

# SOA

BYU Marriott School of Business

School of  
Accountancy



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

# DIRECTOR'S 2024 MESSAGE



Dear School of Accountancy alumni and friends,

As another school year passes by, we in the School of Accountancy (SOA) could not be more pleased to relay the great progress we have been making within the program. Currently, we are ranked No. 3 by *U.S. News & World Report* for Best Undergraduate Accounting Program. This past year, the SOA also reached a record number of 438 junior core applicants. The SOA's forward momentum, even in challenging times, is truly remarkable.

We also have a number of faculty changes to share. This year, we are bidding a fond farewell to four professors who will be retiring: Greg Burton, Monte Swain, Ron Worsham, and Mark Zimbelman. We thank them for the 111 collective years of service they have so generously dedicated to the SOA and our students, and we wish them well with their future endeavors. As we send off our retirees, we also welcome our new 2023 hires, Hannah Judd (MAcc 2017) and Amanda Pope (MAcc 2007), who taught this school year. In addition, we welcome our new 2024 hires: Nicole Donahoo (MAcc 2020), Jeffrey Pickerd (MAcc 2011), Ryan Sommerfeldt (MAcc 2016), and visiting faculty James Hansen (MAcc 1999).

This year, we are focused on four new initiatives: connecting women alumnae and women students, recruiting BYU students to accounting starting at the freshman level, reaching out to underrepresented students who may need assistance to succeed, and enhancing the current SOA student experience. We connected 37 of our alumnae who provided mentoring to 111 MAcc women students during the school year. We placed 5,000 SOA swag bags in the freshmen dorms, which included informational flyers, an SOA-branded power bank, and an invitation to join our accounting

information session for new students. We partnered with BYU Multicultural Student Services and gave three presentations to over 300 potential students. For our Student Experience Initiative, we held our first back-to-school social, hosted and supported our own student SOA intramural teams, and held a winter semester devotional for our faculty and students.

The SOA is laser-focused on our students, building on the outstanding foundation that our alumni and faculty have built over the past 103 years. Please consider contributing so that we can continue to support our students and the tremendous success of the SOA family. We encourage your involvement in the SOA and its endeavors for years to come!

Douglas F. Prawitt, PhD, CPA  
 Director, BYU Marriott's School of Accountancy  
 McAllister/Deloitte Distinguished Professor of Accountancy

# CONTENTS

Year in Review	4
Program Highlights	5
Experience Report	6
Impact Report	12
Progress Report	20
Program Support	26



Back-to-School Social



Europe Accounting Study Abroad

All communication should be sent to the following:

School of Accountancy  
 BYU Marriott School of Business  
 540 Tanner Building  
 Provo, UT 84602

Phone (801) 422-4959 | Email: [soalumni@byu.edu](mailto:soalumni@byu.edu)



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# YEAR IN REVIEW

## Back-to-School

In early September, the SOA held a back-to-school social in Lions Park, Provo. Students were able to get to know each other while participating in various games and activities, including a bouncy house obstacle course.



## Bonding Over the Field

The SOA sponsored its first six intramural teams in coed soccer, volleyball, and ultimate frisbee.



## Stepping up to the Challenge

Coming back from a seven-year hiatus, the pit-crew challenge enabled junior core students to participate in a group bonding activity.

## Spiritual Guidance in the SOA

The SOA held a fireside in which two student converts spoke about their spiritual journeys.

## Recognizing Excellence

Headed by Associate Professor Ron Worsham, BYU's Beta Alpha Psi Chapter received international recognition for its outstanding efforts and was awarded Superior Status for 2023.



## Celebrating Decades of Service

The SOA held a party to celebrate the retirements of recent retirees Greg Burton, Monte Swain, Ron Worsham, and Mark Zimbelman.



## Advocating for Women

The Women's Initiative Committee was formed and held its first meeting.

## Accounting Across the Globe

The SOA held a 31-day accounting study abroad with 20 students and two faculty. They visited 14 cities in six countries, including an overnight ferry ride, meeting with different business companies.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	BS Acc	MAcc
Applicants	438	270
Students Admitted	378	210
Entered	325	200
Percentage Admitted	86%	77%

3.78 BS Acc Average Entering GPA

3.71 MAcc Average Entering GPA

FEMALE

BS Acc

36%

MAcc

31%



MALE

BS Acc

64%

MAcc

69%

## RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT

BS Acc Avg. Salary: \$75,000

MAcc Avg. Salary: \$83,000



BS Acc & MAcc  
Job Placement

82

RECRUITING FIRMS  
extended offers

72

RECRUITING FIRMS  
where students signed offers

## ALUMNI & FACULTY

15,561 Total Living Alumni

29 Total Faculty

6 Total Adjuncts



See More  
Highlights

## RANKING



U.S. & NEWS  
WORLD 2023 REPORT  
Undergraduate  
3rd

## CONNECTING THE FINAL PIECE

When Jennifer Maroney, School of Accountancy (SOA) manager of alumni relations, was hired, she had a dream of creating an alumni network that would rival those at Harvard or Yale. “Here in the SOA, we have one of the largest alumni networks within BYU, with close to 16,000 alumni,” Maroney says. “The end goal has always been to provide a way for our alumni to be connected to each other, to our current students, and to the SOA.”

