

Letter of Transmittal
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Date: July 12, 2017
To: Professor Ryan House
From: Katie Early, Director of Research and Information
Derek Held, Director of Administration and Deduction
Jordan Surma, Director of Communications and Projection
Subject: A guide introducing Accounting majors to options available to them after completing a baccalaureates degree

Attached you will find our study and product of a “A guide introducing Accounting majors to options available to them after completing a baccalaureates degree”. The tasks that were detailed in our proposal were completed on July 9th 2017. We habituated ourselves with the programs of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) for both WSU, and University of Washington (UW). We also familiarized ourselves with the requirements to obtain a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) certification, and a Certified Management Accountant (CMA) certification. It also discusses the benefits of obtaining an MBA degree, MAcc degree, CPA certification, and CMA certification.

In order to find the information needed, we performed primary research. We looked into the MBA requirements for both WSU, and UW. In addition, we researched the benefits of someone obtaining a CPA, and CMA certification. After the research was concluded, we compiled what we found and converged our data.

The primary findings are that those wishing to seek a Master’s program must be very studious. The MBA requirements for both WSU and UW are exceedingly difficult. The work load for both programs is identical, however the program at WSU is far cheaper then UW’s. We found that having a CPA, and CMA certification make candidates resumes outshine other candidates resumes.

We recommend a single course of action: That students majoring in Accounting have the necessary, non-subjective information provided to them to help formulate a plan to achieve their career goals in the field of Accounting.

We appreciate the interest that you have expressed to our proposal. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us.

Educating Undergraduate Accounting Majors on Post-Degree Pursuits

Prepared for: Professor Ryan House

Prepared by: Katie Early
Derek Held
Jordan Surma

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Executive Summary

This report discusses our process in identifying a need had by undergraduate account students and reaching a point of making a recommendation. We begin with the issue of helping undergraduates to think about their post-degree options. There are many options that had to be researched and condensed into an easily digestible deliverable. The research methods we used are discussed more in length to make it clear how we reached our conclusions. These conclusions are detailed out and are followed by our recommendations based on the research and the conclusions we reached. We also include an example deliverable that ties together everything learned in the course of this project into a product that we believe would be useful to undergraduate accounting majors.

Introduction

College students commit years of their life to obtain their undergraduate degree. They are offered assistance by academic advisors throughout their student career to help them plan, prepare and organize a structured outline that will help them to succeed with the aspirations of obtain a bachelor's degree. The final year in a student's undergraduate degree with pass very quickly and without adequate research, planning and organizing the student could feel lost. They are often faced with the challenge of if they should continue to graduate school or if they should enter the job force. What this comes down to is a personal preference. The biggest hurdle is sorting through all the subjective material to draw the best conclusion for yourself. As an Accounting major, it can be very difficult to decide if a Masters in Business Administration (MBA), Masters in Accounting (MAcc), Certified Public Accountant (CPA) certification, Certified Management Accountant (CMA) or entering the job market is the correct path to take. The goal of this project was to create a guide for Accounting students that will provide high level important factors to consider when looking toward life after completing an Accounting undergraduate degree.

Research Methods

For us to compose a completed product we divided the project into four main tasks.

Task 1: Audience analysis.

For this project our targeted audience is Accounting majors that are looking to further their education via a Master's program or an Accounting certification. We limited the scope of the project to only include Washington state universities and Washington state certification requirements. Thus, our information will only be relevant to individuals who are looking to extend their education or obtain an Accounting certification within the state of Washington.

Task 2: Project organization.

The project organization is the key to success in order to develop and complete a useful product. We began the process by voting which project pitch to use. The project with most votes was repurposed. This also meant that the person who pitched the subject would serve as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) on the project. Individually, we all brainstormed ideas for a product that would be most beneficial for our targeted audience. We then agreed that a guide would be most suitable and user friendly for Accounting majors. From here, the tasks of completing the guide such as the design layout, guide content and editing were divided among the team members. To provide a useful product, our text book, Technical Communication, was highly used to ensure proper formatting was followed. We also utilized Blackboard discussion boards to collaborate our ideas for the product. When someone was done with their portion of the project, they would post in a new discussion thread for another team member to edit and revise.

Task 3: Design layout and guide content.

The design layout was envisioned to include only non-subjective information. The SME on the project provided the content for the guide since they had extensively conducted the research prior to starting this project. The layout needed to be simple, yet informative. We decided to only include

the high-level information to keep the reader's attention. The deliberative content selection would also serve as a viable quick reference for students in the future since it is only two pages long. We also wanted to keep the color schemes simple as to not distract the reader from the guides content.

Task 4: Revising and editing.

Once the information was added to the guide, it was then posted on Blackboard for another team member to edit and revise. Once all team members had reviewed the product and made suggestions, a finished product was completed.

