

SESSION 2: TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22

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Differences in Expectations between Practitioners, Students and Educators Concerning the Undergraduate Accounting Curriculum

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ABSTRACT: This paper details research on the disagreement between accounting educators and accounting practitioners on how best to institute changes in accounting education in order to better prepare students for professional positions in today's complex, global market-place. The dilemma for accounting educators and accounting practitioners is how to create an effective undergraduate accounting program when there is no clear opinion of what is needed and how to deliver the needed information. The research consisted of a questionnaire transmitted to three categories of accounting participants – 1) public accountants, 2) management accountants and 3) educators. The research, through a survey utilizing the Likert scale, obtained the preferred accounting undergraduate curriculum from accounting educators, public accountants and management accountants. The variables studied were – 1) what accounting courses should be required for an accounting degree and what accounting courses should be offered as electives, 2) accounting topics accounting students should understand, 3) accounting topics that should be developed more thoroughly, 4) how much time should be given to developing each of the 25 designated skills in an undergraduate program and 5) ranking the most effective teaching methods of accounting.

The study found that educators, public accountants and management accountants agreed on seven of the nine required courses – Accounting Principles, Managerial Accounting, Accounting Information Systems, Intermediate Accounting I, Intermediate Accounting II, Auditing and Advanced Accounting. The only elective course selected by all three categories of respondents was Ethical Responsibilities of Accountants. The categories of respondents agreed that seven of 44 undergraduate topics required more than an introductory level knowledge – generally accepted auditing standards, internal control, accounting ethics, preparation and presentation of financial statements, including footnotes, disclosure standards, revenue recognition and expense recognition. The categories of respondents agreed that only three of 25 skills required more than a medium level of classroom time problem solving in diverse and unstructured situations, written communications and analytical. Even though the categories of respondents agreed on three of 25 skills, the categories of respondents disagreed significantly on the importance of the skills.