After meeting with several alumni relations managers from top-ranked schools, Maroney recognized that there was a missing piece in the SOA’s current network. She needed to provide a

platform to connect both alumni and students and house all communication in one location. Armed with this information, Maroney envisioned the SOA ‘Ohana platform.

In 2014, before the platform was created, the first step in connecting alumni was building a LinkedIn group page where all alumni news, jobs, and events were posted. While the page started the process of connecting alumni and students, there were limitations to what the site could do. In addition, the evolving needs of alumni and students came to light, such as better avenues for mentoring, varied groups for alumni interests, and easier ways to communicate.

Maroney imagined that a new platform would incorporate the best features of the LinkedIn page and give users more options to curate their experience.

This dream was finally realized in 2024 with the launch of SOA ‘Ohana ([www.byusoa.org](http://www.byusoa.org)), the new alumni platform created by Gravyty, a software platform developer that specializes in alumni engagement. Drawing meaning from the Hawaiian term *‘ohana*, the name of SOA’s alumni platform encapsulates the student-led ‘Ohana program in the SOA. Both the student program and the new alumni initiative work to inspire a feeling of family in the SOA community.

Within the SOA ‘Ohana network, each user can personalize their profile with biographical and professional information, look for or post job positions, and directly message other users without having to be connected, like on LinkedIn. In addition, a business directory is available for users to advertise their personal or professional companies.

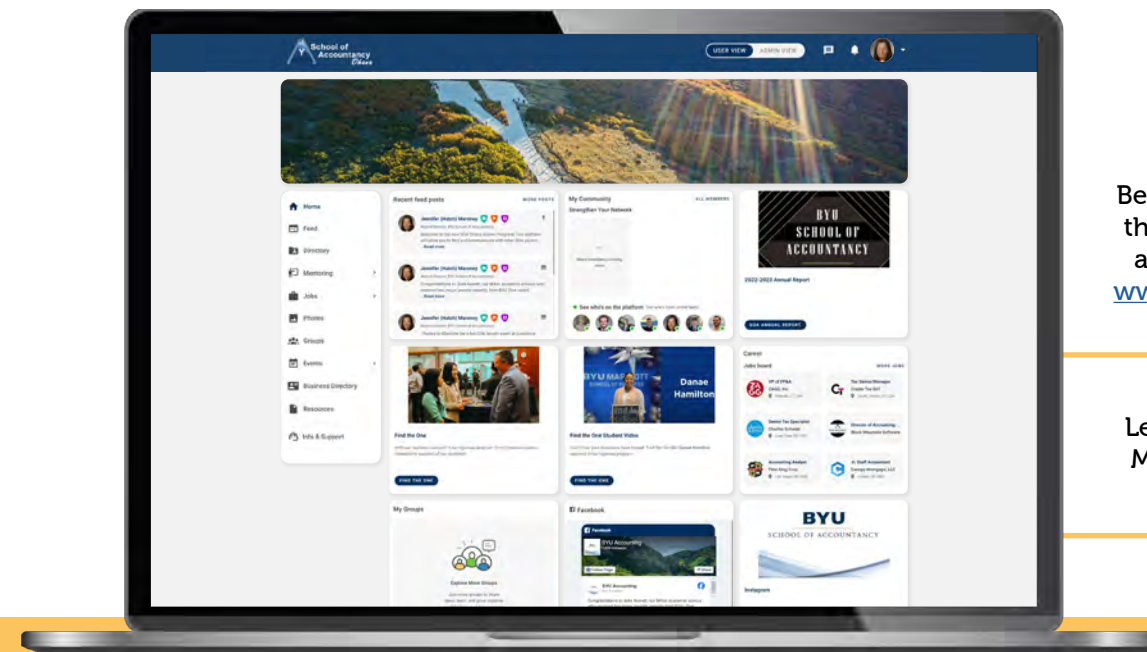
One highlight of the platform is the affinity groups, where users can join specific groups based on professional and personal interests (e.g., lawyers, retirees, junior core cohorts, alumnae, etc.). Within these affinity groups, users can network, ask questions, and hold town hall meetings to discuss current topics.

