firms and companies.”

Ramos will use the scholarship funds to pay for a master in accounting or an MBA, which she plans to pursue in the college. ■

## **New faculty members continue school’s tradition of research distinction.**

The School of Accounting and the College of Business Administration expect significant research from faculty members. Professors’ expertise—validated by the acceptance of their work in an array of academic and practitioner journals—brings credit to the school, raises the stature of these individuals in their professional organizations, and draws the attention of members of the media when they need expert insights into accounting matters.

New faculty in the School of Accounting—among them Sharon S. Lassar, associate professor, and Kathryn J. Jervis, assistant professor—are carrying on the school’s tradition of producing highly respected research.

### ***Sharon S. Lassar enjoys solving complex puzzles.***

For a person who is “very curious by nature,” and who “likes to pick apart complex issues,” the U.S. tax code offers Sharon Lassar a limitless repository of subjects.

Lassar gets ideas by reading about transactions—such as mergers and acquisitions, charitable requests, and spin-offs—in the *Wall Street Journal*, for example, and follows legislation carefully. She then prepares articles with the practitioner in mind.

“Frequently, a new tax law will have a loophole, which makes for interesting research,” she said. “Also, I enjoy looking at major new tax laws while they are being debated in Congress.



*“Frequently, a new tax law will have a loophole, which makes for interesting research.”*

**—Sharon S. Lassar, associate professor, School of Accounting**

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I examine implications practitioners may contend with when they see the final versions as well as the possible court cases and administrative consequences.”

Author of about a dozen articles, Lassar currently is watching several areas, including pensions and charitable contributions.

“Practitioners will need to deal with new provisions in the ‘Pension Protection Act,’ which will affect a number of issues beyond pensions,” she said. “The act encourages charitable contributions while also tightening substantiation and valuation requirements for many donations. Also, new operating rules for tax-exempt entities will have a variety of serious repercussions.”

Working in concert with other researchers—in part because she appreciates multiple sets of eyes trained on the complicated subjects she examines—is one form of dialogue related to her research. Another is to bring the ideas into the classroom to discuss with her students.

### ***Kathryn J. Jervis applies social and political interests to accounting research.***

After performing one audit for a non-profit organization, Kathryn J. Jervis was hooked on the subject of non-business reports—how they’re developed and how they’re used.

“Financial statements tell a story, and people have to understand the story,” she said. “Board members of non-profits may not be trained in reading the reports, yet they have to make informed decisions on the basis of them.”

Her research has led her to explore non-profit hospitals, untangling the

complex manner in which they use funds and situations in which they could lose their non-profit status as a result of the ways they handle accounting information.

*“Financial statements tell a story, and people have to understand the story.”*

—**Kathryn J. Jervis**, assistant professor, School of Accounting



With eight publications to her credit, Jervis closely watches contemporary events and considers the broader implications—such as social ones—that grow out of accounting practices.

“I try to understand the real world by reading the paper and talking to people,” she said. “I’m interested in politics, political theory, and the ramifications of public policy decisions. For example, an organization has to report its finances, yet it may not reveal everything investors want to know. These social and political aspects intrigue me and give me insights into how different organizations work.”

While their emphases may vary, both professors share their interest in the human elements behind tax and accounting issues.

“It’s fascinating to look at the human nature revealed in the creation and exposure of loopholes,” Lassar said, while Jervis sees an “inextricable connection between research and teaching, as I consider the same questions, such as ‘how will people use this information, how will it affect them, and what does it mean for them?’” ■

## **New faculty members bring expertise, publication credentials.**

Continued from page 3

### **Sharon S. Lassar (cont’d)**

MS, Taxation, Bentley College

BS, Accounting, West Virginia University

Sharon S. Lassar’s areas of expertise span tax accounting methods and changes, real estate and cost segregation, flow-through entities (S corporation, partnership, LLC), international taxation and transfer pricing, and tax practice quality control and ethics. Her research, published in a number of practitioner journals, has won awards, as has a web-based training program she developed.

