

capitalize

Fall 2022

Introducing Albertans to the CPA Profession

The MANY LAYERS OF A CPA

WE'RE WAITING FOR YOU!

Get social with CPA Alberta and follow along for updates on accounting, finance, business, and all things CPA. Engage with future CPAs, Albertans, and the profession in CPA Alberta's online communities.





JULIA CRUZ
HAS FOUND
HER NICHE IN AI

36

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Visit capitalize.cpaalberta.ca for even more *Capitalize*!

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Message from Rachel Miller, CEO, CPA Alberta



Dear Alberta students:

Welcome back to campus for another school year! I always loved the start of a new school year and a fall semester—it seemed like the beginning of new possibilities, as well as the start of meeting new people and having new experiences.

Over the course of your journey as a student, you'll be adding new "layers" to your experiences and identities. Those layers could include being a volunteer, a leader on campus, a CPA Education Foundation scholarship recipient, or maybe even a *Capitalize* Campus Star! As you move forward and continue developing new layers, I encourage you to consider adding a three-letter one to your collection: Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA).

This Fall 2022 issue of *Capitalize*, themed "The many layers of a CPA," features Alberta CPAs sharing all the different layers that make up their professional and personal lives. When you meet an Alberta CPA, those three letters tell you that they are credible, professional, ethical, and skilled. But that's just one layer of their professional identity. As you'll soon learn in these pages, Alberta CPAs have many layers—in addition to being CPAs, they're also national athletes, beauty queens, yoga instructors, business owners making a difference in building culture in their communities, and so much more.

For me, in addition to being a CPA, my layers include being a female leader, CEO, mom, dedicated volunteer...and that's just the tip of the iceberg. My designation and the skills it has given me have enabled me to develop and enhance all of these layers and to create a life and career that I love and am passionate about.

A CPA designation provides you with a foundation of credibility, business acumen, and competence. More important, however, is all the different ways you can use that foundation; a CPA designation can be your springboard into any career in any industry—and in any city or country around the world. Want to find out how? Keep reading to get to know awesome Alberta CPAs and find out how the CPA designation can help you build your own professional and personal "layers."

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Capitalize* and that the 2022/23 school year is a great one. CPA Alberta looks forward to supporting your student experience and to meeting you at an upcoming event on your campus.

Rachel Miller FCPA, FCA

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

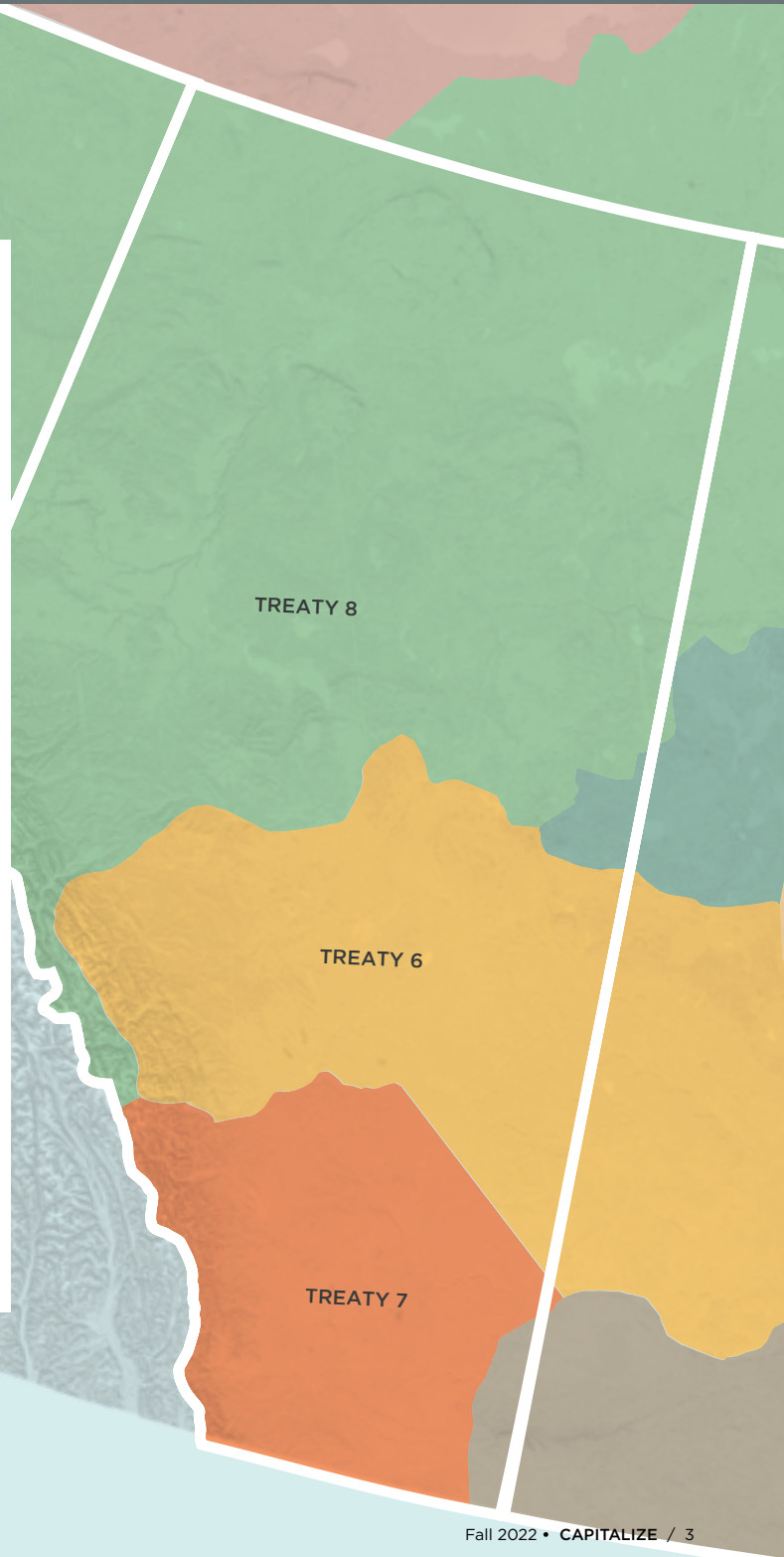
CPA Alberta and *Capitalize* acknowledge the land we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land, and their histories and culture influence our community to this day.

Spanning generations, acknowledgment of the land is a traditional custom of Indigenous peoples. In the spirit of reconciliation and building respectful relationships, we recognize our offices are situated on the following traditional territories:

Amiskwaciwâskahikan, or Edmonton, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 6 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux people.

Moh'kins'tis, or Calgary, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 7 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani First Nations), the Stoney Nakoda First Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), Tsuut'ina, Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation Region 3.

We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. CPA Alberta is committed to building a profession where Indigenous peoples and their voices and experiences are heard, valued, respected, and celebrated.



CPA EVENTS

events **CALENDAR***

CPA Alberta Events



Meet Your Employer

September 12 (Calgary), 15 (Edmonton), and 21 (Lethbridge)



CPA Alberta virtual information session

September 28
12:00 – 1:00pm



Meet Your Employer

Meet Your Employer is a career fair-style event to connect prospective CPAs with their future employer! CPA Alberta holds this event annually in the fall, bringing together thousands of students and key employer partners in Alberta. Learn more at cpaalberta.ca/meetyouemployer.



CPA Alberta virtual information session

CPA Alberta's information sessions are a great opportunity for anyone interested in becoming a CPA to learn more. We'll share details on the CPA program requirements and the enrolment process—and, of course, provide time for your questions!

Register at bit.ly/3GZ0ujZ.

CAREER FAIRS AND OPEN HOUSES

From career fairs to sponsorships to information and networking sessions, below is a list of some upcoming events you should know about!

CPA SPONSORSHIPS

CPA Alberta sponsored events

CPA Alberta partners with student clubs at post-secondary institutions across Alberta to sponsor events throughout the year.

Some of the events you can look forward to in 2022/23 include Meet the Firm at MacEwan University, Industry Night at the University of Calgary, and Intro to Accounting Club at the University of Lethbridge.

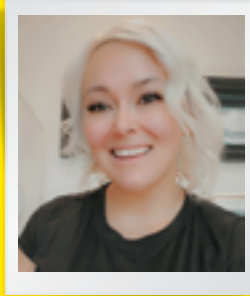
These are just a few of the events coming up, so be sure to check capitalize.cpaalberta.ca regularly for updates!

**Events and their format are subject to change based on current public health guidelines at that time.*



Meet your 2022/23 Campus Ambassadors

The 2022/23 Campus Ambassador team is here to assist you on the path towards the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation. The following ambassadors will be the primary point of contact for students to get information about important events and activities, as well as answers to their questions about the CPA Professional Education Program and the CPA designation.



