

SPRING 2020

capitalize

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The

Building Blocks

CPA

Issue

Alberta CPAs provide the building blocks for a number of useful skills



CPA

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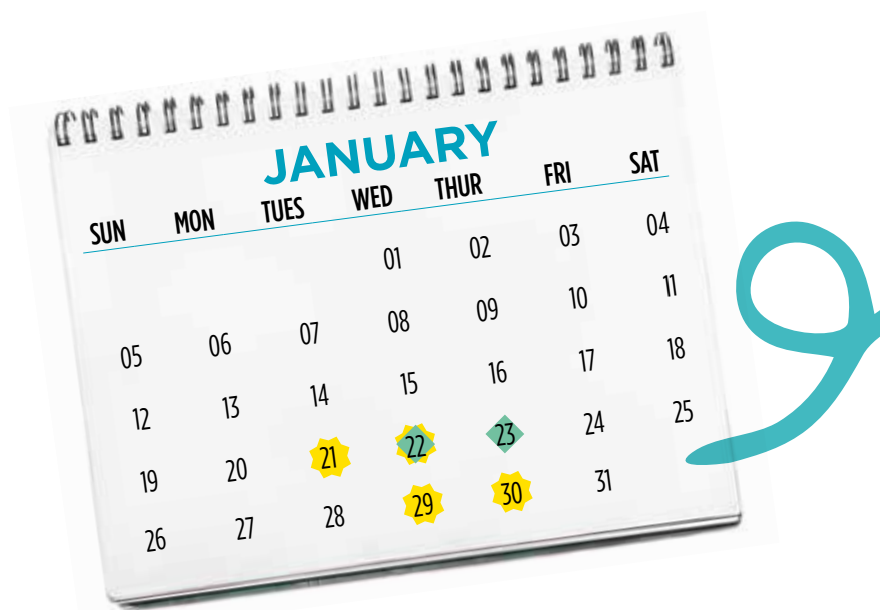
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events CALENDAR

January

- 21 Career Fair**
NAIT
Centre for Applied Technology (CAT) Building
9:30am - 3:00pm
- 22 Career Fair**
University of Calgary
MacEwan Hall A/B
10:30am - 3:30pm
- 22 CEO Spotlight Series**
University of Calgary
Hunter Hub
12:00 - 1:30pm
- 23 Haskayne Career Development Centre - Networking Unplugged**
University of Calgary
4:30 - 6:30pm
- 29 Career Fair**
University of Alberta
Alberta School of Business, Stollery Centre (5th floor)
10:00am - 3:30pm
- 30 Career Fair**
Business Networking Day
Mount Royal University, Ross Glen Hall
10:00am - 2:00pm



From career fairs to sponsorships to information and networking sessions, below is a comprehensive list of upcoming events you should know about!



CPA Alberta Event



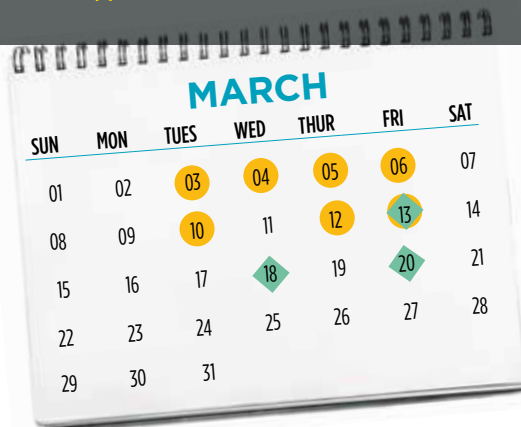
CPA Alberta Sponsorship



Career Fairs and Open Houses

February

- ◆ **1 Haskayne Accounting Case Competition**
EY Office, 215 2 Street SW
9:00am – 5:00pm
- ◆ **4 University of Calgary CEO Links and Drinks**
Hunter Hub
6:00 – 8:00pm
- ★ **5 Career Fair**
Olds College
11:00am – 5:00pm
- ★ **6 Career Fair**
MacEwan Get to Work Career Fair
MacEwan University, Robbins Health Learning Centre
10:00am – 3:00pm
- ◆ **10 Ask Your Alumni**
University of Calgary, BMO Forum
4:00 – 6:30pm
- 19–21 Rocky Mountain Business Seminar**
Jasper Park Lodge
- ◆ **26 BSA Anti Burnout Booth**
Alberta School of Business, Business Students' Association (2nd floor)
11:00am – 2:00pm
- **27 CPA Info Session – Networking 101**
MacEwan University, Building 6, Room 6-133
3:30 – 5:00pm