### **Antoinette Lynch**

Assistant Professor

Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

PhD, University of South Florida

BS, Business Administration, Christopher Newport University

Antoinette Lynch specializes in looking at audit and internal controls, information systems auditing, accounting and information systems, and governmental and public audits. Her research has been published in several journals; she has presented papers at numerous meetings, and she has won many awards.



### **Andrew Sbaraglia**

Visiting Assistant Professor

PhD, Business Administration, Pennsylvania State University

MS, Accounting and MS, Taxation, University of Central Florida

BS, Accounting, Pennsylvania State University

Andrew Sbaraglia’s areas of expertise include earnings management, insider trading, and taxation. He is a co-author of the paper, “An Integrated Analysis of the Association between Accrual Disclosure and the Abnormal Accrual Anomaly,” and was the recipient of a Kenneth Nelson Fellowship and a Smeal Dissertation Grant.



## School of Accounting Refereed Journal Publications

K. H. Galbraith, M. Gillingham, **Manuel Dieguez**, **Rosalie C. Hallbauer**, D. A. Forgione, and **John A. Wrieden**, "Building a Health Administration Program: Strategies for Success," *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, 2.8 (August 2005): 37-47.

**Cherie J. Hennig**, N. Wang, and X. Yuan, "Cross Border Taxation of Employee Stock Options," *Journal of Legal Tax Research*, 4.1 (2006): 59-75.

**Krishnan Dandapani**, **Walfried M. Lassar**, and **Sharon S. Lassar**, "Virtual Banking: Impetus and Impediments," *International Journal of Finance*, 17.2 (2005): 3512-3524.

**Sharon S. Lassar**, **Walfried M. Lassar**, and C. Manolis, "The Relationship Between Consumer Innovativeness, Personal Characteristics, and Online Banking Adoption," *International Journal of Bank Marketing*, 23.2/3 (Summer 2005): 176-199.

**Sharon S. Lassar**, J. O. Everett, and W. A. Duncan, "Assessing the Tax Consequences of a Sale of Rental Property with Varying Degrees of Personal Usage," *The Tax Magazine*, 83.10 (October 2005): 53-60.

**Suchismita Mishra**, **Kannan Raghunandan**, and **Dasaratha Rama**, "Do Investors' Perceptions Vary with Types of Non-Audit Fees? Evidence from Auditor Ratification Voting," *Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory*, 24.2 (November 2005): 9-25.

T. Vermeer, **Kannan Raghunandan**, and D. Forgione, "The Composition of Nonprofit Audit Committees," *Accounting Horizons*, 20.1 (March 2006): 75-90.

**Kannan Raghunandan** and **Dasaratha Rama**, "SOX Section 404 Material Weakness Disclosures and Audit Fees," *Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory*, 25.1 (May 2006): 99-114.

## Mireya Fonseca applies her marketing and development savvy to her alma mater.

Combine a major in marketing with marketing experience for a brokerage firm with development work and research in the area of central advancement and you get Mireya Fonseca (BBA '00), assistant director, external relations and resource development. She joined the College of Business Administration in July, 2006, and is focusing her talents and efforts on the School of Accounting.

"As my jobs alternated between solitary positions, such as research, and more people-oriented ones, such as marketing, I realized that I wanted to be in a situation in which I would have a lot of interaction," Fonseca said.

Her role gives her ample opportunity to engage with others, while she puts her knowledge of marketing and development to good use: helping accounting students.

"I know how hard it is to be a student who wants to go to a conference but doesn't have the money, or whose educational future depends on a scholarship where there might not be one," she said. "I see the funds I raise being used to support student organizations and scholarships as well as the school's operating expenses."

Fonseca already has been actively involved with the school's advisory board, helping organize the group's quarterly meetings and keeping them informed in between.

"We hope to have the meetings at different locations so members get to see each other's places of business," she said.



*"I see the funds I raise being used to support student organizations and scholarships as well as the school's operating expenses."*

—**Mireya Fonseca**, assistant director, external relations and resource development

She also has handled logistics for events—including the "New Faculty Reception" and the first "Meet and Greet"—aimed at drawing the school closer to local accounting and financial professionals for mutual benefit.