Sarah DeLeon

Concordia University of Edmonton
sdeleon@cpaalberta.ca

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

The opportunities to attend all the exciting events in person after being virtual last year! Being able to interact with people face-to-face is going to make a huge difference.

Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?

The learning aspect of it never ends; there are always new procedures or legalities involved. I'm also really excited to see how the profession continues to grow with the world around us.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I'm a huge introvert at heart, and I've been impacted by various mental health issues throughout my life. Every day is a new challenge, and I love that!



LeeAnn Garbe

NAIT
ldirk@cpaalberta.ca

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

The thing I am looking forward to the most is creating and establishing lifelong professional relationships within the accounting field and meeting a diversity of exceptional people.

What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

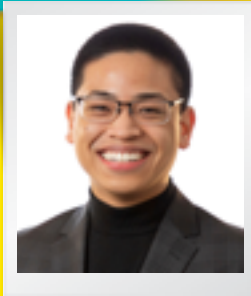
I wish people knew how much fun and how rewarding a career in accounting can be!

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

Something surprising about me is that I am an ultra-marathon trail runner. If you give me a mountain, I am going to run it!

HELLO
I AM...

Your on-campus contact



Frederick (Red) Enorme

University of Alberta
fenorme@cpaalberta.ca

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I was interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador because of the many opportunities it provides to connect with others. Obtaining the CPA designation is a big step in one's career, so I'm here to share everything I know about how the CPA program and designation can add value to the education and careers of students!

What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

Accounting plays an important part in the success of businesses. CPAs are tasked with solving problems others can't, and they use business fundamentals and acumen to add an infinite amount of value and knowledge to businesses.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

For nine years, I sang with an internationally ranked choir that focused on advanced acapella classical music. We had the opportunity to tour and travel across Canada, South Africa, and the UK!

MEET YOUR 2022/23 CPA CAMPUS AMBASSADORS



Evan Eng

MacEwan University
eeng@cpaalberta.ca

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I decided to become a CPA Campus Ambassador to meet more of the wonderful people in the accounting field. I love hearing the stories of CPAs, business leaders, and other students to learn more about their experiences.

Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?

One word: exploration. There are endless opportunities in accounting to grow and develop. You'll never know where you end up, but you can be assured that your future will be bright.

What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?

I'm absolutely a caffeine fiend. I love the energy-filled miracle chemical so much that I've begun making my own caffeinated gummy bears—in addition to drinking my usual cups of coffee.



Abdul Gafar Andres

SAIT
aandres@cpaalberta.ca

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

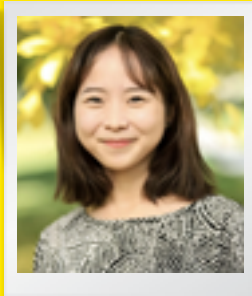
I'm interested in being a CPA Campus Ambassador because the experience and knowledge I will gain from this position will equip me to reach my ultimate career goal: receiving my designation.

How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

The accounting profession will change significantly in the next 10 years because of modern technology. It will likely require less crunching numbers and more storytelling.

What pump-up jam do you listen to before a big test or presentation?

It has been a year now that I've listened to classical music while studying and before my exams and presentations.



Sally Lee

University of Calgary
slee@cpaalberta.ca

Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I wanted to become a CPA Campus Ambassador because my past experiences with hosting networking events for students have helped me realize how much I enjoy helping students succeed in recruiting. I also want to learn what it means to kick-start your accounting career as a student who wants to pursue their CPA designation later.

How do you think the accounting profession will change over the next 10 years?

I think the skills and expectations surrounding CPAs will change. Accountants may be held to higher standards of insightfulness and analytical skills as less inquisitive tasks are taken over by technology.

What pump-up jam do you listen to before a big test or presentation?

“Don’t Stop Believin’” is a classic that’ll always pump me up whenever I’m anxious about something!



Jessica Grandison

Mount Royal University
jgrandison@cpaalberta.ca

What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?

I’m mostly looking forward to making connections and learning more about the different ways people have used their CPA designation.

What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?

I wish people knew that it’s not just about numbers. When I tell people I want to be an accountant, many of them reply that I must be good with numbers. While I am, accounting is so much more and it involves a lot of analysis, problem solving, and decision making.

If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?

I would love to build a non-profit organization catered toward underprivileged children, where they are able to attend classes or workshops and learn various skills or figure out their passions.



Your first 100 days in a new role

EMBRACING YOUR FULL POTENTIAL WITH CAREER MANAGEMENT

By Ifeoma Ngwudike CPA, CMA

You may have recently secured your first professional job or are on the path to one. Congratulations! Getting that job is not where it stops, though. It simply marks the beginning of your career journey, and your first 100 days in a new role are important. To help ensure your success, let me introduce you to career management. You must play an active role in the planning and management of your professional career development.

Your first 100 days are crucial, but I am not proposing you have a limited term to get things done like a political role. My hope is to encourage you to have a success mindset and plan, and that starts in the first 100 days.

Strategies for realizing your professional career goals right from the start

1. Clarity:

Get clear on why you work in the first place and what that means for how you engage with your career. Include both personal and professional reasons. Regardless of your definition of professionalism, you always bring your whole self everywhere—work included.

2. Focus:

Take stock of your abilities and identify any gaps. Some people may focus on the opportunities to improve, but my recommendation is always to focus on your strengths and create a stand-out impression and sustainable momentum. Focusing on strengths also provides a confidence boost for navigating and making progress while learning more about your role, the people you work with (and for), and the organization.

3. Identity:


Design your brand and discover how it aligns with the organization's brand. Trust is a key ingredient to success, and your brand lets people know what to consistently expect from you.

4. Action:

Listen and ask questions. Track your accomplishments and celebrate, recalibrate, and refine accordingly. Take advantage of corporate training and professional development opportunities. We live in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world, and a couple of good ways to be relevant today and in the future are to keep abreast of best practices in the profession and environment and demonstrate practical, innovative solutions to problems.

5. Connections:

Build and foster connections strategically. Nurture them intentionally. Your connection capital is an investment you cannot afford not to build.

In summary, your first 100 days are an excellent opportunity to establish yourself for success in the workplace. By being intentional, having a clear purpose of why and how you add value in the workplace, focusing on your unique strengths and identity, and fostering trusting connections through positive actions and learning opportunities, you are already ahead of the game as a new professional. 

Ifeoma Ngwudike CPA, CMA is the author of *The successful immigrant woman: 8 transformational strategies to build confidence, be empowered, and achieve success as an immigrant woman*. She currently works with CPA Alberta as Director, Member Products and Services. In her pastime, Ifeoma works with professionals and immigrant women seeking to discover themselves, with a focus on developing and motivating leaders.





HERE, THERE, AND EVERYWHERE

**NIDA FATMA SHARES HOW HER GLOBAL
WORK EXPERIENCE HAS SHAPED HER LIFE**

By Kate Austin | Photography by Ramsey Kunkel Photography



**EVERYONE HAS A STORY,
EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING
TO SHARE. HEARING THEIR
EXPERIENCE AND HEARING
THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY CAN
MAKE YOU GROW AS A PERSON.**

Nida Fatma CPA, CGA

For many of us, travelling to different countries and experiencing different cultures is something we dream of doing, especially these days. For **Nida Fatma CPA, CGA**, it's been a part of her work over the last nine years, and it's helped her grow as a person.

From early on, Nida dreamed of gaining international experience. When it came time to research her post-secondary education options, she chose a university based in Edinburgh, Scotland, that had recently opened a campus in Dubai, where she'd lived for most of her life. "I wanted something that had an international touch to it," she recalls. Her professors would fly to Dubai to lecture and share their international experiences, which Nida found valuable.

It was only a matter of time before Nida would embark on her own international adventures. In 2016, she was selected as one of two staff members—out of more than 200 applicants—at Deloitte to take a secondment to South Africa. The experience opened Nida's eyes to the differences that exist between cultures. "Every country and every place has their own style of working," she says.


When Nida moved to Canada in 2019, she already had a wealth of knowledge that prepared her for the cultural differences she'd face. She knew how to communicate with different people and had an open mind, and she

found herself confident in a variety of situations, like attending trivia nights and even getting her Alberta driver's licence.

The value added from these soft skills, her experience with controls testing and auditing at Deloitte, and especially her designation made it possible for Nida to succeed in Canada. "The CPA designation is really valued here, especially if you're in the accounting and finance fields," she says.