March

- **3 CPA Info Session – Networking 101**
Alberta School of Business, BUS 1-06
4:00 – 5:30pm
- **4 CPA Info Session – Networking 101**
NAIT, Centre for Applied Technology (CAT) Building, CAT 250
12:00 – 1:00pm
- **4–6 The Business Challenge**
(Hosted by the CPA Education Foundation)
Sheraton Cavalier
- **10 Get Connected**
(Hosted by the CPA Education Foundation)
Hotel Arts, Spectrum 3 & 4
6:00 – 8:30pm
- **12 Get Connected**
(Hosted by the CPA Education Foundation)
Hotel Fairmont Macdonald, Empire Room
6:00 – 8:30pm
- **13 High School Presentation**
Archbishop MacDonald High School
10:07 – 11:07am
- ◆ **13 Bissett Accounting Students Society CPA Networking Dinner**
Calgary Marriot Downtown
5:00 – 9:00pm
- ◆ **18 CPA Info Session – Networking 101**
Mount Royal University
5:00 – 6:30pm
- ◆ **20 Women in Business Year-End Gala**
Hudson Calgary
5:00 – 9:00pm



EFFECTIVE TIME MANAGEMENT

Why it is important at any stage of life

Three professionals—a recent successful Common Final Examination writer, a mid-career CPA raising a young family, and a retired CPA—provide insights into how they optimize the use of their time

By Quinta Iticka | Photography by Trudie Lee Photography



The early-career pro

Janel Knispel

24^{hours}

That's how much time everyone gets in a day regardless of age, gender, or status. Once those hours slip away, it is impossible to get them back. And because time is so finite, it is precious and worth managing with care.

Proper time management involves having a good understanding of your workload, planning ahead, prioritizing, and being able to say “no” when you need to.

Janel Knispel, Financial Analyst at Dominion Diamond Mines, applied time management techniques to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) and passed the Common Final Examination (CFE) in 2018. She is currently completing her practical experience requirements and hopes to obtain her CPA designation soon.

Janel admits that she found CPA PEP overwhelming at first. “The program is challenging,” says Janel. “Time management is vital for CPA candidates because many of them work full-time while studying part-time. In some cases, they’re also juggling families.”

Realizing that she had to be strategic with her studies, Janel took a step back, reevaluated how she was allocating her time, and came up with a plan, which included implementing an efficient study method, rallying the support of her loved ones, and having a study buddy.

“My study buddy, Vicky Cato [who was also in CPA PEP], was honestly one of the big reasons I was able to stay on track with my studies,” says Janel. “When I felt overwhelmed, she encouraged me, and vice versa.”

Janel had to submit roughly two to three assignments per week during CPA PEP. To stay organized, she kept a calendar, which contained everything she had to work on. “I was disciplined. I planned things out and gave myself hard deadlines. I made an effort to submit my work the day before the actual deadline; otherwise, I’d be wordsmithing and changing everything,” says Janel.

As Janel tracked the time she spent on her studies and assignments, her progress became more evident, and she was able to see where to focus her efforts more—whether on case writing, debriefing, or marking.

Flashcards became Janel’s secret weapon. “It took too long to look up information in the manuals. So in my own words, I summarized key information on flashcards,” says Janel. She had roughly 100 flashcards, and there was a “good” and a “bad” pile. The good pile contained information she already knew, and the bad pile contained information she had to work on. Her goal was to eliminate the bad pile. “I’d work all day, come home, have supper, and my boyfriend would ask me the questions on the flashcards. That was our routine,” says Janel.

Support from someone with a “positive spirit” was also instrumental in helping Janel manage her time in CPA PEP; but there was a small catch: “For your loved ones to fully support you, they need to be aware of the intensity of the program,” says Janel. “My family knew when I had assignments and exams and when I was away at workshops on weekends.”

