We have just begun a new academic year having spent approximately eighteen months navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. For most of the pandemic, the University restricted visitors on campus, which was a challenge for our usually open community. Despite the dislocation, the faculty did a great job in pivoting to remote and hybrid teaching – all faculty had to be trained and certified to teach remotely. As you may know, we have always taken pride in providing a high touch learning experience for our students and having to teach remotely with very little personal contact was foreign to us. Nonetheless, we had a very successful academic year and have resumed our preferred mode of teaching face to face and having a more open campus – as much as the pandemic will allow. This newsletter serves as an update on what has been happening here in the Accounting Department over the past eighteen months.

**New Faculty**

**Elena Klevsky**

joined UT as an assistant professor in accounting in Fall 2020 having previously worked at the University of New Mexico. She earned a Ph.D. in accountancy from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is a CPA, and worked as a senior associate at PwC in Boston. At UT, Klevsky teaches Introductory Managerial Accounting but taught Intermediate Accounting, Cost Accounting and Project Management Accounting at her previous institutions. Her research is centered on how social relationships impact workplace behavior and decision-making. She has published articles in *Accounting, Organizations and Society* and *Fraud magazine* and presented at many conferences held by the American Accounting Association.

**Rebecca (Becca) Baaske**

joins the accounting faculty this fall (2021) having earned her Ph.D. in accounting from USF. She is a CPA and previously worked with PwC – Chicago, rising to the position of senior auditor in the Private Company Services group. At USF, she has taught classes in auditing, Accounting Information Systems (AIS) and principles of financial accounting. Baaske’s research interest is in behavioral auditing and accounting information systems (AIS). Her dissertation explores the use of data analytic visualization tools to assist with risk assessments during the planning of the audit.
Theresa Campbell is a CPA, has an M.S. in accounting from Northeastern Illinois University, and has been an adjunct instructor at UT since 2016. Campbell began her new role as visiting lecturer in Fall 2021. She teaches introductory financial and managerial accounting.

**Current Faculty**

**Elio Alfonso** joined the accounting faculty in fall of 2018. He earned his Ph.D. in accounting from Louisiana State University and previously was an assistant professor at Florida International University. Alfonso is a CPA and specializes in teaching the intermediate accounting series, but also teaches introductory financial accounting and MBA accounting.

**Michael Baker** has been a faculty member since Fall 2019 and is the faculty advisor for the IMA student chapter. He is a CPA and teaches introductory financial and managerial accounting, AIS, and introduction to global business to incoming freshmen.

**Allison Beck** joined the accounting faculty in Fall 2019 having previously served as an assistant professor at Florida State University. She earned her Ph.D. in accounting from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Beck teaches introductory financial accounting and auditing.

**Lisa Bostick** has been with the accounting department since Fall 2001. She earned her DBA at Louisiana Tech University and taught at that institution prior to joining UT. Bostick is a CPA and specializes in teaching intermediate accounting but also teaches introductory financial accounting.

**Bachman Fulmer** earned his Ph.D. from Florida State University and worked as an assistant professor at California State University, Fullerton prior to joining UT in Fall 2016. Fulmer specializes in teaching data analytics and accounting information systems and also teaches introductory financial accounting.

**Sarah Fulmer** joined the accounting department as an assistant professor in Fall 2019, and previously was an assistant professor at California State University, Fullerton. She earned her Ph.D. in finance from Florida State University and holds an LLM from the University of Florida. Fulmer specializes in teaching managerial and cost accounting.

**Rachel Gambol** has an M.S. in accounting from Kent State University and is a CPA. She has been with UT as a lecturer since Fall 2017. Gambol is the Beta Alpha Psi faculty advisor and teaches introductory financial, and managerial accounting, and intermediate accounting.

**Rob Goodwin** has an MSA from USF, and holds both the CPA and CMA designations. He has been affiliated with UT since 2015, serving as a lecturer and visiting instructor. He teaches a variety of courses, including introductory financial and managerial accounting to undergraduate business students and MBA students. Goodwin also teaches intermediate accounting, and auditing.

**Yvette Green** has an MSA from USF and is a CPA. She joined UT in 2015, and she is a lecturer. Green is the coordinator for introductory accounting courses and teaches introductory financial and managerial accounting, and intermediate accounting.

**Mary Keener** has a Ph.D. from Kent State University. She joined UT in 2007, and teaches contemporary accounting issues in the graduate program and introductory financial accounting at the undergraduate level.