Not only did her experience and designation help Nida get her foot in the door at Steelhaus Technologies Inc. right before the pandemic hit in 2020, but they also helped her quickly move up in the company to become a divisional controller.

Having international experience gave Nida clarity on where she sees herself in the future. "Seeing different people in global leadership roles with various management styles helped me envision being in a senior leadership role in the near future and making strategic financial decisions for [a] company," she says.

For Nida, the most important skill she learned from her global experiences was to take the time to listen to others. "Everyone has a story, everyone has something to share," she says. "Hearing their experience and hearing their side of the story can make you grow as a person." 

The CPA Certification Program: what students need to know

The CPA Certification Program—which consists of education, practical experience, and a final examination—is designed to provide future Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs) with the knowledge and skills to succeed in business.

Degree and prerequisites

An undergraduate degree (in any discipline) from a recognized post-secondary institution is required for admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP). In addition to an undergraduate degree, prerequisite courses must be successfully completed.

A transfer credit guide for Alberta post-secondary institutions is available online at www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide.

CPA Professional Education Program

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is a graduate-level program delivered part-time over two years. The program includes six modules designed to develop six technical competencies and five enabling competencies. In Alberta, the national CPA PEP is delivered by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). CPAWSB delivers CPA PEP to all candidates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut who are pursuing their CPA.

Candidates will take CPA PEP while working in a relevant position. For candidates, their CPA PEP education, coupled with practical experience, will complement the development of CPA competencies.

CPA PEP uses a variety of learning methods to help students develop their skills. The program combines online learning, self-study, classroom learning, and teamwork to help CPA candidates develop the competencies expected of Canada's pre-eminent professional accountants.



Vivien Chu CPA, CA

CPA Alberta's new video series

The CPA profession has been around for a very long time. With that kind of longevity, there's bound to be change and progress. CPA Alberta's new video series looks at some of the CPAs driving the profession forward in dynamic, innovative, and impactful ways. Check it out at cpaalberta.ca/changingfaces

Modules

Six modules comprise CPA PEP. The program begins with two core modules that are common to all CPA candidates, followed by two elective modules (of which there are four options). Upon completion of these four modules, all candidates are required to complete the two "capstone" modules.

The modules are:

- Two common core modules, which all CPA candidates must take, focusing on the development of competencies in management and financial accounting, and the integration of the six core technical competency areas.
- Two elective modules, which allow CPA candidates to develop deeper skills in their areas of career interest. Four electives are offered: assurance, performance management, tax, and finance. All candidates must choose two of the electives; candidates pursuing careers in public accounting must choose assurance and tax.
- A capstone integrative module that focuses on the development of the enabling competencies, such as leadership and professional skills, and the integration of core competencies.
- A capstone examination preparation module, which prepares CPA candidates for the Common Final Examination (CFE).

Registration into the CPA Professional Education Program

Students are encouraged to apply for conditional acceptance into the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) prior to the completion of their required courses and degree. Registration as a CPA candidate is required prior to registering for specific modules; however, candidates are encouraged to register for modules once they've submitted their application.

Once a student has applied for CPA PEP, there is a registration validation period in which transcript assessment, verification of degree, and verification of prerequisites will occur. After verification, the student may then participate in Core One.

Module registration deadlines are typically six to eight weeks in advance of the module start date. Please refer to the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) website for key module registration deadlines: www.cpawsb.ca/current-learners/cpa-pep/schedules.

For more information about becoming a CPA, please visit www.cpaalberta.ca; call CPA Alberta at 1-844-454-1245 (toll-free); or email recruitment@cpaalberta.ca.

To inquire about your eligibility for CPA PEP and admission support, please visit www.cpawsb.ca; call CPAWSB at 1-855-306-9390 (toll-free); or email cpaapplication@cpawsb.ca.

Entrance requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program

Bridging into the CPA Professional Education Program

For students who have completed their degrees but have not obtained the necessary prerequisite courses for the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP), or for students who do not have a degree,* there are two options:

1. CPA preparatory courses

CPA preparatory courses are a suite of 14 courses that provide all knowledge requirements for admission to CPA PEP. These courses are available in an accelerated format and are delivered part-time, with options for self-study, online, and classroom learning. Students complete only the courses they require.

Students are eligible for enrolment if they have successfully completed one year (30 credit hours) of post-secondary studies or three years of relevant work experience.

**Students are still required to complete a degree before admission to CPA PEP.*

Please contact CPA Alberta at 1.844.454.1245 or email recruitment@cpaalberta.ca to learn more about preparatory courses.

2. Prerequisites through a post-secondary institution

Students can register for the business and accounting courses they are missing through a post-secondary institution approved by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). A transfer credit guide is available online at www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide. Students will only take the courses they need for entrance into CPA PEP.

Practical experience

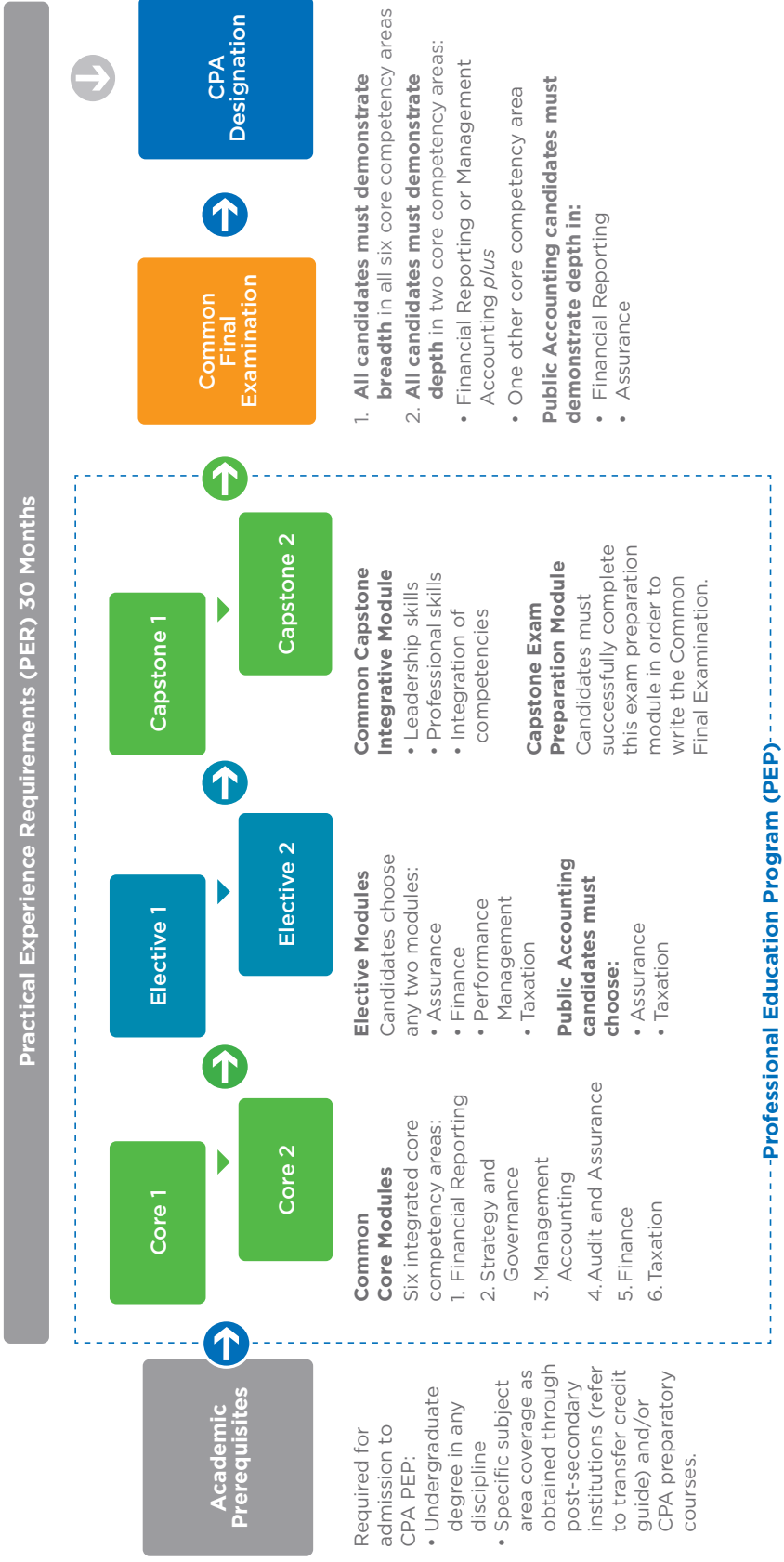
In addition to formal education, candidates are required to complete a term of relevant practical experience. The knowledge and competencies gained through practical experience complement those developed through CPA PEP. To develop as a professional accountant, CPA candidates must gain relevant, paid employment that is progressively challenging. For the period of practical experience to begin, individuals need to be registered with the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) as a CPA candidate, be employed in a qualifying position, and have a mentor.