Janel’s strategic approach to studying paid off. As she looks forward to completing her practical experience requirements and getting her three letters (CPA), she offers the following words of wisdom: “There are some things in life you can’t prepare for, but you can prepare for exams. You know what you need to do to pass. Focus on the material, and manage your time wisely.”

Additional time management tips from Janel to high school and post-secondary students:



Invest the time in your studies.
What you put in is what you get out.

Have a plan, write it down, and follow it. Following it is key.

You may need to take a self-care day. That’s totally ok.

Surround yourself with the right people who will encourage you during those moments when you feel like quitting.





The planner

“
Don't procrastinate.
Start studying early,
and take small steps,
such as reading
a chapter a day.
Identify key exam
and project due
dates, and enter them
in your calendar.”



Chioma Ufodike CPA, CMA

Chioma Ufodike CPA, CMA, Manager of Trust Safety at the Law Society of Alberta, is a planner. “I like to know that A leads to B and B leads to C. That way, nothing is ambiguous and nothing gets missed,” says Chioma.

Meticulous planning enables her to manage competing priorities at home and at work. At the Law Society, Chioma leads a team of compliance specialists and auditors. At home, she is a mom to four children (all under the age of 10, including a set of twins!). Chioma also holds an incredible five professional designations to her credit.

“I received the Certified Fraud Examiner and the Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialist certifications before getting married,” says Chioma. “I started working on my CPA designation when I was on mat leave with my first child. From the beginning, I was able to put her on a schedule, so that she ate and napped at specific times. This allowed me to focus on chores and my studies.”

Chioma recently obtained her Master of Forensic Accounting (MFAcc) degree from the University of Toronto. “This is big. I have spent most of my career in forensic accounting, which involves using my accounting and investigative skills to uncover information regarding financial irregularities and fraudulent activity. But you can't really be called a Forensic Accountant if you don't have both a CPA designation and the MFAcc,” says Chioma.

With so much on the go—between personal, professional, and educational obligations—planning and prioritizing are important to Chioma.

“Every Sunday I ask myself, ‘What does this week look like? What extracurricular activities do the kids have? Am I going to be out of town? Are there any projects that will keep me at work past 5:00pm?’

Do I have board meetings?’” says Chioma. She then uses Google Calendar to keep track of her family-related activities. “Everything goes in the calendar, including birthdays and reminders to buy gifts. I like Google Calendar because it syncs with Outlook, and I can share it with my husband,” she adds.

To prioritize at work, Chioma blocks time in Outlook to work on projects and interact with her team. She admits that she wouldn't let anyone else manage her calendar. “I feel like it would make me less organized,” she laughs.

Planning and structure also enable Chioma to pursue her passion for volunteering. “I have been blessed with a successful career, and I believe it is important to give back. There is a saying: ‘giving back creates a virtuous cycle that makes everyone more successful.’ That's my mantra,” says Chioma. She is the Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee at the Loughheed House Conservation Society, a non-profit that works to restore the historic Loughheed House.

Despite being a master juggler of obligations, Chioma recognizes that multitasking is not for everyone. “My rule of thumb is, if you're not good at multitasking, prioritize and focus on one thing at a time. Otherwise, something suffers,” she says.

To high school and post-secondary students, she cautions: “Don't procrastinate. Start studying early, and take small steps, such as reading a chapter a day. Identify key exam and project due dates, and enter them in your calendar. Keep an eye on your schedule, and don't be afraid to say ‘no’ to competing commitments that can take up your time. Finding the right balance is key to being effective at managing your time.”

Changing priorities sometimes call for changes in the way one allocates their time.

Now retired, **Betty Thompson** FCPA, FCGA, Chair of the CPA Assist Committee, has aligned her schedule with her life-long passion of volunteering for not-for-profit organizations.

Prior to retirement, Betty's time was structured differently. Betty made sure she only worked Mondays to Fridays when she was a Managing Partner at Calvista LLP, an accounting firm. "Weekends were mine, and vacations were mine," says Betty. "I didn't even bring a cell phone when I went on vacation."