**Robert Marley** has a Ph.D. in accounting from USF and is a CPA. He has been a member of the accounting faculty since Fall 2014, having previously served as an assistant professor at Georgia Southern University. Marley specializes in teaching auditing and fraud examination but also teaches introductory accounting courses and financial statement analysis and valuation at the graduate level. He is the director of the Center for Ethics.
Steve Platau has a JD from the University of Cincinnati and holds the CPA designation. Platau has been with UT for 37 years and specializes in teaching tax at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Michael Robinson earned a Ph.D. in accounting from the Arizona State University. He joined UT in Fall 2012 and was previously a visiting assistant professor at USF. He teaches in the EMBA and MBA programs and teaches financial statement analysis in the accounting graduate program.

J. Christian Plesner Rossing earned his Ph.D. from the Copenhagen Business School where he also served as an assistant professor and an associate professor prior to joining UT in Fall 2019. He specializes in teaching financial accounting at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels, and taught introduction to global business to incoming freshmen.

L. Melissa Walters earned her Ph.D. from the University of Central Florida. She joined the accounting faculty at UT in 2006 having previously been an associate professor at Loyola University. Her teaching interest is in AIS, business and professional ethics, cost and management accounting, and information systems audit and assurance.

Faculty Retirement

Teresa Pergola retired at the end of academic year 2020-21, after 19 years of service to UT. Pergola worked in UT’s Office of Administration and Finance prior to joining the accounting faculty. Her passion for teaching was evident, and she provided stellar leadership in the COB’s and the department’s Assurance of Learning (AOL) process. We thank Teresa for her hard work and leadership and extend best wishes in her retirement.

Academic Year 2020-21 Highlights

Congratulations to Bachman Fulmer who earned tenure and promotion to associate professor.

Elio Alfonso earned a course release to develop content on “Accounting for Leases: The Impact of Topic 842.”

Rob Goodwin earned the designation of Certified Management Accountant (CMA) in February 2021. Goodwin was also elected secretary of the Tampa Bay Chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA).

Steve Platau was elected chair of the Florida Board of Accountancy and chairs the board’s 100% CPE Compliance Task Force. He also serves on the Education Committee and the Board’s Rules Committee. Platau also serves on the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy’s Ethics Committee.

J. Christian Plesner Rossing received the Sykes College of Business, Dean’s Teaching Excellence Award 2020-2021.

Student Organizations and Clubs

Beta Alpha Psi (BAP)

UT’s Beta Alpha Psi (BAP) chapter maintained its superior status by completing a significant number of professional and service hours despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The national BAP president noted that UT BAP “…far exceeded the baseline requirements of Beta Alpha Psi and has excelled in the areas of academics, professionalism, and leadership…I want to especially congratulate the chapter on its accomplishment during this particularly challenging year.”

UT BAP was first-round winner of the Inclusive Leadership Award sponsored by EY. The chapter was selected as one of only 10 to compete for the top three prizes in the final round. UT BAP placed third in the final round of the competition, earning a $1,000 prize.

UT BAP also participated in the Best Practices competition sponsored by Deloitte that had more than 1,000 submissions worldwide, placing first in the Southeast Region. The chapter advanced to the final round of the competition at the Annual BAP meeting in August 2021, where they were one of just nine chapters that placed in the finals, earning second in the “Invest in Your Chapter” competition.

IMA Student Chapter

Michael Baker assumed the role as the faculty advisor to the Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) student chapter, taking over from Rob Goodwin.

The IMA chapter held several virtual events including a presentation by Andrea Rousi, CEO of AX for Pharma, on the growth in ERP solutions in the pharmaceutical industry. She discussed drivers of the demand for cost accountants in the healthcare industry. For example, pricing pressures have driven the need for more sophisticated approaches to costing products and managing enterprise risk.
Accounting Programs

The Department continued evaluating and changing programs during the pandemic to better reflect the mix of skills demanded by the accounting profession. In addition, to a strong accounting foundation, students should have strong information technology and analytics skills, must be able to think critically, and should possess leadership and other soft skills. The major changes were to the MSA program, and we also launched a 4+1 program, both of which are effective as of Fall 2021.

The 4+1 Program
- Can be completed in one year after completing required undergraduate credits.
- Qualified undergraduates can take graduate level courses without dual enrollment in the MSA program.
- Increases the likelihood of retaining the best students by offering a seamless path to the MSA.