There are two routes to obtain practical experience requirements:

- **The Pre-approved Program Route (PPR)** in which future CPAs gain relevant experience by choosing a position from a wide range of employers pre-approved by the profession.
- **The Experience Verification Route (EVR)** in which future CPAs demonstrate competence and gain relevant experience at a chosen employer.

Future CPAs can gain experience through either route or a combination of both. The profession may accept up to one year of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. The minimum practical experience requirement for both routes is 30 months; this includes an allowance of up to 20 weeks of time away from work (including vacation time).

CPA Professional Education Program Overview



1. **All candidates must demonstrate breadth** in all six core competency areas
 2. **All candidates must demonstrate depth** in two core competency areas:
 - Financial Reporting or Management Accounting *plus*
 - One other core competency area
- Public Accounting candidates must demonstrate depth in:**
- Financial Reporting
 - Assurance

There are five common elements that support both routes:

1. Candidates gain relevant experience and develop as a professional accountant in a minimum of 30 months.*
2. Candidates' experience must be appropriately supervised.
3. Candidates must record detailed reports at regular intervals.
4. Candidates must meet and discuss their progress at least semi-annually with a CPA mentor.
5. Candidates' experience is assessed by the CPA profession.

**Practical experience requirements for public accounting practice and professional accounting practice are recognized separately from practical experience requirements for certification.*

CPA Practical Experience Self-Assessment Tool

This tool is intended for individuals who have not yet had their experience assessed by a provincial/regional body but want to understand how their

current or prospective position might align with the CPA technical competency requirements for purposes of the experience verification route. To access this self-assessment tool, visit <https://pert.cpa-services.org/student/TrialAssessment>.

CPA mentorship

Mentorship is a mandatory component of the CPA Practical Experience Requirements (PER). The focus of the CPA mentorship program is to help future CPAs achieve their enabling competencies. CPA candidates who work in the Pre-approved Program Route (PPR) will be matched with a CPA mentor by the organization that offers the program. CPA candidates who choose the Experience Verification Route (EVR) are required to seek out their own CPA mentor in order to find a successful fit. Recognition may be given for a total of up to 12 months of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. After that time, the qualifying period of practical experience cannot begin until CPA candidates have a CPA mentor. CPA Canada has developed a number of valuable resources to assist CPA candidates in finding a mentor.

Please visit www.cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience for more information.

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Make your mark with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree or a Business Administration diploma with a major in Accounting. Learn from experienced accounting professionals and graduate ready to enter CPA's Advanced Certificate in Finance and Accounting program (ACAF) or pursue your CPA designation.

At SAIT, we're proud to be recognized as one of three Canadian schools to make the top 100 of CEOWORLD Magazine's Best Business Schools in the World for 2022.

JOIN US. APPLICATIONS FOR FALL 2022 ARE NOW OPEN.



SAIT.ca/Business



THE MANY LAYERS OF A CPA

FOUR CPAS SHARE THE PASSIONS THAT
COMPLEMENT THEIR DESIGNATION

By Sharon Ruyter | Photography by HarderLee Photography

Balance is a dream for many professionals, and CPAs are no different. But with school, work, extracurricular activities, and family obligations, it can be hard to achieve that coveted sweet spot, where you feel accomplished in all areas.

For these four CPAs, balance isn't just an aspiration, it's a way of life. They've carved out time for both work and some unexpected passions. They're proof that, when you choose the CPA designation, you're not just choosing one path. Instead, you are adding another layer that is filled with excitement, fulfillment, and purpose.

AFFIRMING IDENTITY AND CELEBRATING CULTURE

For **Tam Nguyen CPA, CMA**, her double life began with the birth of her daughter, Zoepi. As a proud Vietnamese-Canadian, Tam wanted Zoepi to have an appreciation for her heritage, and she committed to raising her bilingual. “I started to look for learning resources, and I reached out worldwide through online bilingual parenting groups,” says Tam.

What she found was that many other parents faced similar challenges in sourcing Vietnamese language learning resources. Tam’s inner CPA intuition started to buzz, and in late 2021, she launched VietCan Books—an online store that provides books and resources for bilingual-aspiring families.

Her drive is entrepreneurial, but also community inspired. “It’s hard to be proud of your culture and language when you can’t see it or speak it. You don’t see why you should be proud,” says Tam.

She has seen how the resources have enriched families across Canada and the U.S., and she is proud VietCan Books is part of enriching a global Vietnamese community.

Tam’s designation has come in handy as she learned the ropes of being a new business owner. “The Excel skills are definitely helping. [So is knowing about] cost control and strategically deciding what books to purchase,” she says. “Also procurement, negotiating with distributors, bookkeeping, and filing taxes.”

Running her new business, working as a CPA, and raising two-and-a-half-year-old Zoepi sounds like a lot to juggle, but Tam considers it to be the opposite. “Launching VietCan helped me appreciate that motherhood truly makes me a stronger ‘passion-preneur’ and a stronger team member working as a CPA,” she says.





CREATING ZEN FOR ALL

Johanna Bond CPA, CA tries to be in motion as much as possible. From running to downhill skiing to barre, being active is extremely important to her. But when she heard about hot yoga 10 years ago, Johanna decided to try a workout that required her to be a little more still than usual.

“As soon as I took my first class, I fell in love. It’s not a competition, but you’re always in a sense of discovery,” she says.

Johanna soon developed an insatiable need to learn all she could about yoga, so she decided to sign up for a yoga instructor course. “I wanted to keep learning because there are so many levels and depths to yoga practice,” she says.

Johanna remembers teaching her first class was almost as nerve-racking as writing the Common Final Examination. However, she quickly realized that many of her professional skills came in handy. “It’s a great way to practice public speaking but also to improve your communication skills, which is what we do in business every day,” she says.

Johanna believes it’s never too early to develop your many layers as a CPA or as a student. It’s important to carve out even just 10 minutes to do something that re-energizes you and helps you re-focus. “Once you have your CPA career, you can build on those minutes to create the life you want,” she says.



CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES IN STYLE

“Models and women who do pageants are not intelligent.”

“You’re too unattractive for anything other than being a bookworm and a student.”

Nadine Niba CPA has heard these two narratives her whole life. But contrary to what her detractors believed, Nadine leads a layered life rich with beauty and intelligence.

“I got into pageantry because my self-esteem had taken a hit from years of being bullied and mocked,” says Nadine. “I was told I was too tall and no man would ever want me, and that made me feel ugly and depressed as a young girl.”

Nadine decided to focus on her schooling and eventually went to university, where she discovered a natural talent for accounting. She went on to become the best accounting student in her home country of Cameroon—twice!

In the midst of her high-performing academic career, Nadine was scouted by a modelling agent. To her shock, she was told the physical attributes she was bullied for were perfect for modelling and pageants. Nadine went on to win pageants and discovered a passion in modelling and fashion.

Nadine is now the Manager of Risk Assurance, Compliance, and Analytics at PwC and believes there are many connections between the layers of being a CPA and a model and pageant winner. “Being a woman in the workplace requires a lot of confidence, which I gained in my pageant days. You’re taught how to carry yourself and how to communicate effectively,” she says. “As a CPA, you have to communicate with stakeholders and advise businesses on how to implement controls, and if you don’t have confidence, that message will not be delivered.”

“I have not been able to separate Nadine the beauty queen and Nadine the Chartered Professional Accountant,” she says. “I feel both personalities fit into each other to make me the person I am.”

COMPETING FOR A PURPOSE

Scott Southwood cpa always has the best answer to the question, “What do you do?” In addition to being a CPA, Scott is also an athlete in the only sport in which skills are first learned for humanitarian purposes and competition second. For more than 10 years, Scott has competed in Lifesaving Sport, which requires athletes to apply lifesaving principles in pools and open waters while racing against the clock and competitors.

Lifesaving Sport takes immense dedication and training—something Scott maintained throughout university and during the CPA Professional Education Program. At the peak of his training, it was common for Scott to spend 30-40 hours a week training and prepping for competition on top of studying and keeping up with other commitments. Throughout his journey, Scott represented Canada in competitions on six of the seven continents.