The new platform also helps users indicate areas in which they can help out in the SOA, including mentoring. Users can identify themselves as mentors or as someone who would like to be

mentored, and they can search for mentors or mentees based on different criteria (e.g., areas of expertise, location, corporations, etc.).

Other platform features include embedded social media content, a feed with alumni news postings, and an easier way for alumni to donate back to the SOA.

Now, alumni have a platform with many ways to connect with each other and to the SOA, and Maroney feels the SOA ‘Ohana platform will finally become the world-renowned alumni network she has dreamed of since 2014. “I always knew the platform would be the final piece of the puzzle that would take our alumni network to the next level,” Maroney says. “With the SOA ‘Ohana platform, connecting alumni and students has never been easier and will help bring everybody together as *‘ohana*.”



Become a part of  
the SOA ‘Ohana  
and sign up at  
[www.byusoa.org](http://www.byusoa.org).

Learn  
More





## INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES

Over the past 100 years, the SOA has always focused on the goal of creating a world-class accounting program founded in and permeated by the gospel of Jesus Christ to foster student success. With many accomplishments and innovations (e.g., the world-renowned junior core program), the school continues to evolve and progress. This past year, the SOA strategically developed and formalized several initiatives to continue attracting quality students and provide them with an outstanding SOA experience. These initiatives include the Freshman Initiative, the Belonging Initiative, the Student Experience Initiative, and the Women's Initiative.

Troy Lewis, associate director of the SOA, recognizes how these new initiatives have helped the SOA keep its focus on the success of its students. "The initiative programs have helped the SOA better direct our limited resources on things that truly matter the most," he says. In keeping students as its primary focal point, the SOA hopes that students will perceive the program's commitment not only to their academic success but also to their personal happiness.



"The initiative programs have helped the SOA better focus our limited resources on things that truly matter the most."

## BELONGING INITIATIVE

The Belonging Initiative's purpose is to provide information and opportunities to future BYU students who belong to underrepresented demographics. Partnering with BYU Multicultural Student Services, the SOA participated in its summer SOAR program. SOAR, a week-long college preparation program, invites rising high school seniors to come and learn about BYU. During the SOAR program, the SOA presented about the accounting program and connected with more than 300 students. Afterward, the SOA maintained correspondence with these students during their application process. Once BYU admission decisions were made, the SOA sent out 198 congratulatory emails and invited them to attend the upcoming fall accounting information session.

## WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

The Women's Initiative aims to increase the enrollment, involvement, and connection of female students, faculty, and alumnae in the SOA. In 2013, women made up 17 percent of those enrolled in the junior core program. In 2023, the number of junior core female students nearly doubled, reaching 36 percent. Even with this increase, SOA leadership, along with the Board of Advisors, felt that female recruitment and alumnae connections could be strengthened. Thus, the Women's Initiative was introduced. To read more about this initiative, see the article "Continuing Change and Opportunity" on page 11.

## FRESHMAN INITIATIVE

For the past three years, the SOA has reached out to freshmen the moment they start their college career at BYU by participating in different university freshman outreach projects and events. In fall 2023, the SOA combined its current efforts with new freshmen outreach projects to formalize the Freshman Initiative within the program. One of these new measures involved placing 5,000 welcome bags in the freshmen dorms, which included flyers about the SOA programs, an invitation to attend an upcoming accounting info session, and a small SOA-branded power bank. In addition to the welcome bags, the SOA also set up information booths in front of the freshman dorms and a booth at new student orientation. This Freshman Initiative has allowed the SOA to keep in touch with these students as they explore different majors at BYU. Last year, the SOA admitted more than 50 students who were attracted to the program through the freshman outreach efforts.

## STUDENT EXPERIENCE INITIATIVE

The Student Experience Initiative encourages students' personal, spiritual, and professional growth. At the beginning of the school year, the SOA implemented the back-to-school social, organized a department devotional, and sponsored SOA student intramural teams. In the future, the SOA is considering opportunities to invite students to family home evening activities at faculty members' homes and to attend BYU arts or sporting events together.



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

## JERRY CHIANG

Raised in a corporate area in Taiwan, Jerry Chiang (MAcc 2024) quickly became interested in accounting. For his undergrad, Chiang enrolled at BYU–Hawaii and transferred to BYU’s Provo campus for his MAcc in the fall of 2023.

When he first joined the School of Accountancy (SOA), Chiang was worried about what his experience would be like at BYU Marriott. Being a non-native English speaker and learning business practices in a new country was daunting. However, Chiang immediately felt welcomed into the SOA family. “[The faculty and students’] love, their care, and the sense of belonging I feel here will really give me a good pathway,” Chiang says. In the fall of 2024, Chiang, along with his wife and son, will move to San Francisco to work for Deloitte as an audit associate. Eventually, Chiang hopes that he can return to his roots in Taiwan and serve people in his home community.