Results

Our final product is a reference guide that can be used by Accounting majors who are looking for high level non-subjective information about two Masters degree programs offered by both Washington State University and University of Washington and two Accounting certifications that can be obtained. The objective of the guide is to be used as a tool for an Accounting major who wants to jump start their planning for their future beyond an undergraduate degree. The first page of the guide is used to catch the reader's attention and give a brief overview of the content. The second page of the guide is where the content is listed in bullet points to help the readers shift through the information with ease. The guide contains information about education programs requirements to be admitted into the program or eligibility to sit for a certification exam. Quantitative information such as grade point average (GPA) and the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) scores are also included. The simplistic design of the guide will help the reader focus on the content.

Conclusions

The target audience for this product is Accounting students who are looking for information on what options are available to them after they complete their undergraduate degree. The guide is two pages long, so it will not cause an information overload to the reader. It is meant to be utilized as a quick reference guide composed of high-level non-subjective content including two Masters degree options and two Accounting certification options. In conclusion, the guide will allow the student to start academically planning for their future depending on their career aspirations, based on the general information we provided. This guide is not meant to tell the student what the correct path is, but be used as a tool to give students a jump start on their own research.

Recommendations

This reference guide can be used as a tool that school advisors distribute, it can be sent out as an email to Accounting undergrads or housed under the "F & Q" page for the schools Accounting program. This guide could be handed out to students once they have declared their major because it will allow the student to have a general understanding of what grade point average they will need and what educational requirements need to be met in order to pursue either a Masters degree or an Accounting certification. What makes this product successful, is that it is an easy and quick read, which will capture the audience's attention. It also provides the groundwork for students to do further research.

There are areas that this product can be expanded. We only focused on two Masters programs and two Accounting certifications. It does not include any of the other options available. Another limitation is that it is only focused on two Washington schools and Washington certification requirements. This could be expanded to include all of the states in the United States. If this was expanded, it would be more useful as a website where students could compare and contrast different options available.

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Appendix: Guide of “What Comes After Your Degree?”

WHAT COMES AFTER YOUR DEGREE?

As an Accounting major, you are presented numerous options for life after your baccalaureates degree. We will answer two common questions Accounting majors ask themselves and talk about what you can expect. The goal of this guide is to give you basic knowledge of the requirements to help you make the best decision for your chosen career path.



An Accounting Major's Choice

**Masters in
Business
Administration
(MBA)**

**Masters in
Accounting
(MAcc)**

**Certified Public
Accountant
(CPA)**

**Certified
Management
Accountant
(CMA)**

Question 1: What are some graduate degree options available?

Two commonly chosen graduate degree program options are the Masters in Business Administration (MBA) and Masters in Accounting (MAcc). Both programs are offered by Washington State University (WSU) and University of Washington (UW).

For admission to both programs: The applicant must take and achieve a score of 550 or above on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) and has a grade point average of 3.0 or above.

The MBA:

- WSU is a total of 32 semester credit hours comprised of 7 core classes, 3 electives and a 2-credit portfolio and would cost about \$17,725. This is a flexible program that allows students to go at their own pace from 1 to 4 classes a semester.
- UW is a 64-quarter credit program comprised of 16 classes would cost about \$21,000-\$23,000 and take an average of two years to complete. Once a student is enrolled into the MBA program they have to have continuous enrollment.
- The core curriculum consists of a mix of management classes that help an individual learn how to manage people, information and understand organizational goals.

The MAcc

- WSU is a 32-semester credit program that focuses on advanced accounting, business law, taxation, auditing and a 2credit final exam. It will cost about \$17, 725 for the program.
- UW costs \$19,800 for Washington residents and is a 45-quarter credit program that is comprised of 10 four-credit classes, a one-credit speaker series and a four-credit internship.
- This program focuses on the topics of tax, auditing, analysis and advanced accounting

Question 2: What certifications can I pursue?

Two highly sought after Accounting certifications are a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and a Certified Management Accountant (CMA). While they are both considered accounting certifications, they both have separate requirements. The requirements for:

A CPA

- 150 credit hours (including a BA Degree)
- 24 semester hours in Accounting where 15 of those hours must be upper division or graduate level
- You must sit for the exam 180 days after completing the education requirement
- Must pass the AICPA Professional Ethics Exam for initial license
- 1 year general experience gained through public accounting or employment in the industry, academia or government
- Once the CPA exam is passed, the individual must pay their annual dues and complete 120 hours of continuing education in three years.

A CMA

- Accounting background is helpful, but not required.
- A Bachelor's degree from an accredited college/university
- Complete two professional years in management accounting or financial management within 7 years of the exam.
- Complete both parts of the CMA exam
- Once the CMA exam is passed, the individual must pay their annual dues and complete 30 hours of continuing education per year.