Now, Scott still competes at a high level and continues to advocate for Lifesaving Sport athletes as the Alberta and Northwest Territories Athlete Representative. He’s also a manager at Kenway Mack Slusarchuk Stewart LLP, where he uses skills learned in the water. “Being an athlete requires a lot of determination and drive, and I think that shows in the quality of my work. I continue to be focused on setting goals and exceeding expectations, which translated from being in the pool and trying to achieve really high results,” says Scott.

As long as he can remember, Scott always wanted to be a CPA. Little did elementary-aged Scott know that he would end up having more than one enjoyable pursuit: one that would take him all around the world and another that he could always come home to—his first love, accounting. **C**





WHAT'S THE ESG BUZZ ALL ABOUT?

BY GINNY AO | PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAMSEY KUNKEL PHOTOGRAPHY

TWO CPAS EXPLAIN THE INS AND
OUTS OF THIS GROWING TOPIC
AFFECTING THE PROFESSION



Practitioners typically provide that extra level of comfort over financial statements for stakeholders. Now, they are going to be looked at to provide that same level of comfort over the ESG and sustainability metrics.

Amy Yacyshyn CPA



You've heard it in the news and in business articles, as well as murmured on campuses: environmental, social, and governance (ESG) is the latest buzz in the business world. But you may be asking yourself, "How does ESG affect CPAs and business leaders?"

Dr. Sandip Lalli *FCPA, FCMA* and **Amy Yacyshyn** *CPA* have the answer for how ESG and sustainability reporting are changing the accounting landscape.

WHAT ARE ESG, SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING, AND GREEN ACCOUNTING?

For those new to the idea of ESG, terms like "sustainability reporting" and "green accounting" can be overwhelming.

"Green accounting is a type of accounting that considers the environmental costs to an organization, while ESG reporting considers a wider range of factors that fall into different categories of environmental, social, and governance," explains Amy, Principal of Sustainability Reporting and Assurance at CPA Canada. "ESG reporting is specifically focused on capital markets while

sustainability reporting is used by a wider range of stakeholders."

Through ESG considerations, organizations can better understand their impact on the community and in the world in which they operate. It also allows business leaders to evaluate how they are performing and whether they are meeting targets.

Sustainability and ESG reporting "allow companies to monitor their performance and assess their risk and opportunities," says Amy.

Another reason you may be hearing more about sustainability or ESG reporting is because investors are now demanding it, adds Amy. Standards boards and regulators have also put sustainability on centre stage.

For example, the IFRS Foundation's International Sustainability Standards Board recently released two exposure drafts for comment and the Securities



As CPAs, we have a great opportunity to have a profound impact on building and/or transforming sustainable business models.

Dr. Sandip Lalli FCPA, FCMA

Exchange Commission in the U.S. asked for comment on proposed climate-related rules, says Dr. Lalli, a sustainability, finance, risk, and strategy senior executive with global experience.

With all these changes and the speed of development, “sustainability reporting and business strategy will need to be one strategy for [an] organization. A technical green accounting skill set will eventually be a required CPA skill. [Sustainability reporting] will become part of the principles-based standardized financial statements and disclosures,” says Dr. Lalli. “All these pieces will provide the value, benefit, and transparency that financial statements have traditionally provided.”

As standards evolve and the demand for information continues, ESG and sustainability reporting are starting to move from the nice-to-have into the must-have column.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR FUTURE CPAS?

As organizations begin to report more and more on a variety of ESG factors, CPAs will be on the frontlines, ensuring these metrics are captured and accurately reported. CPAs will be tasked with not only knowing how to report on both the financial and sustainability pictures, but also with explaining how they’re linked.

“From the assurance perspective, practitioners typically provide that extra level of comfort over financial statements for stakeholders. Now, they are going to be looked at to provide that same level of comfort over the ESG and sustainability metrics,” says Amy.


“As CPAs, we have a great opportunity to have a profound impact on building and/or transforming sustainable business models,” agrees Dr. Lalli. “Our value is in business optimization, strong throughput accounting, structured cost assessments, value identification and capture, and transparent, auditable reporting. Our ability to provide relevant decision-making business intelligence sets us apart as a profession.”



HOW CAN YOU JOIN THE ESG CONVERSATION?

If you're wondering how you can dive into the ESG space and don't know where to start, Amy suggests just basically diving in. "Become educated on the subject," she says. "There are a lot of resources available. Also think about why you're passionate and research the organizations you'd like to work for."

Amy points to re-generation.ca/careers as a great place to start as it has a variety of free resources.

"Stay current with the standards and the standards in development on disclosures. That is your best way to stay technically ahead and be valuable in conversations," adds Dr. Lalli. "A reimagined capitalist framework that is uncompromising in its efforts to win at social and environmental issues and private-sector growth is what it's going to take to have a thriving society. As CPAs, we have a great opportunity to contribute to these efforts." 



IN ACTION: ESG AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTING

Andrea Grigg CPA, CA is a Senior Consultant in the ESG practice at KPMG, a professional firm providing audit, tax, and advisory services. She shares her first-hand experience with ESG consulting.

Q: Can you describe ESG and sustainability consulting?

A: ESG includes a wide range of topics, but fundamentally it's a framework to help organizations create long-term value and growth through building a more sustainable future. Our team at KPMG helps our clients through every step of their ESG journey, including ESG strategy, sustainable finance, climate change and decarbonization, reporting, and assurance.

Q: How has KPMG introduced sustainability into its own practices?

A: We're putting ESG at the heart of everything we do. As a global business, we are helping create a more sustainable future for our stakeholders through the areas outlined in KPMG's Our Impact Plan: Planet, People, Prosperity, and Governance. We're also investing in our people and technology and embedding ESG across the firm to help our clients address a host of ESG challenges and opportunities.

Q: What is KPMG most proud of in terms of its success in ESG/sustainability?

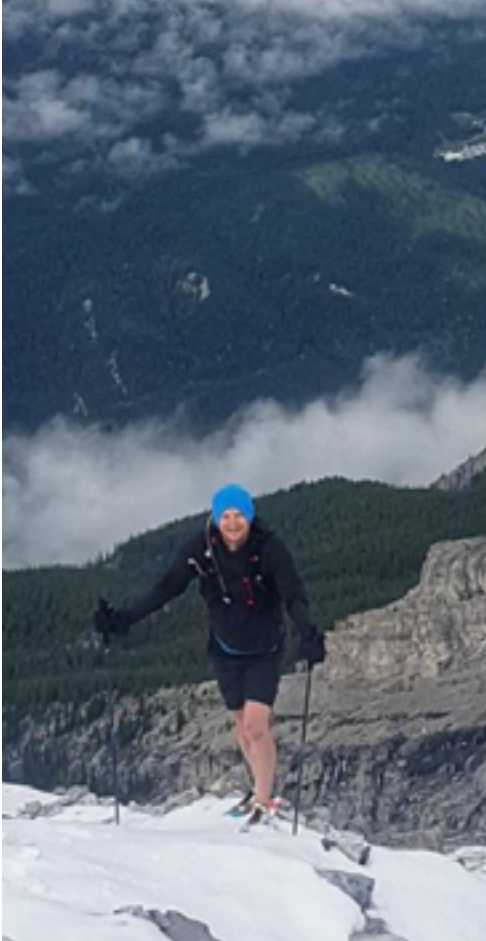
A: Helping our clients achieve their ESG ambitions and leading by example through our own sustainability commitments. We have set goals and are making progress towards them, such as our net-zero commitment by 2030 and goal of working with 100 per cent renewable electricity by the end of 2022.



CPAS IN ALBERTA HOT SPOTS

Two CPAs discuss how the CPA designation has helped them carve out successful career paths in the Canadian Rockies

By Quinta Iticka | Photography by Riyaz Sharan and supplied



“
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Chris Hughes CPA, CGA

Each year, millions of people travel to Alberta's tourist destinations to experience their natural beauty. **Andrea Terrill CPA** and **Chris Hughes CPA, CGA** don't have to make these trips—they live, work, and play in a couple of these hot spots.

Andrea, who grew up in Jasper and moved back after post-secondary, loves the great outdoors. "I wake up every morning to a panoramic view of the mountains," says Andrea, who runs, bikes, hikes, snowboards, and cross-country skis in the Rocky Mountains. "I have tons of trails at my fingertips. In the winter, some of the trails are groomed for fat bikes, and I am able to run on them."

While offering amazing recreational opportunities, Jasper (like many national parks) is also a habitat for a variety of wildlife. Bear sightings are common in the summer, so it's important to know a bit about bear safety if you're doing any kind of trekking. "I don't go on a bike ride alone," Andrea says. "We take bear spray, and every time we go down a corner, we do bear calls to make sure we don't spook them."

There is also an abundance of elk in and around the townsite and, on occasion, bighorn sheep congregate to enjoy a delicious snack they lick right off the highway—salt.