After two years of doing research in her most recent job, Fonseca realized she wanted a different pace and she asked herself, "Where can I get it?" Happily for her and the college, "Florida International University" was her answer. ■

Continued on page 7



## Student leaders organize and participate in professionally enriching activities.

Twenty-one companies and several hundred business students attended the fall, 2006, Business Industry Night—a mini career fair that enables recruiters and business students to learn more about each other. The FIU Accounting Association (FIU-AA) organizes the semi-annual event, led by the president-elect and with help from Beta Alpha Psi. In addition, Beta Alpha Psi took the lead on “Meet the Firms,” which brings accounting students into contact with public accounting firms.

Joyce J. Elam, executive dean of the College of Business Administration, spoke at Business Industry Night, as did Krystel Ramos, president-elect at the time, and Zameer Upadhyia (BACC '02), president, Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting's (ALPFA) Miami Chapter and South Region director, with the majority of the time given over to information-gathering and networking.

At “Meet the Firms,” Dean Elam introduced the firms and students rotated among tables staffed by representatives, who gave them personal attention and career insights.

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*Business Industry Night*



## School of Accounting Refereed Journal Publications

*Continued from page 6*

M. Geiger, **Kannan Raghunandan**, and **Dasaratha Rama**, “Auditor Decision Making in Different Litigation Environments: The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act, Audit Reports and Audit Firm Size,” *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*, 25.3 (May/June 2006): 231-252.

J. Carcello, J. Lin, and **Kannan Raghunandan**, “Auditors’ Reporting Options and Client Disclosure Quality,” *Research in Accounting Regulation*, 18. (March 2006): 127-142.

**William R. Siegel**, “New Procedure On Taxation on Dual-Use Property Governs Interaction of Sections 121 and 1031,” *Journal of Taxation*, 102.5 (May 2005): 282-288.

D. Forgione, T. Vermeer, **Krishnamurthy Surysekar**, **John A. Wrieden**, and C. Plante, “DRGs, Cost and Quality of Care: An Agency Theory Perspective,” *Financial Accountability & Management*, 21.3 (August 2005): 291-308.

### Books

S. Dennis-Escoffier and **Karen Fortin**, “*Taxation for Decision Makers 2006*,” (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2005).

J.W. Everett, **Cherie J. Hennig**, and W. A. Raabe, *M-3 Explained*, 1, (Chicago, IL: Commerce Clearing House, 2006).

### Book Chapters

J.W. Everett and **Cherie J. Hennig**, “Chapter 1a:1 Gross Income: History and Development,” *Lexis-Nexis Federal Tax Library*, 1, (Newark, NJ: Matthew Bender, 2006)

J.W. Everett and **Cherie J. Hennig**, “Chapter 2a:1 Taxation of Individuals: An Overview,” *Lexis-Nexis Federal Tax Library*, 1, (Newark, NJ: Matthew Bender, 2006).

## Student achievements

### Beta Alpha Psi

The college's Beta Alpha Psi chapter earned "Distinguished Chapter" status, a recognition requiring evidence of significant academic achievement and community activity.

Luz-Angela Grimaldos and Dana Grimes, both enrolled in the Master of Accounting (MACC) program, each received a \$2,000 scholarship from the Florida Institute of CPAs (FICPA). The scholarships, which came through the Educational Foundation of FICPA, were funded by contributions from local chapters.

### FIU-AA

To further contribute to members' education and development from students to professionals, the Florida International University Accounting Association (FIU-AA) launched a scholarship program. It will honor its most active members who have a 3.0 GPA or higher. "Best Member" will receive \$400 and "Outstanding Member" will receive \$200. Members will raise the funds through events such as raffles and donut sales and make the award at the end-of-semester banquet.

This past year, members participated in two case competitions: the KPMG event in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Johnson & Johnson Case Competition, held at the company's corporate headquarters in New Brunswick, New Jersey. For KPMG, each student group made a twenty-minute presentation of its case and appropriate accounting treatment to three judges who acted as senior managers of the audit committee of a client. For the Johnson & Johnson Competition, the team had to recommend future plans for a drug for schizophrenia, whose patent was about to expire.