To ensure timelines were met at the firm, Betty and her team clearly outlined responsibilities and expectations so that they were on the same page as their clients. "We had a list of what the client needed to do and what the firm needed to do," says Betty. This helped her properly manage her time during busy periods such as the December year-end when clients needed to submit their audited financial statements and in March when clients wanted their audits completed before their annual general meetings.

Betty now volunteers as the President of IntegralOrg, a registered charity that provides knowledge and support to not-for-profit organizations by helping them understand how they are incorporated, how they should manage and govern themselves, and how to comply with legal and financial management requirements.

Betty and a partner established IntegralOrg after identifying a lack of understanding of legal

compliance in the not-for-profit sector. "When we started, we thought it was just going to be this little project. But we now have staff, and we just hired an Executive Director," says Betty.

She runs workshops where she coaches clients on different aspects of the not-for-profit sector, including policy development, governance, and how to read financial statements.

Despite being retired, Betty says her volunteerism still amounts to full-time work. "I'm trying to get back my weekends. But it is fun to look at stuff for the charity and come up with great ideas."

As busy as Betty is, she enjoys a flexible schedule. "At the firm, I had to be in the office at 8:00am," she says. "Now, I mostly work from home and go into the office only when I have meetings."

Despite the flexibility and slower pace, Betty admits she still needs to prioritize. "I carve out time to work on projects. If I am facilitating a workshop, I choose a day to work exclusively on it from home," says Betty. "I also eliminate distractions as much as I can."

Betty believes in having a schedule and sticking to it. "That's the only way I was able to obtain my accounting designation. When I did the program, structure and discipline were even more important because I had been out of school for a while and had to learn how to study all over again," says Betty. "If you are a student, ask yourself: 'What are my priorities? When and how am I going to get things done?' And have fun along the way!" 📱

“
If you are a student, ask
yourself: 'What are my
priorities? When and
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”
The prioritizer

Betty Thompson FCPA, FCGA



Colette Miller FCPA, FCA (left) and Ashley Bodnarchuk CPA, CA

WHAT GENERATIONAL BARRIERS?

**A Baby Boomer and a Millennial
share how their firm embraces
today's multigenerational
workforce reality**

By Sarah Maludzinski
Photography by Laughing Dog Photography

A Baby Boomer and a Millennial walk into an office—no, this isn't the start of a cheesy dad joke. This is truly what the start of a workday looks like in many organizations today. From those born in the Silent Generation (late 1920s to mid-1940s) to those of Gen Z (late 1990s and early 2000s), five generations are rubbing shoulders in today's workplace.

How do you thrive in a business environment with colleagues from different generations potentially having different preferences and expectations?

Colette Miller FCPA, FCA (a Baby Boomer) and **Ashley Bodnarchuk CPA, CA** (a Millennial)—who also happen to be mother and daughter—describe how their firm, Wilde and Company, embraces and encourages generational diversity.

"I believe different generations provide different perspectives," says Ashley, "and although our corporate culture has changed over the 57 years...there are definitely some core values that have remained the same."

"Like respect," adds Colette. "You can eliminate the age thing if you treat each other respectfully and with kindness."

Flatten the hierarchy

Colette's father and Ashley's grandfather, **Jerry Wilde** FCPA, FCA (a member of the Silent Generation), founded Wilde and Company in 1962 and has always been very open to change and mutual learning between generations. This kind of thinking has led Wilde and Company to truly break the mould for accounting firms.

"A stereotype in the accounting world is, 'The person who has been here the longest is the most knowledgeable.' A natural progression is from 'manager' to 'principal' and finally to 'partner.' And if you're here," says Ashley, gesturing to the top of the ladder, "then it was believed you hold elite knowledge. Pods have broken down that stereotype for us."

Pods (or teams) are how Wilde and Company have flattened their structure, encouraged more autonomous decision making, created informal leadership opportunities, and handled disruption. They have five pods—connections, human resources, IT, quality, and tax—to make decisions and bring forward creative ideas related to their focus. The pods meet regularly, and anyone in the office can participate. "Whatever stage you are at in your career, you can add value," says Ashley. "If you are interested in a certain area, get involved and make change."

Smash the communication barrier

When discussing the hurdles in a multigenerational workforce, both Colette and Ashley mention communication. "Wars are started over poor communication," says Colette.