Andrea never imagined she could pursue an accounting career in this town of about 5,000 people. After obtaining her bachelor's degree from NAIT, she came home for the summer and was fortunate to get her first accounting job at a local public practice. Eventually, she moved into a role at a hotel that required her to have the CPA designation. "They were willing to pay for my studies. That marked the start of my CPA career," says Andrea.

She credits her CPA designation for helping her become a Finance Officer at Parks Canada. "To qualify for this position, applicants needed to be close to completing the CPA Professional Education Program or have the CPA designation," she says. "Because I was already a CPA and a resident of Jasper, my application stood out.



Andrea Terrill CPA



“My designation helped me come full circle in Jasper. To live and work in a town I love so much is a dream come true.”

Living in the Rocky Mountains is also a dream come true for Chris, who has lived in Banff for 24 years and loves it there. “I travel a lot and every time I come home, I am stunned by the natural beauty of this place,” he says.

Approximately 8,000 residents live in Banff, and the town receives an average of four million visitors every year. “Because of this visitorship, Banff seems bigger and more cosmopolitan.... This isn’t something I expected,” says Chris.

He recalls feeling a bit claustrophobic because of the towering mountains when he first moved to Banff. That soon changed, and instead, he now feels comforted and protected by those same mountains. “Now when I am out in the prairies, the horizon seems too far away,” he says.


Similar to Jasper, Banff’s recreational landscape facilitates an active lifestyle. “Within a five-minute walk from the busiest street, you can be on a quiet trail,” Chris says. “The trail network is hundreds, if not thousands, of kilometres long. I hardly run the same ones twice in a month.”

Chris also snowboards, mountain bikes, plays hockey, and runs ultramarathons. And while the landscape enables him to stay active, his CPA designation has enabled him to carve out a successful career path in this world-famous tourist destination. But accounting wasn’t actually on his radar until years after he visited Banff from Nova Scotia.

“When I first came here at the age of 24, it felt like an extension of university life; it was fun. Six months turned into a year, then I met my wife, had kids, and now this is our home,” he says.

After working at the Banff Centre, he landed a mid-level finance role at the Town of Banff, and his employer encouraged him to get his CPA designation. “They were going to pay for it. It was really a gift,” says Chris.

Currently the Director of Corporate Services for the Town of Banff, Chris acknowledges the significant role his CPA training and work experience has played in his career progress. “The designation teaches you to think broadly and lead strategically,” he says. “As you move up in an organization, the soft skills help you evaluate risk, solve business problems, and make strategic decisions.

“The CPA designation played a key role in retaining me in this position. I feel like I owe it to my employer to stay and give back as much value as possible.” 



My designation helped me come full circle in Jasper. To live and work in a town I love so much is a dream come true.

Andrea Terrill CPA



INTRODUCING THIS YEAR'S
CAPITALIZE
CAMPUS STARS

BY SARAH MALUDZINSKI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HARDERLEE PHOTOGRAPHY AND LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY

Every year, the *Capitalize* Campus Stars program recognizes amazing Alberta post-secondary students who are dreaming of one day becoming CPAs and who are already leaving a legacy on their campuses and in their communities.

These five students embody what it means to be a *Capitalize* Campus Star. They are the future of the CPA profession, and we are proud to introduce them as the 2022 class of *Capitalize* Campus Stars.

IZZA ATHAR

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Izza Athar wasn't originally thinking much about what came next in terms of post-secondary education until her dad convinced her to go to university. Despite wanting a bit of a break from formal education, she decided the hard work might be worth it and applied.

"When I got accepted to the University of Calgary, I was very excited," says Izza. "But it's been a hard go sometimes, and I've had to learn a lot about myself."

Izza is the only deaf student in her year in her program, and she found it difficult to get to know people. So she thought to herself, "How do I broaden my social circle and get involved at the same time?"

Along with two friends, Izza co-founded the American Sign Language club at the University of Calgary. "We wanted it to be a safe place for anyone who wanted to practice, learn, and feel comfortable being around a language model like myself without any intimidation," she says. "It's not a formal class; it's a social activity. And for me, a benefit was alleviating some of that loneliness."

Izza isn't afraid to advocate for access and engagement opportunities that work for her, allowing her to participate in campus activities and bring her perspective. "If you're not getting what you need—for example, if you're told, 'No, this is too expensive or this isn't something we've had someone like you at'—[the host and other students] are missing out on an opportunity too," she says.



WHO INSPIRES IZZA?

Deaf people who have come before her. "They're the pioneers who fought for a lot of our rights," says Izza. "I wouldn't be here without the work they've done in making the world easier for me and more accessible."

WHAT IS IZZA'S ADVICE FOR HER FELLOW STUDENTS?

Advocate for what you need! You need to be a self-advocate to get what you want out of school and for your future career.



SARAH DELEON

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY OF EDMONTON

“I’m a mature student, so going back to school for me was very nerve-wracking, and there was a lot of unknowns,” says **Sarah Deleon**. “But everything I thought it was going to be, it has turned out to be the exact opposite.”

She’s made personal relationships with her instructors, met many great fellow students in her program, and even built lifelong friendships since going back to post-secondary school in January 2019.

When she first started in the business program, Sarah was “so sure” she would leverage that degree to go into human resources. “Then I took my first couple introductory accounting classes, and I loved it,” she says. “It was a mind-blowing experience for me because all throughout my public education, math was not my strong suit.”

In fact, Sarah even serves as her campus’s CPA Ambassador and works to inspire her classmates to learn more about the profession as well. “People think accounting is just one thing, like tax, but I wanted to help bring awareness that there are so many options,” she says. “You could have an industry in mind—like you could really like music, you could really like sports—and all those areas need CPAs!”

WHO INSPIRES SARAH?

Her two best friends. “Nothing is out of reach because she knows my capabilities better than I give myself credit for,” Sarah says of one of her friends.

WHAT IS SARAH’S ADVICE FOR HER FELLOW STUDENTS?

Don’t be afraid to ask new questions, and don’t be afraid to put yourself out there and network.



EMILY PARKER

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

"I eventually took some accounting classes, I liked them, and my mom laughed at me and said, 'typical,'" says **Emily Parker** when describing how she decided to follow the CPA path.

"My grandpa and my uncle started an accounting firm," explains Emily. "And my dad, aunt, and uncle are all CPA partners there, so I will be a third-generation CPA."

In addition to attending her classes, Emily is involved with the Ch'nook Scholars program, which is available at post-secondary institutions in B.C. and the University of Calgary. "It's a way to connect with other Indigenous business students," says Emily. "We do a bunch of workshops and seminars relating to business topics, like being a CPA, banking, governance—especially Indigenous governance."

She even reconnected with a childhood friend through one of the events! "That was really cool," says Emily. "It was a way of almost getting a sense of community within a community."

And if that's not enough, Emily also serves on her Indigenous band's settlement corporation. "They had an opportunity for a student to sit on the board of directors," Emily says. "It's been a really awesome experience."

WHO INSPIRES EMILY?

Her parents. "The life they have built, the life they are pursuing, and who they are as people to their core are an inspiration to me," Emily says. "I aspire to be anything like them."

WHAT IS EMILY'S TIME MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

Remember to take time for yourself every day. Life gets busy when you say yes to things, so it's important to remember "you" time, even if it's just 30 minutes.



ARIELLE VALENCIA

SAIT

Originally an engineering student at the University of Victoria, **Arielle Valencia** found her studies derailed by some health complications. “I decided this path wasn’t for me,” says Arielle. “Then I thought about it while I was recovering and realized I wanted to open my own business.”

From there, she decided accounting was the right route for her to follow that dream and help her rewrite her story. “After getting sick, it was really important that I show not just myself but others that you can rewrite your story, and it can be even better than it was originally,” says Arielle.

In writing this new story, Arielle has also learned one of the qualities she appreciates most in a leader is feeling like she’s been heard and taken seriously. She tries to bring that quality to her leadership in the classroom, into her interactions with her fellow students, and to the case competitions she participates in.

“I try to make sure everyone is listened to. I try to step back at times and realize if I’ve been talking too much,” Arielle says. “I’m really open to listening to people’s ideas. If I don’t agree with it, I’ll talk it out.”

WHO INSPIRES ARIELLE?

Her aunt, her faculty advisor, and her co-op boss. “All three of these women have always been so open to listening to me and showing me what really great leadership looks like and inspiring me to be that kind of leader,” says Arielle.

WHAT IS ARIELLE’S ADVICE FOR HER FELLOW STUDENTS?