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### *First-ever Finance Conference establishes high bar for future events.*

The FIU-AA teamed up with the professional business fraternity, Alpha Kappa Psi, to host a finance conference that drew between sixty and eighty attendees to student-moderated sessions on careers in investments, banking, credit unions, corporate finance, and accounting. Each session included highly placed officials from organizations such as Ameriprise, SunTrust Banks, Inc., and Johnson & Johnson.



*Michael Jadoo*

Michael Jadoo, director of professional development for Alpha Kappa Psi, handled the logistics and fundraising responsibilities, along with Giovanni Rondon, special events coordinator, FIU-AA.

"Our purpose was to enlighten students about the finance industry," Jadoo said. "Except for internships, there are few ways in Miami for students to learn about jobs and how to prepare to enter the field."

Thanks to the success of the inaugural conference—which also included two presentations and networking—students plan to continue to offer it, either annually or each semester.

### *Women in ALPFA luncheon inspires students.*



*Vanessa Coronado*

ALPFA has launched "Women in ALPFA" events to provide its members the chance to hear from successful women in the field. Members of the FIU-AA and Beta Alpha Psi volunteered to work at the Miami gathering at which Maria Yip, partner, Grant Thornton, moderated. The college's students affiliate with ALPFA through their membership in the FIU-AA, and the college has the largest ALPFA student chapter in the country. Dean Elam sits on the organization's corporate advisory board.

"We had the opportunity to hear from these role models, who shared their professional experiences and discussed the importance of mentoring," said Vanessa Coronado, president of the FIU-AA during the fall, 2006, semester.

### *Banquet offers chance to offer thanks.*

About 200 faculty members, students, and representatives from firms and companies attended the end-of-the-semester FIU-AA and Beta Alpha Psi banquet. Outgoing officers acknowledged members of the organization, the college—particularly the School of Accounting faculty—and the community, announced the incoming

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Members at FIU-AA Banquet

executive boards, and Beta Alpha Psi held its initiation ceremony for pledges. Alejandro Euse made the arrangements, and Dean Joyce J. Elam, who holds one of the few chairs available on the organization's national board of directors, spoke.

Students expressed their gratitude for many forms of support—including

ing the college's funding of 22 FIU-AA students to attend the ALPFA annual meeting in Texas in August, along with additional funding from Deloitte. They also acknowledged their appreciation to Christos Koulamas, the school's interim director, and faculty advisors Kenneth Henry (FIU-AA) and C. Delano Gray (Beta Alpha Psi), among others. ■

## Student achievements

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### ALPFA

At the Association for Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting's (ALPFA) 2006 annual meeting, held in Fort Worth, Texas, Ana B. Garcia (BACC '06), was named ALPFA Student of the Year (South Region); Manuel Munguia (BACC '05), an auditor at BDO Seidman, was named a Director-at-Large, Student Affairs; and Zameer Upadhyia (BACC '02), president, AMR Consulting Services, who founded the university's chapter of ALPFA in 2001, was the first student to sit on the national board, and is the current president of the ALPFA Miami Chapter, was named South Region Director, a two-year position he began in October, 2006.

## Local community regularly calls upon faculty expertise.

When the South Florida Chapter of the AICPA, among other groups, wants a well-versed speaker on a timely or controversial accounting topic, it need look no further than the School of Accounting. C. Delano Gray, instructor and faculty advisor to the school's chapter of Beta Alpha Psi, is one faculty member who willingly volunteers to share his expertise, offering continuing professional education (CPE) through the College of Business Administration's Center for Accounting, Auditing, and Tax Studies (CAATS).

"We use faculty from the college as a resource as often as we can because they provide our members with quality CPE from knowledgeable and enthusiastic presenters," said Pat Green, CPA of the firm Kratish, Teitelbaum & Green, P.A., and currently chapter president.



C. Delano Gray teaching CPE course

At his most recent session, Gray spoke about "Audit Evidence and Documentation."

"The content was very informative, and he kept the group interested and asking questions," Green said.

The audiences gain from learning the latest about a variety of issues, but benefits accrue to the presenters and the school as well.