Learn More about Jerry



Learn more about Danae:



## DANAE HAMILTON

Ever since she was young, Danae Hamilton (MAcc 2024) has been a pursuer of the arts. In addition to her love for the arts, Hamilton found herself fascinated with budgeting and decided to study accounting while enjoying her love of arts on the side.

When Hamilton first came to the United States, she enrolled as an accounting student at Ensign College (then known as LDS Business College) and graduated with her bachelor’s degree in April 2022. In 2023, Hamilton began the MAcc program at BYU Marriott. In her experience as a student, Hamilton has loved the challenge that accounting provides. “I would think that I am a problem solver, and so I like the problem-solving of accounting,” Hamilton says.

In fall 2024, Hamilton will be heading to Boston to work for Deloitte in audit. Once Hamilton establishes her career, she plans to dive back into the world of art by taking classes in fashion and dance performance.

# CONTINUING CHANGE AND OPPORTUNITY

For many years, SOA leadership has acknowledged the lower percentage of SOA female student representation compared to other accounting schools. To address this issue, SOA Director Doug Prawitt collaborated with Board of Advisors member Rhonda Powell (MAcc 1988), and the SOA Women’s Initiative was born.

The Women’s Initiative includes multiple smaller projects that fulfill the goals of recruiting more women, fostering allyship, and building connections between students and alumnae, both professionally and personally. To reach out to more women in the SOA, a committee comprised of female Board of Advisors members and SOA alumnae invited students to a Women in Accounting lunch. More than 80 students attended to network and ask a panel of alumnae and department leadership about the SOA.

In addition to advocating for more women in accounting, the committee held panel discussions for the SOA faculty about allyship. They invited male faculty to continue their commitment and support in this initiative. “Men are a part of this as well—they can be allies to women,” Powell remarks.

The Women’s Initiative committee also implemented a student mentoring program to connect SOA students and alumnae. Shanna Steed (MAcc 1990), leader of the mentorship program, explained that the purpose is to not only make connections but also generate an atmosphere of respect between students and alumni. “A climate of respect and belonging enhances our



learning, facilitates collaboration, and encourages personal growth,” Steed says. During this past year, 37 alumnae mentored 111 MAcc students.

In continuing the goals of the Women’s Initiative, Prawitt and other SOA leaders hope to involve more SOA alumnae. Alumnae interested in participating in this program are encouraged to fill out the SOA Women’s Initiative Survey. “Come share and be mentors and help us continue to evolve as we support students,” Powell says.

Take the Survey



## BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF BYU

How do we use technology to enhance what goes on in accounting? That is the question BYU Marriott's SOA professors Scott Summers and David Wood are constantly working to answer. Together, they created Accounting 591R-3: Accounting Technology Hub, a class where students combine technology and accounting to develop a website and create technical challenges. This course, along with its accompanying website, was nicknamed "TechHub."

The student-created challenges on TechHub (<https://www.techhub.training/>) specialize in technologies like Microsoft Excel, ChatGPT, Microsoft Power BI, and SQL. One of the most popular challenges requires students to evaluate a fried chicken restaurant, utilizing various software tools to calculate, analyze, and visualize the restaurant's sales, expenses, and net income. With interactive challenges like these, TechHub empowers students to discover and share their unique solutions, propels them to harness their ingenuity, and engages them in their academic journey.

"How do I take and build cool new things and make something that doesn't already exist? That is a lot of what TechHub is for students," Wood reflects.

Since the website's official launch in March 2023, TechHub has reverberated throughout the program, leaving an indelible mark on students both within and beyond the SOA. More than 11,000 users from 109 countries have already visited the website. Alex Garrett, a first-year MAcc student, says, "Being a cofounder of the TechHub website was an unmatched opportunity for me. The collaborative effort we all put into creating this resource was not just about coding. It was about inspiring learning, fostering growth, and making a positive impact on the worldwide accounting community."

Praising the efforts of TechHub, SOA Director Doug Prawitt affirms, "This effort is a great example of SOA professors being a catalyst for not only our students' learning but also for others far beyond the boundaries of BYU."

## TAX POLICY THINK TANK

Throughout his tenure in BYU Marriott's School of Accountancy (SOA), Associate Professor John Barrick always dreamed of creating a club focused on tax policy. With the help of some first-year MAcc students, Barrick made this dream a reality when the Tax Policy Association was launched in 2021.

