

## Future Accountant Stakeholder Symposium: Partnering for Impact

Sponsored by: American Accounting Association and NABA, Inc.

September 28-29, 2023

Convene, Washington D.C.

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8:15 a.m. Welcome: Yvonne Hinson, CEO, American Accounting Association; Guylaine Saint Juste, CEO, NABA, Inc.

Introduction of Meeting Facilitators: Loretta Penn, Executive Coaching and Consulting; Ellen Glazerman, Executive Director, EY Foundation

Pipeline Symposium Objectives:

- Gather critical stakeholders together to strengthen relationships.
- Create an environment to brainstorm, ideate and collaborate.
- Learn from each other – what are you doing that makes a difference?
- Leave with a Plan that is scalable and sustainable by the collective body for the good of the profession.

Pipeline Symposium Ground Rules:

- Remain open to new ideas.
- Be willing to share.
- Be punctual.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- Attack the problem, not the person.
- When you speak, state your name and organization.
- Listen to and respect other points of view.
- Ask questions.
- Place all mobile phones on silent or vibrate.
- Close decisions and follow-up.

[Agenda: See AAA NABA Stakeholder Symposium PowerPoint Slides 4 -5](#)

1. Karen Osterheld presented research that was provided by the stakeholders:

What is the current situation:

- Accounting majors are the business major cohort most likely to say they picked their major before entering college (66%). (CAQ, Increasing Diversity in the Accounting Profession Pipeline, July 2023)
- Accounting graduates trended downward in the 2019–2020 academic year, with decreases of 2.8% and 8.4% at the bachelor's and master's levels, respectively. (2021 AICPA Trends Report)
- Four in ten non-accounting business undergraduate students reported they considered accounting before choosing another field of study. The rate is even higher among Black and Hispanic students. (CAQ, Increasing Diversity in the Accounting Profession Pipeline, July 2023)

- In 2020, 10% of Associate’s Degrees and 7% of Bachelor’s Degrees were completed by students who identified as Black or African American; the corresponding numbers for students who identified as Hispanic or Latino are 19% and 13%. (2021 AICPA Trends Report)

Who are we branding to? Gen Z:

- Financial Security is increasingly important to Gen Z (including how and where they make it).
- Gen Z seeks job fulfilment and money when it comes to their work choices.
- While Gen Z is laser-focused on creating a better future for themselves and others, they are also undergoing a crisis-level battle with mental health.
- Inherently skeptical, Gen Z reserves higher levels of trust for individuals and smaller or more local entities.
- Source: 2023 EY Gen Z Study

What are some of the branding issues?

- A lack of diverse representation in the profession continues to discourage new entry into the field.
- Students’ doubts about the math skillset needed to become an accountant; this is a more significant concern for Black and Hispanic business students.
- When asked to rate satisfaction levels across several areas of their early career, job stability ranks first and is the only aspect where most accounting graduates are very satisfied. Black recent grads are significantly less satisfied with organizational culture.
- Source: CAQ, Increasing Diversity in the Accounting Profession Pipeline, July 2023

What are some of the major barriers?

- Asked about their experiences with introductory accounting courses, only 1 in 3 non-accounting majors who considered accounting said the content was interesting or engaging.
- Other themes emerged among students who ultimately chose not to pursue accounting including, lack of passion, higher starting salaries for other majors and not wanting to pursue the additional academic hours necessary to become a CPA.
- Students say a variety of supports would be helpful in encouraging them through accounting courses, with the most traction around exposure in high school and a better overview of job/career pathways.
- Source: CAQ, Increasing Diversity in the Accounting Profession Pipeline, July 2023

2. Priorities – Based upon input from the stakeholders:

- Branding of the Profession, High School Programming, Community College Programming, Principles Courses
  - Q: Why Community College and not Universities? A: 4-year shows up in Principles Courses.
  - Q: Are these in order of importance? A: They are not in order, but Branding was first. They were just the top 4.
- 3. Table Work – Ideation - Each table was asked to come up with a list of priorities for each of the four major areas: High School Programming, Community College Programming, Principles Courses, Branding of the Profession:

See [Supplemental Materials](#):

[High School Programming Ideation](#)

[Community College Programming Ideation](#)

[Principles Course Ideation](#)

[Branding of the Profession Ideation](#)