"I find these presentations valuable because they help the discourse among professionals on current—sometimes contentious—subjects," said Gray, who has made eleven CPE presentations over the past several years and functions as a voice of moderation when the subject prompts heated debate. "Also, I think the school is the best at what we do and through these CPE opportunities, I can underscore that fact."

Gray maintains copies of his presentations online at [business2.fiu.edu/1048733/www](http://business2.fiu.edu/1048733/www). ■

## Executive and professional education accounting-related courses deliver high-quality and convenience.



Financial Plans & Budgets class with Professor John Zdanowicz

Executive and Professional Education (EPE) in the College of Business Administration offers a wide range of short, intense courses to help professionals stay sharp in accounting and finance. *Financial Plans & Budgets* and *Accounting & Finance for Non-Financial Managers* are just two of them, both delivered recently on the University Park campus.

In early January, 2007, eighteen participants attended *Financial Plans & Budgets*, taught by John Zdanowicz, professor in the college's Finance Department.

*"I got a different view of assets and inventory and how to budget better—information I can apply in my job by preparing better for future expenses."*

—**Jesus Banal**, director of operations,  
AAR Landing Gear Services

"I wanted to obtain a better understanding of finances in order to help with planning and budgeting,"

said Jesus Banal, director of operations, AAR Landing Gear Services, who was taking an EPE program for the first time and who now plans to sign up for others. "I got a different view of assets and inventory and how to budget better—information I can apply in my job by preparing better for future expenses."

Augusto Medina, service director, General Electric, a veteran of EPE courses, having already taken *Writing for Business* and *Presentation Skills for Managers* and who plans to take more, felt the program met his expectations.

"This was a very good course," he said. "I wanted to learn financial terms and techniques, and I did."

Several participants singled out the value of learning about the "DuPont Model," which analyzes the profitability of a company using traditional management tools while integrating some elements of the income statement with

those from the balance sheet. Others commended the professor.

"Dr. Zdanowicz is clearly knowledgeable about finance and his instruction method is clear and engaging," one said, and another commented, "The instructor kept my attention, explained thoroughly the material, and answered questions readily. I would like to attend other classes that he would instruct."

### *Programs enable attendees to learn—or re-learn.*

The working professionals who attend EPE programs come from around the area—and include members of the university community as well.

"*Accounting & Finance for Non-Financial Managers* helped me to understand what I need to do when I am dealing with controllers, purchasing, accounts payable, and the financial officer," said Carolina Abella-Coker, business office

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coordinator in the university's College of Nursing and Health. "It was very helpful because it provided a review of all the important issues and it put the information in the terminology of the university. Since the university is

a public institution, some things are different."

For her, the course was not so much new as a welcome refresher.

"I had learned some of these mat-

ters when pursuing my degree, but I didn't use them," she said. "This course helped me remember them, and now that I do have to use them, I apply what I learned on a regular basis."

Like many other participants in EPE programs, she has taken others, receiving certificates in customer relationship management (CRM) and human resource management (HRM).

"We offer a full menu of courses and are always willing to discuss with clients customizing a program and offering it on campus or at their site," said Robert Garcia, EPE director.

For information about EPE offerings, visit <http://business.fiu.edu/epe/epe.cfm>. ■



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—**Carolina Abella-Coker**, business office coordinator, College of Nursing and Health, Florida International University

## MACC degree helps university employee change course.

When Richard Patterson, an auditor with Ocariz Gitlin & Zomerfeld, LLP, found out he could earn his Master of Accounting (MACC) in ten months, he was excited—and a little skeptical.

"I wondered 'how can they compress two years worth of learning into ten months?'" Patterson said.

Happily he found out it was possible when he enrolled in the College of Business Administration's program.

"It's intense, but so well structured that you graduate with broad-ranging knowledge about all aspects of accounting," said Patterson, who liked his job as a student advisor in the college but wanted to make a career change. "When I finished the program, I felt confident that I was up to speed with what was happening in the business world."

Patterson describes the coursework as on-target, says the professors were

outstanding, and lauds the dedication of program manager Mike Pischner (BS '00)—a "great guy." Another aspect of the program that has proven invaluable to his career: the ability to meet and build relationships with other professionals working in the field.