It’s ok to change your mind. There is no such thing as wasted time if you’re trying to explore and figure out yourself and your interests.




VISHAL HARESHKU- MAR VEKARIA

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Vishal Hareshkumar Vekaria knew since he was a teenager that he wanted to become an accountant and get his designation, and he eventually decided Canada was where he wanted to do that. As a bonus, he says moving so far from his home of Kenya has helped him transform over these last three years.

“Going out, living independently, handling school, handling part-time work, volunteering—that all has transformed me from the boy I was to the man I have now become,” says Vishal. “When I compare myself to who I was back then, I’m a really changed person.”

And Vishal has certainly learned how to balance a number of different obligations. He maintains very high grades in his courses (his current priority!), he dedicates Saturdays to his commitments with the International Swaminarayan Satsang Organization of Edmonton, he volunteers with various organizations including the tax clinics on his campus, and he even tutors his fellow students for a few hours each week!

“I try to involve myself as much as I can,” Vishal says. “I prioritize my studies, but then whenever I have free time, I use it for better causes.” 

WHO INSPIRES VISHAL?

His parents. “My dad came from a small village in India and built his business from scratch in Kenya for me to pursue an education. He made sacrifices so I could live a decent life,” says Vishal. “And my mom gave me a solid foundation: she showed me what true hard work and work ethic is.”

WHAT IS VISHAL’S TIME MANAGEMENT ADVICE?

It’s all about prioritizing! Plan out your priorities and block off time and fit other activities around it.



Responsible AI and the competitive edge

TODAY, ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE REQUIRES
A DIVERSITY MINDSET

BY ANDREA MICHAUD | PHOTOGRAPHY BY LAUGHING DOG PHOTOGRAPHY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning enable companies to reduce costs, increase revenue, and create new business lines. And these technologies are already at the core of products we use every day, like Google Home and Siri. “The most interesting thing about these technologies is that they get better over time,” says **Julia Cruz CPA**.


After starting her career as an auditor, Julia was unsure about taking the leap into a new field that she only had a basic understanding of at the time. Now, however, she is at the forefront of AI implementation as Lead Business Solutions Consultant at AtIaML, an Edmonton-based company that helps companies design and adopt AI and machine learning solutions to define their competitive edge.

“I’d always been interested in machine learning and AI, but I never felt like I was an expert in it,” says Julia. “But I felt like my CPA [designation] was there and had my back. You have the toolkit from your CPA to take on new challenges.”

AI can take so many different forms and fulfill all sorts of needs in our society, and Julia has found her niche in this world—responsible AI. “It comes from the idea of making AI solutions inclusive of people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized,” she explains.

Because machine learning is only as good as the data it’s trained on, biased inputs can lead to biased results. One way to help AI become more inclusive and ethical is to ensure the people developing these products have the proper training. “Being aware of the practices and tools that are coming out right now to support responsible AI really helps set you up to make sure your output isn’t creating harmful effects on humans,” says Julia. “We need diverse perspectives so we can make sure the solutions are inclusive and ethical.”

These perspectives not only include people from diverse backgrounds and identities, but also from different professions. “I was pretty intimidated to join this field because I don’t have a background in machine learning,” says Julia, “but I think there’s a big need to see people with business backgrounds—especially CPAs—get involved and understand how organizations can help adopt these types of solutions.”

Companies that adopt and use AI responsibly will build and maintain their competitive edge far into the future, and CPAs can define their own competitive edge in many ways. Learning to work alongside AI and machine learning from a diverse and inclusive mindset is a great place to start. 



I FELT LIKE MY CPA [DESIGNATION] WAS THERE AND HAD MY BACK. YOU HAVE THE TOOLKIT FROM YOUR CPA TO TAKE ON NEW CHALLENGES.

Julia Cruz CPA





SHOULD STUDENTS OR YOUNG PROFESSIONALS SAVE FOR RETIREMENT?

THE EARLIER YOU GET STARTED, THE BETTER YOUR RESULTS

By John Kok CFP, RRC, CEA, CKA

Spending is fun. Exciting. Easy. New clothes, eating out, travel, parties, special coffees—who doesn't want to enjoy all these wonderful things and experiences?

Saving money can seem hard. Boring. Difficult. It might mean making your own lunches, wearing clothes that have gone out of style, travelling local, and skipping some experiences.

So, what will you do? Will you say, "I can start saving in the future"? Or will you sit down and already start thinking about saving for retirement?

It doesn't matter whether you are a student, a young professional, or a business executive. What matters is creating habits in your life from a young age.

As a student, you might say, "I don't make much, and it's not going to add up to anything significant." But it doesn't matter whether you have a lot to save or how much it adds up to. What matters is developing the habit of saving that will see you accumulate a great amount over your lifetime, paving the way to an enjoyable and affordable retirement.

One of the key principles of financial success is saving and investing at least 10 per cent of every dollar you earn. I'm a big proponent of never touching these funds until retirement, but they could also be accessed as an emergency fund or an opportunity fund.

When you start working in a full-time, permanent position, you could even consider increasing that 10 per cent to 20 per cent. If you do this at the start of your career, it's like you never had that money, and you might be less likely to miss it. The mistake some people make is that as their income increases, their spending increases instead of their saving. This can be wasteful and assumes your situation will always get better, but reality tells us sometimes people lose their jobs or they get sick or become disabled.

An important question, though, is: What vehicle to use for savings? The two most popular choices are Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) and Tax-Free Savings Accounts (TFSA). With either plan, you can invest in investment funds, stocks, or even plain-vanilla term deposits. An RRSP provides a tax

deduction based on your tax bracket, and the funds grow tax-free but are taxable upon withdrawal. A TFSA does not provide a tax deduction but grows tax-free and is tax-free upon withdrawal.

But which is right for you?

A rule of thumb is the higher your income, the more an RRSP makes sense; the lower your income, the more you might choose a TFSA. A financial planner can help you determine which option makes the most sense based on your circumstances.

Which leads to the last point: you need allies—someone on your side, someone who can coach you through the financial issues you will be facing, someone who can also be your advocate in navigating the financial challenges you will face. This can include a qualified financial planner or simply identifying people who have achieved saving success in their own lives and would be willing to mentor you. ☑



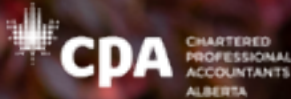
It doesn't matter whether you are a student, a young professional, or a business executive. What matters is creating habits in your life from a young age.

John Hok CFP, RRC, CEA, CKA



John Kok CFP, RRC, CEA, CKA is the Founder and President of Navigator Financial. He is passionate about the importance of financial education as an effective way to improve the lives of Canadians. He can be reached at 780-425-5870 or john@navigatorfinancial.com.





In my opinion, receiving an education is a privilege and a gift of the highest degree (pun intended!). So to receive this award from the CPA Education Foundation in recognition of what I have achieved is a welcome reminder of the value of those accomplishments and a testament to the strong network of people behind me.

— Tinashe Muzah, recipient of the New Canadian Achievement Award

WORK HARD. GET REWARDED.

CPA Education Foundation student awards

The CPA Education Foundation is passionate about helping students reach their CPA designation goals and recognizes that education is a significant financial investment. That's why the Foundation offers a variety of awards to help ease the financial barriers of higher education for students at all stages of their educational careers, from high school to post-secondary and through to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

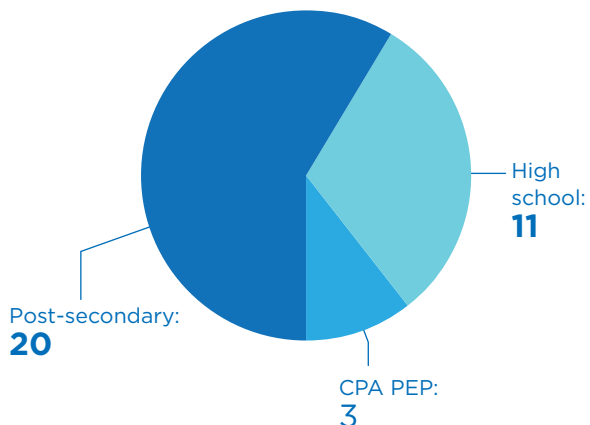
Post-secondary and CPA PEP awards deadline: January 31

High school awards deadline: May 1

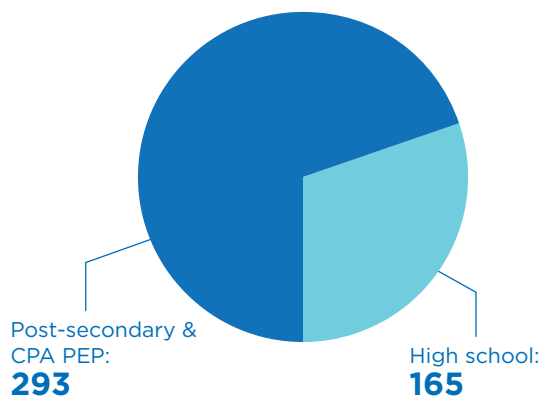
For more information on any of the CPA Education Foundation scholarships, please visit cpaalberta.ca/scholarships.