Now in its third year, the association has more than 70 members, including SOA, law, and JD/MAcc students, who meet bimonthly to discuss current issues in tax policy. In these discussions, students develop their skill sets and learn about future careers within the field.

In addition to regular meetings, the association hosts a case competition every spring. This competition was implemented to garner interest from potential association members and help students understand how to research and present on tax policy. Students' practical exposure to tax policy then culminates in a trip to Washington, DC, to visit with tax policymakers. While on this trip, students can get a glimpse of possible careers and see the principles they have studied in practice.

Many association members share the goal of one day working on Capitol Hill. Trenton Werts, first-year MAcc student and association vice president, shares this goal. During the association's visit to Washington, DC, in April 2023, Werts met with Utah congressman Blake

Moore and secured an internship for Winter 2024, where he worked under Blake Moore on the House Ways and Means Committee in tax policy.

Tax Policy Association President Brianna Landon, a JD/MAcc student, has also experienced professional development from the association. "I've had to learn a lot of leadership skills and how to work with the team," she says. Landon and fellow leaders are optimistic about expanding club membership. By extending the association's reach across campus, they hope that more students will engage with tax policy and hone skills for their future careers, whether that be on Capitol Hill or in other areas.



# RETIREMENTS

## IMPACT ON THE PROGRAM



**G**reg Burton joined the SOA faculty in 2001 as an instructor of auditing, accounting information systems, international accounting, and international business. Burton led numerous study abroad programs and coauthored the proposal for a \$500,000 donation from EY to expand international opportunities for BYU Marriott faculty and students. He has presented at conferences in China and Greece and across the United States, and he is fluent in German, Serbian, and Croatian. Burton has served on national and international accounting associations and is published in prominent academic journals. He has been honored with many distinguished teaching awards, including the BYU Marriott Excellence in Teaching Award (2016), the Ian Hague Award for Outstanding Service to the International Accounting Section from the American Accounting Association (2020), and the KPMG Professorship (2019). Burton's special interest in international business and extensive international experience has helped to foster a global mindset for those in the SOA.



**M**onte Swain joined the SOA faculty in 1991 to teach and research management accounting in 1991. Swain took a one-year academic leave in 1999 to serve as the CFO for Authorize. Following his return to BYU Marriott, he served as the associate director of the MBA and executive MBA programs from 2011 to 2013. He also served as the management accounting section president of the American Accounting Association from 2015 to 2016 and the director of the nonprofit Profitability Analytics Center of Excellence since 2019. Swain has received several notable teaching awards, including the Deloitte Professorship in 2003 and BYU Marriott MBA Core Professor of the Year in 2021. He has presented his research at more than 75 conferences, has contributed to innumerable publications, and was involved as an advisor, consultant, or director on many professional committees. While highly accomplished, Swain is best known for his lifelong priority of lifting others.



**R**on Worsham was inspired to join the SOA faculty in 1994 after earning both his bachelor's degree in accounting and his MAcc from BYU Marriott, followed by a PhD in accounting from the University of Florida. As an associate professor, Worsham focused on tax, including tax compliance, taxes and business strategy, and professional tax judgment. Worsham has been a visiting professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business and The University of Texas at Austin, and he has contributed to several textbooks and numerous academic journal articles on taxation. He has served on more than a dozen national taxation associations, received several national and university fellowships, and consulted with companies such as Deloitte, EY, KPMG, Moss Adams, PwC, and RSM US. Worsham is recognized at BYU Marriott for his efforts to connect theory to real-world practice in the classroom.



**M**ark Zimbelman joined the SOA faculty in 1999 to teach courses on auditing and fraud examination. Zimbelman graduated *magna cum laude* from BYU's accounting program in 1984, after which he gained six years of experience working as a controller and an auditor in public accounting, followed by three years of professorship at the University of Oklahoma. While at BYU Marriott, he has developed a national reputation for his research on auditors' detection of financial statement fraud, which he has published in prestigious accounting research journals and the textbook *Fraud Examination*. Zimbelman has also worked on multiple editorial boards for top accounting journals and continues to maintain a blog, *FraudBytes*. In 2013, he was awarded BYU Marriott's Scholarly Excellence Award and received the Mary and Ellis Professorship. Zimbelman has dedicated his career to helping students find intellectual and spiritual truth.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR RETIREES



Monte Swain



Ron Worsham



Mark Zimbelman





## COMMUTING IN STYLE

Instead of having a traditional commute to work, Alexis Rodriguez de Almeida (MAcc 2011) takes a 20-minute helicopter ride along the scenic Florida coast to get to NextEra Energy's corporate headquarters.