*"I wound up with several job offers given my MACC credentials."*

—**Richard Patterson**, auditor, Ocariz Gitlin & Zomerfeld, LLP

"Many of my interview opportunities came through someone connected with the program," Patterson said. "I wound up with several job offers given my MACC credentials and chose a medium-sized firm in Miami with about fifty staff members." He looks forward to working with different clients and to learning about the many aspects of firm operations and business. In the meantime, he continues to swing by campus regularly (he lives only five miles away) to greet friends from the program and check in with Pischner. He also keeps in touch with fellow classmates, who are now friends and colleagues.

"Many of us who work in this community have come from the School of Accounting," Patterson said. "That's part of what makes the accounting field a fun place to work." ■

## Variety of events link School of Accounting and community.

If a “little knowledge is a dangerous thing,” then recent efforts by the School of Accounting and local firms to expand their knowledge of each other are a step in the right direction. Three separate events have opened doors, put faces to names and voices, and enabled the college and its business counterparts to get to know how each can benefit the other.

The New Faculty Reception, held early in the 2006 fall semester, got the closer relationship underway.

### *Ernst & Young shares information about its expertise and expectations.*

On November 17, 2006, John P. Walsh, Mario Rodriguez, and Michael Lawrence Jr., three members of the Ernst & Young (E&Y) business risk services group, presented to faculty members and staff from the School of Accounting.

“E&Y, which hires many of our graduates, had asked for the chance to speak to us to give the faculty members the opportunity to learn more about their specific practice and the firm in general,” said Manuel Dieguez, instructor, who alerted his colleagues to the request. “This knowledge will enable faculty members to provide more information to students about what E&Y has to offer.”

From Ernst & Young’s point of view, the session also gave them the chance to give professors some insight into the type of student they would like to know more about.

*“We are looking for smart people who are dedicated and whom we can train.”*

—**John P. Walsh**, Ernst & Young, Business Risk Services Group



*E & Y representatives talk to faculty about their organization.*

“We are looking for smart people who are dedicated and whom we can train,” Walsh said.

### *“Meet and Greet Luncheon” affords professors an additional chance to deepen their knowledge about local accounting careers.*

The firm of Goldstein Schechter Price Lucas Horwitz & Co., PA, hosted a luncheon on December 8, 2006, at La Palma in Coral Gables to provide a social setting in which faculty members and members of the firm could get to know each other.

The “Meet and Greet Luncheon” was the brainchild of Carlos Garcia, partner, and currently an MBA student in the college.

*“We believe that our success is based in large part on the quality of the students from the School of Accounting.”*

—**Carlos Garcia**, partner, Goldstein Schechter Price Lucas Horwitz & Co., PA

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*Faculty and staff meet with business leaders in the accounting community during a “Meet and Greet” Luncheon.*

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“The luncheon was a wonderful opportunity to sit with the faculty and administrators in the School of Accounting and other members of the College of Business Administration and discuss how impressed we are with the quality of the accounting students passing through the programs,” he said. “We believe that our success is based in large part on the quality of the students from the School of Accounting as well as on our effectiveness in recruiting from there, and we look forward to a continued partnership.”

Ten members of the firm, including three alumni from the School of Accounting, attended. Eight members of the accounting faculty and four staff members represented the school. Executive Dean Joyce J. Elam and Christos Koulamas, interim director of the school, also participated, with Dean Elam making some remarks.

“I thought it was an excellent event, and I enjoyed meeting the partners from the firm and seeing that they have an exciting and growing practice,” said Steven Vogel, an adjunct professor

in the School of Accounting and an attorney. “It’s certainly a firm I would recommend to any student pursuing a career in public accounting.”

Garcia was equally enthusiastic.

“We really thought it was great,” he said. “So many of my partners have told me how fantastic they thought the lunch was and how pleased they were that they had an opportunity to meet with the faculty. I am glad that we were able to make it happen and look forward to doing it again.” ■

## Graduates find success in striking out on their own.

They say three’s a charm. That certainly seems to be the case at De La Torre, Taraboulos & Company, a firm started by three School of Accounting graduates that has been very successful since its launch in 2004.

