Pathways Commission

Question #2
What should be the accounting educational pathways?

Overall Discussion Leader
Karen Pincus
Question #2 High School / Community College
Del DeVries, Dan Deines, Madge Gregg, Gregory Johnson, Tracie Nobles, Margarita Lenk, Mary Medley, Jack Wilkerson, Susan Crosson
Understanding the complete accounting supply chain is essential to formulating the educational pathways.

Foundational questions identified:
- Common Body of Knowledge for the first course in accounting. This course is the doorway or beginning of several entry points to pathways.
- Define “Accounting Professionals”

Career Pathways (included in this sub-group)
- Paraprofessionals
- Entry level accountants (no certification required)
AP Accounting (Accounting Pilot and Bridge Project), Taylor Report (AICPA 2000) and College Board research on first course in accounting content

AECC documents on first course in accounting

Issue #2 group – has working definitions for paraprofessional/professional

AAA Reports written by David Leslie
Accounting broadly defined includes Accounting Professionals and Accounting Paraprofessionals.

- Defining / understanding the supply chain of accounting is essential to formulating educational pathways for
  - Paraprofessional (applied science degree track)
  - Entry level positions with no certifications required
- Consensus on definitions is needed to define “who are we”?
Establishing a strong, accurate accounting brand is essential in high schools to enhance college bound student’s pathways to accounting.

- Currently many high school accounting courses misrepresent accounting’s value proposition
- Possible Initiatives: Accounting pilot and bridge project, AP accounting course and exam, Academies of finance, honors accounting, and dual enrollment.
The first course in accounting is the gateway to accounting and business degrees and is important for communicating the accounting value proposition.

- Accounting is the language of business
- Should Accounting become a GenEd requirement for Secondary/Post-Secondary degrees?
- What are the core competencies and pedagogy that will attract students and educate accounting’s users?
Open Items about Working Issues

- Data needed for working issues
Financial literacy is bigger than the Pathways Commission. But important to America’s future.

Other high school non-accounting, business, and personal finance courses
Next Steps

- Initiate data collection on working issues
- Integrate feedback from public meeting
- Formulate recommendations and action items for working issues
Question 2 University Subgroup
Harriet Maccracken, Martha Doran, Dan Deines, Jack Wilkerson, Margarita Lenk & Karen Pincus
What should be the accounting education pathways for entry-level professional accountants?

What are the key knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities accounting students will need to meet the challenges of the future?

In studies and reports over many decades, there is general agreement the competencies for entry level accountants.

AAA – “KSAAs: The Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Abilities related to faculty development for accounting faculty”.

Albrecht & Sacks: "Accounting Education: Charting the Course through a Perilous Future”. Accounting Education Series, Volume No. 16—

Resources/References

- Marshall, Dombrowski, Garver and Smith: “The Accounting Education Gap – Faculty Perspectives”, The CPA Journal, June 2010
Major Observations/Working Issues

- Given the general consensus, the question arises, why haven’t these recommendations been implemented, and what are the impediments to change?
- These skills and attributes are taught to students largely by their accounting professors.
- There is a growing disconnect between academics and practice, evidenced by PhD candidates with little or no experience in the profession of accounting.
Major Observations/Working Issues

- What is the viability of encouraging institutions to develop a course that is part of the PhD curriculum on understanding the accounting profession in the broadest sense?
- What changes should be made in doctoral education to prepare professors for the rapidly changing learning environment?
- What factors have blocked or impeded the various recommended changes in accounting education?
Open Items about Working Issues

- Survey of accounting faculty and PhD candidates as to their assessment of the pedagogical skills included in their preparation to become professors, similar to the Swain and Stout 2000 survey published in the Journal of Accounting Education.
- Look into what AACSB may be doing as it relates to studying doctoral education globally.
- Develop survey to determine impediments to achieving or sustaining previous change recommendations.
Some Open Items may not be pursued, based on feedback from the Commission.
Integrate feedback from the public meeting.

Deal with Open Items:
- Follow up Stout, Swain survey;
- Work with AACSB to study doctoral education models;
- New study to examine barriers to change based on prior change recommendations.
Question #2: Career Subgroup
Stephen Young, Larry Evans, Mary Medley, Kate Mooney, Holly Paul
Who assesses the CPAs continuing education needs and how?
Who plans how to satisfy those needs?
What are the options for satisfying those needs?
Who assesses whether those needs are met and how?
How well is the public interest being served?
Are critically important changes needed or not?
If changes are needed, what are the impediments?
The Career Subgroup believes CPE generally serves its purpose and is well understood by the CPA profession.

- We do not believe a significant change to the method CPE programs work (for example, from an inputs-based to an outputs-based structure) would generate improvements sufficient to warrant the time and resources needed to do so.

The opportunities for improvement include:

- Developing learning pathways for various professional roles in public accounting, industry, education, and government to assist CPAs in identifying skill gaps and CPE activities to help them develop skills and competency; and

- Exploring how to achieve greater consistency in CPE requirements among licensing jurisdictions, similar to the uniformity initiative focused on mobility of the CPA certificate, to enable CPAs to meet the spirit and intent of CPE.
Working Issues

- None at this time
None, unless feedback strongly suggests that others believe the CPE process warrants a higher priority than the subgroup does.
The Career Subgroup believes that the current continuing professional education model works well enough that it should not be a primary focus for change at this time.
Next Steps

- Integrate feedback from public meeting