Since her time studying accounting at BYU Marriott's School of Accountancy, Rodriguez de Almeida has preferred to take things one at a time. "I do what I want to do. And then, when I'm ready to do something else, I take that step," she says. As graduation approached, Rodriguez de Almeida found herself without a concrete, long-term career goal, much in line with her one-step-at-a-time philosophy. However, one thing was certain: She yearned to find a place where both she and her family could thrive and find happiness.

This quest led her to embark on her journey with PwC in Miami. After spending four years in audit with PwC, Rodriguez de Almeida felt it was time for a change. She landed a position with NextEra Energy in the internal audit department. In her fifth year at the renewable energy company, Rodriguez de Almeida was extended a compelling proposition: an opportunity to delve into the realm of data and analytics. Now, she leads a team of data and analytics professionals within the internal audit group, often requiring her to fly to corporate headquarters several times a week. At NextEra Energy, Rodriguez de Almeida found a place where she can meaningfully contribute and spend more time with her family.

While Rodriguez de Almeida primarily focuses on the present in her current position, she remains mindful of an eternal perspective. "Keeping that eternal perspective really helps you focus on what's important," she says. "It helps you to step back, take a breath, reevaluate, put things in order, and manage things as they come."

## SKYWARD AMBITIONS

Whether he's teaching in the classroom, flying in his plane, or riding his bike 16,000 miles a year, Mark Taylor (MAcc 1988) always approaches life with a strong work ethic.

When Taylor first enrolled in the accounting program, he planned on pursuing public accounting. However, as he delved deeper into the program, he discovered a newfound appreciation for the academic aspect of accounting. "For me, going down the academic path, I just can't imagine doing anything else," Taylor says. After he completed his master's degree and PhD at the University of Arizona, Taylor joined the faculty at the University of Nebraska. Over the next 20 years, Taylor worked at the University of South Carolina, Creighton University as an endowed chair and at Case Western Reserve University as a department chair. In 2019, Taylor made his way to the University of South Florida (USF) in Tampa, where he took on his current position as the director of the Lynn Pippenger School of Accountancy.

As director, Taylor stays busy managing three separate USF campuses: Tampa, Saint Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee. In addition to his position as director,



Taylor serves on various investment company boards as an audit committee chair. Taylor is also currently serving as president of the American Accounting Association (AAA), which involves planning seminars, conferences, and the AAA's annual meeting.

Although it is a challenge to balance his multiple responsibilities, Taylor derives great fulfillment from his work, particularly when he's in the classroom sharing his knowledge. Taylor's teaching approach includes fostering intellectual growth and helping to develop the personal character of his students, including a diligent work ethic and dedication to integrity. "Keep pushing through when the going gets tough," Taylor emphasizes.

# ALUMNI IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



**JEREMY ROBINSON**

Following what he calls a “typical financial audit career journey,” Jeremy Robinson (MAcc 2002) has spent his career in public accounting, coming up the ranks from staff to now being a managing director in EY’s Sacramento, California, office. In this position, Robinson has worked with people from places such as Guam and Vietnam. When he isn’t in the office, Robinson loves playing games with his wife and five kids. He also enjoys basketball, golfing, scuba diving, and jet skiing. Although thriving in his current position, Robinson hopes that one day, after retirement, he can serve a mission and open an entertainment or food establishment to keep himself busy.



**TODD ELDRIDGE**

Even if it means running from place to place, Todd Eldredge (MAcc 1999) has always strived to keep a balance between his work, family, and church responsibilities. Residing in Greensboro, North Carolina, Eldredge is a partner at PwC in banking and capital markets assurance practice. With all three of his children out of the nest, Eldredge spends most of his free time running. This year, Eldredge ran his 14th marathon and plans on continuing to participate in such events in the future. Eldredge advises current students to take advantage of internships and other opportunities. “Learn how to network and how to push yourself outside of your comfort zone,” he says.



**ANDREA HESS**

While Andrea Hess (BS 1994) was in the accounting program, she suddenly felt prompted that she needed to serve a mission. At first, she was not sure how she could leave the program mid-semester, but after receiving advice from emeritus faculty Jay Smith, she took a leap of faith. She served a mission in Arcadia, California, returned to the program, and graduated with her bachelor’s degree. When the pandemic hit, Hess was working part-time from home in Spokane Valley, Washington, so she decided to pause her career to focus on her family. Since her hiatus, Hess has found fulfillment in biking, swimming, hiking, reading, and playing the piano. She also loves spending time with her four children and husband.



**KATHY HEALEY**

After attending BYU Marriott’s School of Accountancy, Kathy Healey (MAcc 2001) began her career as a public accountant with Deloitte in Denver. In 2006, Healey joined RSM US LLP and has been there ever since. Currently, she works as an assurance partner and serves as the Utah/Colorado market leader. Managing multiple positions is not easy, but Healey still makes time to be with her family as they enjoy outdoor activities together, usually boating and camping. Throughout her career and life, Healey emphasizes the importance of making sure that you “take time to enjoy life and the happiness and joy that you can get from those you surround yourself with daily.”