- 4. Ellen reviewed notes from the flipcharts:
  - Community College Comments:
    - We need to focus our resources on Community College educators to attend and participate in conferences. A participant suggests that the plight is misunderstood for those students that aren't attending a 4-year college.
    - You have career students, extra learners, only taking one or two courses. This is not one size fits all so that needs to be a branding message – accessibility.
  - Principles Course Comments:
    - Accountants are lazy, and it is too much work.
    - The end goal is to go to campus and recruit. Make recruiters understand the ages of the recruits. Mentorship is a possibility.
    - When we talk about what we will do differently. We hear this all the time, and nothing is done.
    - We need to lead with accountability.
- [Amy O'Connor, Center for Audit Quality, Presentation on Accounting + - See AAA NABA Stakeholder Symposium PowerPoint slides 15-19](#)
  - QUESTION - How are we pushing info out to them? ANSWER – High school classes are being distributed by EVERFI and the campaign is going through social media..
  - QUESTION - Can you give us resources to put on our sites. ANSWER - They have a [tool kit for educators](#).
  - COMMENTS – EVERFI has quizzes to bring students in and then they organically discover Accounting+.
- [Jennifer Glaser, Siver Creek High School, Presentation – See AAA NABA Stakeholder Symposium PowerPoint slides 20-25](#)

#### 5. BRAINSTORM – TOP 2 ITEMS PER PRIORITY GROUP

- Principles Courses Group
  - Revamp course significantly. The group is committed to take on this big endeavor.
  - Create a new course instructed by accounting professionals.
  - COMMENT – Must revamp the textbooks as well.
- Community College Programming Group
  - National repository of student information – students may need a professor to talk to, mentors (retired accountants). How can we connect them? How can firms engage, true student matching. On a personal level, much more personalized to fit the student's needs.
  - Onboarding to universities. How do we connect them, so they feel as if they belong. Students would control the information they provide to be a part of it. COMMENT – Standardizing the transfers on the list also. If the students know they can transfer their credits to a university, that helps, and the Community Colleges come under the umbrella. For example, 2+2 program in Florida.

- Branding of the Profession Group
  - Type of accounting press kit with the latest information to share with students, universities, firms. Alignment on myth busters, messaging assistance, culture, low salary, etc. “It’s not your grandparents’ accounting!”.
  - Combination of two ideas – some type of consortium with all agencies (like the people here) involved to get together consistently and utilizing the press kit and goals. COMMENT – Has there ever been a TV presence to be an accountant. Sustainable funding is key.
  
- High School Programming Group
  - Partner with Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) and communicate with organizations (NAF, Junior Achievement, Year Up) and leverage the networks to help.
  - Tool kits – plug and play out of the box. Right content, right teachers are the secret sauce. COMMENTS – Did you consider any type of engagement for career days in High Schools? Summer programs visited 20+ high schools. Community partners should be doing that. AICPA has toolkits. Work with state societies (three now promoting this fall). [www.thiswaytocpa.com](http://www.thiswaytocpa.com) EVERFI course (visual content) in 3000 schools this year. Over 40K students took the course. Can be measured. COMMENT– in the Community College Group they talked about the national repository and how it all should be tied together as a resource bank.

## 6. IDEAS: group work

Poll questions:

What did you learn?

- The difficulty of using LinkedIn as a portal of sending information.
- Learned about Accounting+
- Learned the interdependencies between HS and CC and how to make them go further.

What do we need to think about for tomorrow?

- Scaling – what are we going to do to get there?
- What is getting there?
- What is the best organizational structure to make this work and where are the resources going to come from?
- What connections are there for other High Schools teachers for professional development? How do we make them?
- Challenge us to use a simple idea.
- How do we make sure that this doesn’t turn into the Pathways Commission?
- Wish we all work together instead of not feeling supported.
- Worry about cascading this and still doesn’t get outside of this group.
- We are not going to solve it tomorrow; this is the only step.
- Start with tangible things.

What Loretta Heard Day 1

1. Awareness

2. Accountability
3. Knowledge is Power (ask yourself)
  - a. Is it a knowledge enhancer?
  - b. What are you doing to make sure you know?

What Loretta Saw Day 1

1. Commitment
2. Dedication
3. Collaboration

## DAY 2

Guylaine Saint Juste began with a discussion as to the importance and critical nature of including diversity in our thoughts as we go through these meetings. We have entered a time where the majority of students graduating from high school are diverse, our profession needs diversity; therefore, we need to consider the experiences of our diverse potential students as we have discussions.

### Group Report Outs

See [Supplemental Materials](#);  
[High School Programming Report Out and Voting](#)  
[Community College Report Out and Voting](#)  
[Principles Courses Report Out and Voting](#)  
[Branding of the Profession Report Out and Voting](#)

### **Community College Programming Group**

Idea #1 – Resource Repository:

- What to accomplish – Curating content, how do we pull it together through the lens of accounting, not specialized areas.
- Platform to use could be LinkedIn or Accounting + could offer.
- How might we incorporate and not reinvent the wheel. How do we add more Community College content into Accounting +.
- Matching program – The idea is to match students with mentors. How do we create the matchup concept? Shared that we already struggle finding tutors. This would be a resource for channels to bring employers and practitioners to students for future success and to get paired appropriately. COMMENTS: BAP chapters already provide a lot of tutoring. QUESTIONS – can they offer virtual tutoring? Can this be an enhancement to offering this for Community College students to do it where they are?