"Communication style may be very different between generations," adds Ashley. She explains that those who grew up texting sometimes find it difficult to "write concisely with proper English."

Those of the texting generations—often Millennials and Gen Z—may also have a hard time interacting with their coworkers or supervisors when there isn't a screen to shield them. If you're in the same office as your coworkers, which is not always the case with telecommuting becoming more popular, learning to knock on someone's door to chat with them in person is integral to crossing generational lines.

"You need to find ways to get more comfortable communicating. If you're not a natural, I encourage you to track: Who have you talked to today? Who have you deliberately gone and reached out to? You have to make the effort. When people fail, it is often due to weak communication," says Colette.

It all comes back to kindness

At the end of the day, surviving and thriving in a multigenerational workforce comes back to kindness and respect, two of the qualities Wilde and Company looks for in its team members. "We try to recruit creative thinkers and kind people. Kindness should never be underrated—that's a philosophy Colette lives by," says Ashley.

People who are kind and respectful won't even notice the boundaries between generations. "Nice people generally don't judge others based on stereotypes," says Ashley. 



A CPA from the Silent Generation joins the conversation

Jerry Wilde FCPA, FCA, Colette's father and Ashley's grandfather, founded Wilde and Company in 1962. At 85 years old, he still regularly visits the firm's offices in his semi-retirement and spends much of his time volunteering with the Iron Runners Auto Club and the Vegreville Regional Museum.

Colette mentions that seeing the founder of the firm continue to do what he is passionate about is inspirational for other generations, particularly the CPA candidates at the firm (Wilde and Company is a 50-year CPA training office).

The current partnership structure at the firm reflects Jerry's recruitment efforts. When Colette chose a path in public accounting, Jerry says he was "thrilled to welcome her to the partnership."

Colette's leadership was a natural fit with the firm's ideologies and core values. One generation later, Ashley will soon be making the transition to partnership.

However, Jerry points out that his recruitment and succession planning extended far beyond family. His focus has always been on fit, which led him to even seek recruits outside of the province (two current partners have roots in Saskatchewan).

And once they're in the fold, Jerry does his best to convey the firm's basic beliefs to the younger generations, including sharing his many words of wisdom. Some of his favourite phrases? "Love many. Trust few. Always paddle your own canoe."



Whatever stage you are at in your career, you can add value.

Ashley Bodnarchuk CPA, CA





HOW TO SUCCEED IN THE GIG ECONOMY

Expert advice on how to find your place and thrive in the world of contract work

By Andrew Moore

Photography by Trudie Lee Photography



The way we work is changing. Fewer of us are working traditional nine to five jobs, and more of us can be found clocking our own hours. Apps like Uber, Airbnb, and Skip the Dishes don't just offer service at the tap of a finger, they double as a source of income as well.

Since the 2008/09 financial crisis, short-term employment contracts have been steadily increasing. The shift in work has been coined the "gig economy" and is, in part, a result of the hyper-connected world we live in. A workforce study conducted by Randstad Canada in 2017 estimated that between 20 to 30 per cent of the Canadian workforce consisted of "non-traditional" workers, which encompasses consultant, contractual, part-time, freelance, and/or virtual workers.

Another factor behind the increase in gig workers is a change in the way we view the traditional office environment. As a gig worker, you choose what jobs (or gigs) you want to accept, which means more flexibility and independence. It might sound like a no-lose situation, but before you start setting up shop,

it's important to note that being a gig worker doesn't mean less work and more play. According to **Ryan Gubic** CPA, CGA, MBA, the reality is quite the opposite.

Ryan is President of MRG Wealth Management and an Investment Advisor with MRG Investments of Aligned Capital Partners Inc. He has spent more than 17 years working in accounting and finance. A CPA who has successfully made the transition from workforce to business owner, Ryan shares some important tips on how to succeed in the gig economy.

Be passionate about your work

Ryan's passion to help business owners create more time and flexibility in their lives is ultimately what led him down the path to creating his own wealth management company.

"Passion is critical to success in this business," says Ryan. "There's no such thing as nine to five in the gig economy. Passion, determination, and skillset help you succeed, and clients appreciate the difference they experience."

A gig economy is a labour market characterized by the prevalence of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs.