**ALICE SKOUSEN**

Avid traveler Alice Skousen (MAcc 1989) prioritizes integrity and faith in her work and all other avenues of her life—principles that solidified from her days in the SOA. After graduating and passing the CPA exam, Skousen spent several years with KPMG before primarily staying home to raise her family. Five years ago, Skousen returned to the professional workforce and is now the controller for Blake’s Lotaburger in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Outside of work, Skousen loves spending time with her children and grandchildren. Once she retires, she hopes to keep traveling with her husband and the rest of her family.



**RON TAMBASCO**

As a partner at Baker Tilly US, Ron Tambasco (MAcc 1991) has come to love living in Odessa, Florida. When the company he works for changed ownership last year, Tambasco learned to orient his focus on his clients and team members, ensuring that they had the best experience possible, and, as a result, he was successful in his work despite his challenges. Outside of work, Tambasco loves spending time outdoors, and he appreciates having the ocean near his home and office. He and his wife have three grown children and have recently become grandparents.

## MEET MORE OF OUR ALUMNI



Fadia Azar



Victor Belo



Bryant Gunnerson



Rachel Jepson



Rob Lewis



Erica Pugh

## CULTIVATING A COMMUNITY



**T**oward the end of her first semester at BYU, Grace Templeton, a recent convert to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, set out on a quest to find a campus support network for new church members.

During her search, Templeton stumbled upon a past student club, called the Converts Club, that had dissipated over the years. She took it upon herself to reinstate the club, driven by the desire to create a welcoming environment for converts at BYU. "I couldn't really find any support on campus for converts, and I felt that was really necessary because I wanted new converts to have support," she says.

Unsure of where to begin, Templeton reached out to the previous club president, who then directed her to SOA Professor Melissa Lewis-Western, a convert of 10 years. After meeting with Lewis-Western, Templeton asked her to be the club's faculty advisor, and the two officially revived the BYU Converts Club.

While the club is still small and young in its reestablishment, the SOA is well represented in the club's membership, with three pre-business majors interested in accounting as members. Lewis-Western finds that advising the club has helped her build a special and long-lasting connection with the students. "I get to shepherd them in their gospel training, but at the same time, they're hopefully going to see me in the SOA, and I get to help them learn in their education journey as well," says Lewis-Western.

The BYU Converts Club provides an inviting community where individuals share common experiences and find understanding. Templeton and Lewis-Western are optimistic about expanding this inviting community. Lewis-Western says, "Our long-term goal would be that all students, or even all faculty [who] feel they're new to the gospel or even newly recommitted to the gospel, have a place to go and to grow."

## PAYING IT FORWARD

**H**annah Judd (MAcc 2017), a Texas A&M graduate (PhD 2023), has always loved the idea of teaching. Even during her time as a student in the SOA, Judd revered her professors. "I felt that they really cared about me and helped me see the potential I had and that I could be successful," Judd says.

As an undergraduate, Judd found herself drawn to the SOA, and her initial hesitation to apply to the program quickly dissipated thanks to the



unwavering support and encouragement from female SOA faculty. "I knew I could belong here," Judd recalls. "I knew that [my professors] would set me up for success not only in school but also as a professional and as an individual."

When contemplating where to teach after earning her PhD, Judd found that BYU Marriott simply felt right. Professionally, she knew that she would be surrounded by world-class teachers and researchers, but Judd's primary motivation to return stemmed from her desire to embody the mentorship she received from her professors. "The SOA faculty are Christlike leaders," she says. "They create a place where students learn in a spirit-led environment, and I want to be a part of that with them."

Following the example of her female mentors, Assistant Professor Judd hopes to be an instructor to whom students can come when they need guidance and encouragement. To Judd, accounting transcends mere business; it's a conduit for fostering relationships and fulfilling spiritual duties. This profound belief is something she's eager to impart to her students while enriching their understanding of accounting with a deeper sense of purpose and connection.



## PASSING THE TORCH

**R**aised by a mother who was a grade-school educator, SOA graduate Amanda Pope (MAcc 2007) always recognized the value of obtaining an education, but she was unsure of what to study. Guided by her love for numbers, Pope was quickly drawn to the SOA when she arrived at BYU.

After completing the MAcc program in the tax stem, Pope realized that, despite the rigorous curriculum, studying accounting at the SOA



would prove to be one of her best life decisions. “The SOA has opened doors for me, for my career, and for my family,” she says.