Idea #2 – Onboarding: Aiding faculty to provide best practices to prepare the students to onboard to four-year institutions.

- Accounting+ has resources and could provide some groundwork to build a model.
- QUESTION: If we know of schools that are already known that already are doing the transitional program, what is the forum to get them to share their model and where to share it (AAA site, AAA AM.)

- COMMENT – let’s not forget about the Community Colleges. COMMENT – Leadership Section is the best way to get the information out there. Possible session at the Midyear Meeting.
- COMMENT – What’s been missing is the High School communicating with the Community College and the 4yr colleges.
- COMMENT – Everyone is talking about their sites having this information. Can AAA have links to all the sites?
- Take away – Get with Accounting+ to frame this up.

## Principles Courses Group

Idea #1 – Revamp the course.

- Put together a working group (AICPA, IMA, AAA) to put together a pilot course. Start out with something engaging, simulations, videos.
- Credit/Debits come in later in the course, not at the beginning. How do we get this out – AAA Leadership Section - work group to send the outcome of the draft course. Get their principals and instructors to review and start to share this out. COMMENT – Not everyone is in the Leadership Section, and we would need to broaden the audience.
- Principal Tool Kit – Data analytics, student feedback, etc.
- Giving access to practitioners. COMMENT – my perspective as an instructor – to have something engaging, he prefers to do simulations. Stukent, McGraw-Hill have simulations.
- Student competitions – willing to pilot as others are to take it to the classroom.
- COMMENT - The AAA Leadership Section has launched a program to gather best practices for recruiting students and in teaching courses. These best practices will be open to everyone. COMMENT -- AICPA has a white paper coming out soon. COMMENTS – not everyone is in the AAA’s Leadership Section so think about the “and” to provide access to CC students.
- COMMENT – Add on to faculty component – is there a mechanism to have people teaching principles to get some training to signify expertise in intro course teaching?
- Need principles bootcamp, like IDA.
- COMMENT – Inclusivity of AAA and the leadership group. Many HBCU faculty are not involved in the AAA’s Leadership Section. COMMENT – We realize the need for new constituents.
- COMMENT – Leverage the Inclusive classroom series at AAA and the Strategies for Success in the Classroom (AAA).

## High School Programming Group

Idea #1 – Took Kits - Engaging classes and good teachers.

- How do we improve what is happening in the classroom and how to support the teachers? Pull together a tool kit, classroom resources, one day, hour long bootcamps.
- How do we get it out to people? Where does it sit? AAA is a good place for it to sit. What about AAA having a HS section, maybe too much.
- Most High Schools will not pay for membership to professional associations, but they will pay for resources. The AAA could great a space for High School content. Charge \$100 and then a free membership to AAA.
- Go out and meet teachers where they are located. If we are asking HS teachers to help, what can we provide them (incentives) to work on this.
- Creating a mentor program.
- Create a new sponsorship program.

- How do you help build a better sense of community through an Asynchronous program. Monthly meet-up to check in. Lift them up and give them access to resources and a community of educators.

Idea #2 – Leveraging community-based organizations to get inroads into High School to raise awareness of accounting. We recognize that there are already efforts by some organizations.

- This is a recommendation for a national scope.
- Work with NAF, Junior Achievement, BPA, DECCA.
- Get BAP involved.

### **Branding the Profession Group**

Idea #1 – Tool kit - need to spend more time on branding.

- Several comments about CAQ already doing this with Accounting+?
- The challenge was they are already doing it. Accounting+ is focused on African American and Hispanic.
- The challenge is that many live in primarily white communities. What about making sure not to leave out the white population. We need the message and outreach, but beyond that.
- What about the rebranding within the profession. Getting all of us to think differently about our profession. New communication and ways to talk about the profession and what it represents. We felt that this concept needed to pull in all the parties, but not all are at the table, but to be the point of review and get everyone onboard.
- Need to understand but need to share it out also. Not just Accounting+.

Idea #2 - Create a consortium of like-minded accounting professionals to control the narrative and to disseminate it.