Ryan Gubic CPA, CGA, MBA



Outside of working hours, Ryan lends his finance skills to the CPA Education Foundation as a member of its Board of Directors—a position that requires a great deal of passion and dedication. The Foundation’s mission is to create opportunities for students and to strengthen the future of the accounting profession in Alberta. Finding opportunities such as joining a board or becoming a mentor are a great way for gig workers to stay active and give back to the community at the same time.

Find a niche

Ryan recommends that you leverage your strengths and offer a product or service that solves a problem. As one example of how a CPA might fit into the gig economy, Ryan identified a service gap in the wealth management space.

“Often financial planning, investment, and insurance services are brokered out to different people. So there may be a lack of synergy resulting in lost value for a client,” says Ryan. “By having those services integrated with a tax optimization focus, it saves the customer time, provides additional value, and can help them reach their goals faster.”

By leveraging his CPA designation and focusing on his strengths, Ryan provides clients with a premium service that he’s confident in. When it comes to marketing or areas beyond his expertise, he works with strategic partners in his network, which is, in itself, another key to success in the gig economy.

Be ready to make decisions

The ability to make decisions is vital in any entrepreneurial venture. As an employee in a large organization, there may be multiple people weighing in on a decision. But as a business owner, it’s all on you. It’s important to avoid delaying decisions and keep things moving forward.

“Actively work on your decision-making skills,” says Ryan. “Figure out a process that helps you make decisions, and stick with it. Some will be good and some will be mistakes, but just learn from them and move on.”

Be vulnerable

It’s a common misconception that owning your own business means you’re successful and everything is going your way. Ryan says being a business owner is more like a roller coaster ride of ups and downs, and it’s important to know when to ask for help.

“As a gig economy worker, you don’t have free, easy access to all of the on-demand expertise you may have at a large corporation,” says Ryan. “It’s important to know when to reach out and say, ‘Can you please help me?’”

Seeking help can be made easier by networking and connecting with other people working in the gig economy—people who complement you or can help you support your clients. Don’t be afraid to ask for help; people like to help other people succeed.

Look to the future

There’s always going to be a need for finance professionals, regardless of economic circumstances, but working with data is one area where Ryan sees an opportunity for CPAs to excel in the gig economy.

“I believe there’s a huge opportunity for CPAs to help turn data into valuable information,” says Ryan. “Providing clients with simplified decision-enabling information using data collected from a variety of sources can help them make proactive decisions that impact their lives today and into the future.” 

This article is intended to convey the experiences of the subject of the article. Nothing in the article is intended to be employment, investment, financial, legal, accounting, or tax advice. You should not act or rely on the information in the article without seeking the advice of an appropriate professional.

The CPA Certification Program: what students need to know

The CPA Certification Program—which consists of education, practical experience, and a final examination—is designed to provide future Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs) with the knowledge and skills to succeed in business.

Degree and prerequisites

An undergraduate degree (in any discipline) from a recognized post-secondary institution is required for admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP). In addition to an undergraduate degree, prerequisite courses must be successfully completed.

A transfer credit guide for Alberta post-secondary institutions is available online at www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide.

CPA Professional Education Program

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is a graduate-level program delivered part-time over two years. The program includes six modules designed to develop six technical competencies and five enabling competencies. In Alberta, the national CPA PEP is delivered by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). CPAWSB delivers CPA PEP to all candidates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut who are pursuing their CPA.

Candidates will take CPA PEP while working in a relevant position. For candidates, their CPA PEP education, coupled with practical experience, will complement the development of CPA competencies.

CPA PEP uses a variety of learning methods to help students develop their skills. The program combines online learning, self-study, classroom learning, and teamwork to help CPA candidates develop the competencies expected of Canada's pre-eminent professional accountants.



THE FACE OF TOMORROW

Salina Dharamsi, CPA | PwC Canada

Salina has been featured in a variety of the CPA profession's national brand awareness campaign materials as an example of the range and depth of skills and experience that CPAs bring to the marketplace. See page 24 for a profile on Salina.

Modules

Six modules comprise CPA PEP. The program begins with two core modules that are common to all CPA candidates, followed by two elective modules (of which there are four options). Upon completion of these four modules, all candidates are required to complete the two "capstone" modules.