When Pope first entered the workforce, she quickly discovered that there was more to accounting than crunching numbers. Learning how to work with colleagues and building relationships with clients from around the world quickly became one of her favorite parts of working in accounting.

Fostering her passion for working with others, Pope often volunteered with employee training while she worked at Grant Thornton, GLOMOTAX Consulting, and Andersen. Pope understood, much like her mom, that she loved passing along valuable information. Thus, when a teaching position opened in the SOA, Pope knew that the opportunity would allow her to further explore her love for teaching accounting.

In the spring of 2024, Pope joined the SOA full time and began teaching tax in the MAcc program. Kicking off her SOA teaching journey, Pope hopes that students will be able to recognize how being a part of the SOA will help them prepare for anything, just as it did for her. “You [students] are capable. If you can do this, you can do anything,” she says.



## PATHWAY TO RECRUITING SUCCESS

**W**ith a 100 percent placement rate for undergraduate and MAcc students for the 2023–24 recruiting period, BYU Marriott’s School of Accountancy (SOA) continues to see tremendous success in its recruiting and placement efforts. Several key factors have contributed to this achievement, including the work of Brian Voigt in the Business Career Center (BCC) to bring in more hiring firms to provide internships and full-time opportunities and the department’s efforts to hold meaningful recruiting events.

Over the past five years, the SOA has welcomed more than 240 unique hiring firms to recruit at BYU Marriott. One of these firms, Goldman Sachs, offers SOA students internships and jobs in more than 18 different areas of finance. Roughly 95 percent of SOA students land internships. This year, these internships spanned across 14 states and ranged from the Big Four to regional accounting firms to various industry corporations.



With so many diverse firms hiring, SOA students have secured internships and full-time employment opportunities best suited to their interests.

Another part of the SOA’s placement success is a recruiting event called Meet the Firms. This biannual event (held in September and January) is when students can network with firms that are recruiting for internships and full-time positions. Last year, over 100 firms attended the two events combined, and other firms unable to participate in person joined the recruiting event’s virtual option.

According to Voigt, the success behind SOA recruiting is not based upon a single person’s effort—it is a collaborative process. “We are all one community; the faculty, advisors, and recruiters help to prepare students for opportunities,” he says.

Remarking on Voigt’s plans to retire in fall 2024, SOA Director Doug Prawitt says, “Brian has been an incredible asset to the SOA, and his secret is simple: He genuinely loves our students and serves them with heart and mind. We are grateful for all he has done for the SOA and our students—we will miss him greatly.”

## FACULTY RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

**Abigail Allen**, "Regulating Gender Diversity: Evidence from California Senate Bill 826," *Management Science*

**John Barrick**, "Section 174 and Why Temporary Tax Provisions Are Bad Policy," *Tax Notes*

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**David Wood**, "Artificial Intelligence's Capabilities, Limitations, and Impact on Accounting Education: Investigating ChatGPT's Performance on Educational Accounting Cases," *Issues in Accounting Education*

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# FINDING THE ONE

Help in the "Find the One" Initiative

In line with the Savior's call to seek out and administer to the one out of the 100, the new Find the One program in BYU Marriott's School of Accountancy supports struggling accounting students. This new program ensures that students have access to the resources they need to succeed in the SOA, to reach their full potential, and to care for their temporal well-being.

Doug Prawitt, School of Accountancy (SOA) director, asked Associate Professor Brant Christensen to lead a committee of SOA faculty to proactively identify and help students with unmet needs. Once students' needs have been identified, Christensen meets with each one to identify their struggles and directs them to the resources they need. "The resources are there to help them in whatever struggles they are having. We try to learn, and then we try to educate to make sure they get to the resources they need," he says.

One such case occurred when a faculty member discovered that a student had no funds for food. This student had been using the combined salary from three jobs to pay

his parents' medical bills. Through Find the One, Christensen connected this student to food resources that BYU provides to students in such circumstances. Christensen also directed the student to a national college credit card consolidation company to help him consolidate his credit card bills. In addition, the SOA was able to provide a small scholarship to defray the tuition costs for that semester.

Now, one year into the initiative, the Find the One committee hopes that their efforts will raise awareness of student needs and pave the way to assist more students. "I know that there are more [students] who have needs, who continue to suffer in silence, and who try to do things on their own. My hope is that we can reach more than we have already," Christensen says.

Prawitt encourages alumni to join in the Find the One initiative by contributing to the SOA's student aid fund. "Imagine the lifelong impact that two thousand dollars could make for a student to succeed in the SOA," Prawitt says.



Visit our new annual report website for additional information on the following:

- SOA fundraising
- Board of Advisors
- Emeriti videos
- Faculty awards
- Statistics on students and alumni





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