The MSA redesign offers more flexibility in course selection. Specifically, we reduced the number of required accounting courses, which allow students to take up to three non-accounting electives in information technology and analytics. This creates an opportunity to enrich the MSA experience with non-accounting electives. Students who take advantage of the 4+1 program would be able to complete at least two MSA courses while fulfilling the undergraduate requirement.

Other Highlights

CPA pass rates continue a 3-year trend of significant improvements, making UT Accounting competitive with national peers and neighbors. For the 2020-21 tax filing season, students prepared approximately 2,500 tax returns for underserved communities in the Tampa metro area through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA).

Our commitment to continuous improvement includes preparing for AACSB supplemental accreditation. AACSB accreditation is a signal of quality for business and accounting programs.

Faculty Research

Elio Alfonso and colleagues published “Analysts Promoted to Managing Director and Forecast Accuracy” in the January–June 2021 issue of the Journal of Forensic and Investigative Accounting. This paper addresses the economic determinants of analysts’ promotions within brokerage firms and the effects promotions have on the quality of research produced by the analysts. The results indicate that brokerage firms promote the most capable analysts to the top position, and that the relation between managing director analysts and forecast accuracy is driven mainly by analysts who are internally promoted within the brokerage firm.

Elena Klevsky and a colleague published “Serendipity in Accounting: Teaching Students How to Navigate a Changing World” in Issues in Accounting Education. Serendipity is what happens when individuals achieve a positive outcome as a result of a chance encounter with unsought information that they have the knowledge, skill, and ability to properly process and act upon. Learning how to achieve serendipity may prove vital for the accounting profession, especially in a changing world where accountants need to expect the unexpected and respond to it appropriately. As a skill, serendipity can be developed in the accounting classroom, but it is not currently taught at business schools. This article provides accounting educators with resources to teach students about serendipity and gives suggestions on how to design serendipity activities for accounting classes that can help students develop a serendipity mindset.

Robert Marley and colleagues conducted a study examining whether audit engagement lowballing could lead to lower audit quality and the Winner’s Curse. The results suggest that lowballing behavior does exist and that it can negatively affect audit quality and conclude that auditors must take care when pricing audit engagements because some auditors may be tempted to price initial engagements below full cost but cannot sustain that pricing level. A full copy of Marley’s study can be found in Volume 31 (Issue Number 2) of Behavioral Research in Accounting. He presented the paper to the Tampa Bay community during the 2021 Sykes College of Business Research Day.

Steve Platau wrote a chapter on “Professional Liability Risk Management for Valuation Professionals” in The Comprehensive Guide to Economic Damages (vol. 6th, pp. 201-220). The chapter provides how-to and guidance for avoiding professional malpractice liability in this captioned practice area.

Michael Robinson and a colleague published “The Effect of Monetary Incentives on Task Attractiveness, Effort, and performance” in the Journal of Applied Accounting Research. The paper explores the interactive effects of explicit monetary incentives and task attractiveness on effort and performance on a multi-dimensional task. The results indicate that incentives initially promote higher performance than flat pay, but the differential does not persist. The evidence suggests that dissatisfaction with initial performance on the complex task contributed to the decline in attractiveness and the deterioration in performance. The study proposes that incentives may not promote higher levels of performance on multidimensional jobs and that careful consideration should be given to the characteristics of the task and the individual performing the task when implementing incentives programs.
J. Christian Plesner Rossing published a case study on Starbucks’ tax risk management in the UK. In 2012, Starbucks’ UK branch was the subject of massive public criticism over alleged tax avoidance using transfer pricing, resulting in Starbucks overpaying taxes beyond the regulatory requirements. The paper argues that the boards and top management of multinational enterprises (MNEs) can no longer approach tax governance as a purely technical, regulation-driven discipline to be handled solely by accounting and tax specialists. Instead, tax governance plays a pivotal role in the social contract between an MNE and its stakeholders and needs to be managed accordingly. Plessner Rossing presented the paper at the 2021 Sykes College of Business Research Day. A full copy of the paper can be found in the International Journal of Corporate Governance, Volume 10 (Issue 3/4).

L. Melissa Walters co-authored a case about African rhino conservation and the effect on various stakeholders. The paper “Ethical Leadership Isn’t Black and White: A Case Study on Stakeholders and African Rhino Conservation” was accepted in February 2021 for publication in the International Journal of Teaching and Case Studies (IJTCS). Primary ethical perspectives considered in this case include deontology, consequentialism, and justice/fairness; each perspective is applied to frame the issue with respect to different stakeholder groups that directly influence the rhino crisis.