The modules are:

- Two common core modules, which all CPA candidates must take, focusing on the development of competencies in management and financial accounting, and the integration of the six core technical competency areas.
- Two elective modules, which allow CPA candidates to develop deeper skills in their areas of career interest. Four electives are offered: assurance, performance management, tax, and finance. All candidates must choose two of the electives; candidates pursuing careers in public accounting must choose assurance and tax.
- A capstone integrative module that focuses on the development of the enabling competencies, such as leadership and professional skills, and the integration of core competencies.
- A capstone examination preparation module, which prepares CPA candidates for the Common Final Examination (CFE).

Registration into the CPA Professional Education Program

Students are encouraged to apply for conditional acceptance into the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) prior to the completion of their required courses and degree. Registration as a CPA candidate is required prior to registering for specific modules; however, candidates are encouraged to register for modules once they've submitted their application.

Once a student has applied for CPA PEP, there is a registration validation period in which transcript assessment, verification of degree, and verification of prerequisites will occur. After verification, the student may then participate in Core One.

Module registration deadlines are typically six to eight weeks in advance of the module start date. Please refer to the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) website for key module registration deadlines: www.cpawsb.ca/cpa-pep/schedule.

For more information about becoming a CPA, please visit www.cpaalberta.ca; call CPA Alberta at 1-844-454-1245 (toll-free); or email gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca.

To inquire about your eligibility for CPA PEP and admission support, please visit www.cpawsb.ca; call CPAWSB at 1-855-306-9390 (toll-free); or email cpaapplication@cpawsb.ca.

Entrance requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program

Bridging into the CPA Professional Education Program

For students who have completed their degrees but have not obtained the necessary prerequisite courses for the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP), or for students who do not have a degree,* there are two options:

1. CPA preparatory courses

CPA preparatory courses are a suite of 14 courses that provide all knowledge requirements for admission to CPA PEP. These courses are available in an accelerated format and are delivered part-time, with options for self-study, online, and classroom learning. Students complete only the courses they require.

Students are eligible for enrolment if they have successfully completed one year (30 credit hours) of post-secondary studies or three years of relevant work experience.

**Students are still required to complete a degree before admission to CPA PEP.*

Please contact CPA Alberta at 1.844.454.1245 or email gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca to learn more about preparatory courses.

2. Prerequisites through a post-secondary institution

Students can register for the business and accounting courses they are missing through a post-secondary institution approved by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). A transfer credit guide is available online at www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide. Students will only take the courses they need for entrance into CPA PEP.

Practical experience

In addition to formal education, candidates are required to complete a term of relevant practical experience. The knowledge and competencies gained through practical experience complement those developed through CPA PEP. To develop as a professional accountant, CPA candidates must gain relevant, paid employment that is progressively challenging. For the period of practical experience to begin, individuals need to be registered with the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) as a CPA candidate, be employed in a qualifying position, and have a mentor.