“We started small, but always knew we wanted to grow,” partner Jorge de la Torre (BACC ’96) said. He credits his dad with helping to foster his entrepreneurial drive.

Partners, and brothers, Jeff (MACC ’00, BACC ’96) and Robert (BACC ’97) Taraboulos explain they had long talked about going into business for themselves. When Jeff met de la Torre at Deloitte, the timing seemed right.

De la Torre says the current accounting field is ideal for smaller firms like theirs. His partners also describe a strategy of cultivating client relationships and providing all the services of big firms, at lower prices. That approach, coupled with a focus on quality and personal service, has managed to attract new customers with very little advertising.

“A big part of our success was having a joint vision of where we wanted to go,” Robert Taraboulos said. “That helped us set our goals and has driven everything we do.”



From left, Robert and Jeff Taraboulos and Jorge de la Torre

*“A big part of our success was having a joint vision of where we wanted to go. That helped us set our goals and has driven everything we do.”*

—Robert Taraboulos, partner,  
De La Torre, Taraboulos & Company

They also credit their time in the School of Accounting as being a critical factor in their professional success.

“It’s really tough,” Jeff Taraboulos said, “but you leave the program knowing accounting inside and out.”

As the firm has grown, so has its desire to support the school. De la Torre, whose cousin, José de la Torre, is the dean of the Chapman Graduate School, recently joined the School of Accounting’s Advisory Board. All three will continue to seek out fresh talent as they expand their enterprise.

“The students in the accounting program are smart, dedicated, and focused,” de La Torre said. “We’d love to be able to bring more of them on board.” ■

## Advisory Board welcomes Rachlin Cohen & Holtz LLP partner.

Donald Butler (BBA '79), a partner in the firm of Rachlin Cohen & Holtz, LLP, appreciates what the School of Accounting has done for his career. Now he wants to help it do the same for others.

Butler has joined the school's advisory board. As a member, he believes his role is to help ensure the program continues to churn out top-notch accounting students prepared to meet the demands of the workplace.

In Butler's opinion, that means teaching students critical thinking skills. He explains that even with rules, guidelines, and regulations, "at some point in most projects, it comes down to your judgment and assessment of what's right and best."

Butler adds that because his firm and others draw heavily from the school's graduate pool, they have a "responsibility to make sure the school continues to graduate students who are industry-savvy and able to move comfortably in many areas."



*"We have a responsibility to make sure the school continues to graduate students who are industry savvy and able to move comfortably in many areas."*

—Donald Butler, partner, Rachlin Cohen & Holtz, LLP

He also wants to ensure that graduates consider the professional opportunities at medium-sized firms.

"When I graduated in 1979, all people ever talked about was the national firms," Butler said. "I want accounting graduates to know we're out there, too."

Butler thinks a company like his offers a dynamic and challenging work environment. His position as an advisor in several areas means that his workday is far from staid.

"No two of our clients are identical, and I am regularly tapping into different skills and experiences to get the job done," Butler said.

At Rachlin, he said, there is tremendous potential for growth and learning among employees who take initiative and "hit the ground running."

"My time in the School of Accounting taught me how to find answers and find them fast when I come up against something new," he said. "That's a skill that serves me well every day in this job." ■

## MACC graduate presides over fast-growing practice.

When Monte Kane (MACC '82), managing director of Kane & Company, P.A., looks out at the landscape of accounting, he sees a field exploding with opportunity. And he's a guy who should know.

Kane started his own firm in 1990 and said it's been full steam ahead since then. The firm recently opened offices in Orlando and Las Vegas, and Kane anticipates growth of between thirty and forty percent in 2007 alone. The company provides auditing, assurance, business evaluation, litigation support, forensic accounting, and

other services.

Kane attributes the firm's success to a business formula that emphasizes value-added service every step of the way.

"Our motto is to give a little something extra in everything we do," he said. "I really think that's the basis for our growth and strength as a company."

He champions the professional possibilities at a smaller or mid-sized accounting firm. Due to the fact that they operate on a smaller scale, he said, small firms often provide "fast paths

to partnership, an entrepreneurial environment, flexibility in the work schedule, mobile work venues," and other benefits.