- Where does it reside? Staffed by many organizations.
- Let's take what we have and utilize everything we already have.
- Funding needs to come from the parties at the table. Not do it forever, just 3 to 5 years and then sunset. The audience is the profession.
- Create a LinkedIn group with those attending the symposium. (AAA is creating one now for participants and others to share best practices. All participants will receive an invitation to join the LinkedIn Group.)
- Everyone would put their resources sharing through the group. Purpose to get out content quickly. The group would commit to resharing within our own networks. Secondly, creating the message. Press releases, social content, infographics, myth busters, purpose, and value of being in this space. How to push out content and to whom.
- Student focus group to float some ideas by them. Can be done quick. We all think we know what they want, but maybe we don't. Wouldn't it be a shame if we did all this work, and it created no difference. COMMENTS – We leave out the students in our conversation and that is who we are trying to reach. Students should not only be at the top echelon.
- QUESTION – What is the branding problem we are trying to solve? COMMENT – Hear students' opinions. How do we reach those outside the common? COMMENT – Said it was branding to the CPAs, let's make sure that we don't only fix on CPAs. COMMENT – concurred with the previous comment.
- About focus groups – don't we already have CAQ data from focus groups? Yes, was the CAQs response. We should leverage this data.

- COMMENT - I recently exhibited at a meeting that had over 5K school counselors and we developed a brochure for them about just accounting, and not CPAs. The brochure translated into teen-speak and the counselors were so excited. Had to reorder more due to the excitement. The participant encouraged people to exhibit.
- COMMENT – Because of what we are hearing, the LinkedIn group. Right now, is there a way to get a list of all the resources and then just link to them?
- COMMENT – Focus groups – if we are in this room coming up with ideas that are to be actionable. Can we use the groups we have or create new ones. Can we pull this together in 60 days to then have CAQ review? Here are the 6 things that came out of this room.... It must be concrete before we give it to a CAQ focus group.
- COMMENT – Leveraging connection between practitioner - have two universities that bring us in, and they will set up groups of students with no school reps. Different levels, non-declared students, etc. Two reasons – adjust and provide feedback to the school from students.

**Exercise: Four Questions for Each Group to Answer:**

*Who is responsible?*

*What are the measures?*

*Sources of funding??*

*How will we know success?*

**High School Programming Group:**

**Who is responsible?** People that have access to funding and reach and passion and time to get this started. AAA and NABA will help identify who this will be.

**What are the measures?** Group should come up with the consortium business plan, goals, milestone, ensure accountable and measurements. Not just getting them into the pipeline but keeping them. Haven't heard a conversation about that this week. This is a 3–5-year commitment tying into an evergreen question/comments.

**Sources of funding?** TBD

**How will we know success?** TBD

**Community College Programming Group:**

**Who is responsible?**

Independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party COSO-type model to manage. Share all info and own equally amongst invested parties.

**What are the measures?** How many students enroll in accounting? How many High Schools offering accounting courses? How many schools with NAF Academies of Finance?

**Sources of funding?** Those choosing to participate. Commit to x amount for y years.

**How will we know success?** Increased results of surveys.



### **Branding the Profession Group:**

**Who is responsible?** AAA

**What are the measures?** Pre/post surveys of educators and students. Measure enrollments.

**Sources of funding?** Startup funding needs to be impactful. Seek funding from organizations, Federal grants, foundations.

**How will we know success?** Improvements in measurement surveys.

### **Principles Courses Group:**

**Who is responsible?** IMA, AAA, AICPA, NABA, Wiley, McGraw Hill ACBSP, BAP (see notes)

Pilots – 8 to 10 schools including: University of Florida, George Mason University, University of North Florida, Northern Virginia Community College, Florida International University, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

**What are the measures?**

Pre/post student perception of accounting

Pre/post student perception of accounting for the career path

D, F & W/D rates

Still measure learning outcomes

**Sources of funding?** TBD – group will need to focus on funding when they get started.

**How will we know success?** Would teachers teach the course again? Number of students getting through? Perception of accounting data. Increase in the number of declared Accounting majors.

### **Yvonne – Summary of Meeting and Next Steps:**

Stakeholders came to a consensus that the four areas of focus should be High School Programming, Community College Programming, Principles Courses, and Branding of the Profession. We are leaving this Symposium with many ideas in motion and a call to action to get others engaged.

#### **Branding the Profession:**

- Expand what's working. Continue to expose and share the success of Accounting + and look for ways to invest/support their next steps.
- The Center for Audit Quality is measuring a lot, may need some expanded research, but need to pull in students and specifically target them.
- Create a LinkedIn group for Symposium attendees to promote efforts through LinkedIn.

#### **Principles Courses:**

- Six schools represented at the Symposium have tentatively committed to be part of a pilot of a revamped Principles course that will launch in the Fall of 2024.

**High School Programming:**

- Bring stakeholders together, under one tent, at the high school counselor's event (American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Annual Conference 2024).
- The AAA will explore a new affinity group / membership for high school teachers.

**Community College:**

- While more research is needed, great ideas have been generated to assist this important group.

AAA will commit to getting the summary of the Symposium out within the next two weeks.

We will also ask for a call for organizations and individuals who want to engage in moving these ideas forward in the four selected areas. Some of the infrastructure is out there. Let's use what we have and not reinvent or duplicate.