Did you know the CPA Education Foundation provided more than \$170,000 in funding for student awards, scholarships, and bursaries in the 2021/22 year?

Number of awards available in 2023



Applications received in 2022



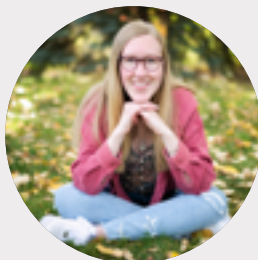
Have questions? Connect with us at cpaef@cpaalberta.ca!

The CPA Education Foundation is proud to support Alberta's future community-builders, philanthropists, academics, and entrepreneurs. Here are some of this year's award recipients.



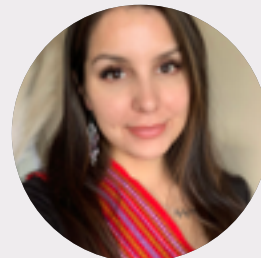
"For me, receiving this award has inspired me to keep giving back to the community and to work hard towards my vision of building a more united global community. Without the generosity and support of the CPA Education Foundation and its donors, recipients like myself would not get opportunities like these or be recognized for efforts in bettering our communities."

— Gurleen Mangat, recipient of the Kelly & Creaghan Stepping Up in the Community Award



"Being a wheelchair user comes with many accessibility-related additional costs that the average person does not need to cover or even think about. This scholarship will greatly help with tuition and the rising costs of today, enabling me to focus on my studies and prosper in my educational journey."

— Jeslyn Ramsay, recipient of the CPA Alberta Young Emerging Professional Award



"Ever since I was 12 or 13, I knew I wanted to be an accountant even though I didn't grow up surrounded by accountants or have any idea of the journey to receive the CPA designation. I am now so close to achieving my aspirations, and I am extremely grateful for the journey. I want my experience in overcoming adversity to serve as a role model for the younger generation in my family, especially my son, and let them know there is no limit to their aspirations."

— Tatianna Pelletier, recipient of the TELUS Award for Indigenous Post-Secondary Success



UP TO THE CHALLENGE

STUDENTS ADAPT TO ONLINE COMPETITION

By Kevin Spila


It can be hard to remember what life was like before the pandemic, when the most challenging aspect of special events and conferences was the logistics of keeping people organized. Over the past two years, we've all found ways to adapt to the new reality; in some instances, we've actually managed to create events that offer unexpected opportunities to interact and learn. The CPA Education Foundation Business Challenge case competition is one of those success stories.

In previous years, this two-day event saw student teams from post-secondary institutions across Alberta come together in Red Deer to practice their business case-solving skills, hone their strategic acumen, and experience what it's like to be a professional working to solve real-world business problems. For the last two years, the case competition has been held entirely online, but the competition was just as real and just as rewarding.

"Our goal from the start was to try to recreate the intensity and excitement of the in-person event in an online format," says **Kayla Gaffney**, Communications Manager for the Foundation. "The Foundation believes that case competitions are invaluable in helping students build their future skills, and we worked hard to find a way to not only replicate the in-person experience, but make the event even more responsive to student needs."

While going online meant students had to give up the in-person camaraderie for virtual high fives, it also meant students got to experience what much of the business world was also going through: solving business problems in the midst of a global pandemic. The case competition offered students a truly unique experience in which boardroom brainstorming, networking lunches, and in-person pitches were replaced by breakout room strategizing, chats and emojis, and virtual presentations.

In total, more than 70 students from eight post-secondary institutions participated in the past two pandemic-era events. Some students even logged in from as far away as Ecuador! As long as students were registered in an Alberta-based accounting program, they were able to compete due to the virtual nature of the competition.

Despite the online format, the case competition garnered high praise from student participants and their faculty advisors. "We'll have to see where we go from here," says Kayla. "It definitely opens more doors of opportunity for students." 

WINNERS OF THE 2022 CPA EDUCATION FOUNDATION BUSINESS CHALLENGE

11 teams. 3 rounds. 4 finalists. But only one team would emerge victorious.

After an intense two days of online collaboration and competition, post-secondary business students from across Alberta presented their findings to a live panel of judges. The panel included CPA Education Foundation Board members, CPAs, and representatives from our 2022 business case partner, Canadian Western Bank.



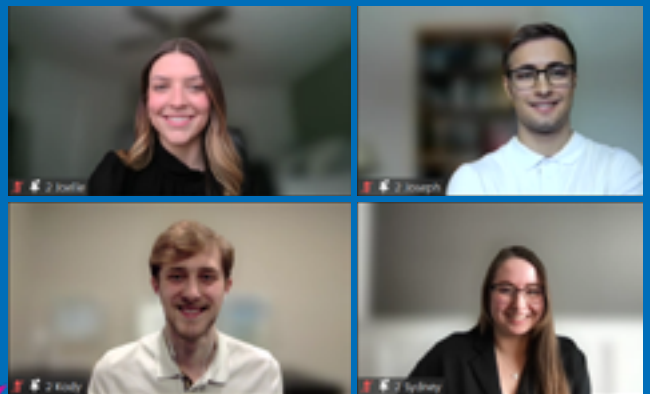
1 FIRST PLACE

University of Alberta



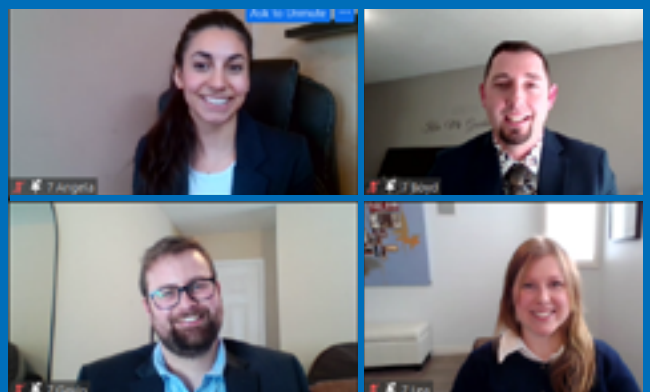
2 SECOND PLACE

MacEwan University



3 THIRD PLACE

SAIT





The Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre helps rural high schools transform big ideas into action

By Kevin Spila

What's the big idea?

Grade 12 students Carson Smith (seated) and Robert Beranek from FP Walshe High School in Fort Macleod are super excited to try the new virtual reality career exploration tool.


Those who attended high school in rural Alberta know post-secondary open houses and career fairs—or even online resources!—are more accessible to those who live close to or in larger communities. Obviously, when you live and learn farther away from a major urban centre, you face additional logistical and technological challenges and have to find creative ways to gain access to those educational opportunities.

That creativity was front and centre as rural high schools pitched their big ideas for the CPA Education Foundation's Rural High School Grant.

Teachers and administrators across the province are finding unique ways to engage their students, such as equipping their schools with new technology to better develop practical knowledge and skills in science and technology and using virtual reality to enhance learning and explore career opportunities for students entering the

21st-century workplace. In the process, they're also shaping the future of learning.

Since it was established in 2021, the Rural High School Grant—which is funded in part by the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre—has been awarded to five schools and school divisions across Alberta for projects aimed at increasing access to educational opportunities and setting students up for success. Most recently, funds were awarded to Drumheller Valley Secondary School in Drumheller, Harry Collinge High School in Hinton, and the Livingstone Range School Division in Fort Macleod.

The Foundation believes these projects will greatly benefit students and honour the legacy of the Knowledge Centre's namesake, the late Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA. Brian had a passion for supporting students in small towns and farming communities who seldom had the same opportunities as students in big cities. 



Our team is filled with gratitude and honoured to have received the Rural High School Grant. Thank you to Mr. Hesje and the CPA Education Foundation for giving us the opportunity to introduce our students to the world of career exploration through virtual reality simulations.

— Christina Bazell, Career Service Team, Livingstone Range School Division

The CPA Education Foundation's Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre was established thanks to a generous gift from Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA (1946–2021), who is remembered as an accomplished Alberta business leader and community builder. The Knowledge Centre, which was founded in March 2019, is a virtual hub of resources and materials featuring Alberta CPAs sharing their unique perspectives and vast expertise on a wide range of topics and issues.

Check us out online!

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