"In the same way we strive to do more for our clients, we also seek to provide a workplace in which our staff is engaged in what they're doing and is given every chance to grow both intellectually and professionally," he said. "Our people are our most important asset."

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Kane wholeheartedly turns to his alma mater in his ongoing search for qualified professionals to staff his shop.

“We hire from the School of Accounting every year because we know the caliber of employee we’ll be getting,” he said. “Many students from the school have unique backgrounds. Many come from different cultures, and when you realize that they’ve excelled academically when English is not their first language, that’s a big ‘wow’.” ■



*“In the same way we strive to do more for our clients, we also seek to provide a workplace in which our staff is engaged in what they’re doing and is given every chance to grow both intellectually and professionally.”*

—**Monte Kane**, managing director, Kane & Company, P.A.

## School benefits from dedication of Ernst & Young executive.

Oscar Suarez, the Miami office managing partner for Ernst & Young (E&Y), is considered something of an “honorary alumnus” by College of Business Administration staff. While not a graduate, Suarez has nonetheless dedicated his time and energy to making the School of Accounting a world-class training ground for business students. The school holds a “special place” in his heart, in part because “it has been a tremendous source of exceptional candidates and has strengthened the accounting profession overall.”

A founding member of the Dean’s Council, Suarez also was responsible, along with Director of Alumni and Partner Relations Monique Catoggio (EMBA ’03), for coming up with the idea to establish affinity groups at local accounting firms. The objective: to formalize existing graduate networks within firms and strengthen their connection to the school. The groups—which Suarez says help “feed” participation in the alumni association—emphasize the importance of providing financial support to the School of Accounting (E&Y matches employee donations), and of “paving the way” for new graduates by participating in recruitment efforts.

“I think it’s important that our employees help others in the same way that they were helped when they were just starting out,” Suarez said. “It’s about building the next generation of business people, helping to maintain the quality of the business school, and ensuring the continued strength of the economy in South Florida.”



*“I think it’s important that our employees help others in the same way that they were helped when they were just starting out.”*

—**Oscar Suarez**, Miami office managing partner and South Florida tax leader, Ernst & Young

Suarez credits the college with helping create a vibrant business environment that is inclusive and that “channels excellence from all walks of life.” As a member of his firm’s national diversity and ethnicity task force, he says that the business school “has really been able to achieve a spectacular balance in the breadth and variety of the student body, and that has been very beneficial to business.” ■

## Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant sets new standard for Alumni Day.



Berkowitz Dick Pollack & Brant (BDPB) recently hosted an Alumni Day with all the popular elements of this successful FIU Alumni Association program and brought something new and exciting to the renamed event.

What was the same? The university's alumni association and the College of Business Administration described their pride in the alumni and updated the forty attendees about news in the university, its alumni association, and the Business Alumni Chapter. Also, the gathering brought alumni within the firm together.

The difference? BDPB suggested inviting members of Beta Alpha Psi. One dozen accepted and gained insight into the potential for growth in their careers.

"By hosting an Alumni Day, BDPB was not only able to provide an enjoyable social networking event for our own university alumni—of whom we have many—but also we were able to meet many of the School of Account-

ing's best and brightest students," said Richard A. Pollack (MSF '02), director-in-charge of forensic and valuation services at the firm. "We have a number of professionals with ties to the university, and the event enabled the students to speak with firm members informally, learn more about our firm's structure,

and see for themselves how strong a relationship BDPB and the university have," he said.

The idea worked so well, the alumni association plans to ask other hosts if they'd also like to include students.

Cherie Hennig, professor, School of Accounting and director of the Executive Master of Science in Taxation program; Monique Catoggio (EMBA '03), director of alumni and partner relations; and Mireya Fonseca, assistant director, external relations and resource development, represented the college.

"It's great to work with BDPB, which is an important part of our business community, is growing tremendously, is recruiting for high positions, and already employs many of our business school's alumni," Catoggio said. "We appreciated that they wanted to show their employees that they care about the college and that they hope alumni will support us." ■



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