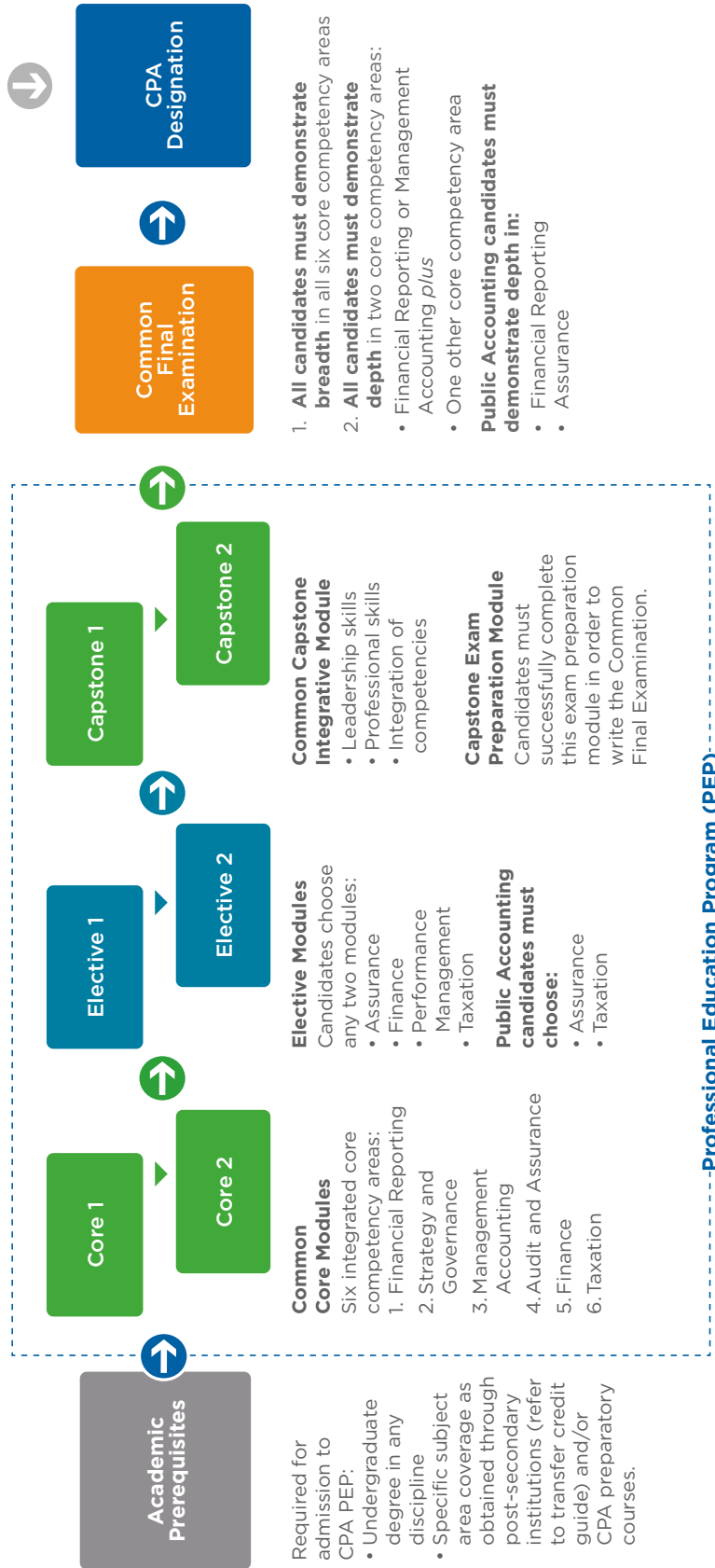
There are two routes to obtain practical experience requirements:

- **The Pre-approved Program Route (PPR)** in which future CPAs gain relevant experience by choosing a position from a wide range of employers pre-approved by the profession.
- **The Experience Verification Route (EVR)** in which future CPAs demonstrate competence and gain relevant experience at a chosen employer.

Future CPAs can gain experience through either route or a combination of both. The profession may accept up to one year of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. The minimum practical experience requirement for both routes is 30 months; this includes an allowance of up to 20 weeks of time away from work (including vacation time).

CPA Professional Education Program Overview

Practical Experience Requirements (PER) 30 Months



1. Candidates gain relevant experience and develop as a professional accountant in a minimum of 30 months.*
2. Candidates' experience must be appropriately supervised.
3. Candidates must record detailed reports at regular intervals.
4. Candidates must meet and discuss their progress at least semi-annually with a CPA mentor.
5. Candidates' experience is assessed by the CPA profession.

CPA Practical Experience Self-Assessment Tool

current or prospective position might align with the CPA technical competency requirements for purposes of the experience verification route. To access this self-assessment tool, visit <https://pert.cpa-services.org/student/TrialAssessment>.

Mentorship is a mandatory component of the CPA Practical Experience Requirements (PER). The focus of the CPA mentorship program is to help future CPAs achieve their enabling competencies. CPA candidates who work in the Pre-approved Program Route (PPR) will be matched with a CPA mentor by the organization that offers the program. CPA candidates who choose the Experience Verification Route (EVR) are required to seek out their own CPA mentor in order to find a successful fit. Recognition may be given for a total of up to 12 months of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. After that time, the qualifying period of practical experience cannot begin until CPA candidates have a CPA mentor. CPA Canada has developed a number of valuable resources to assist CPA candidates in finding a mentor.

Please visit www.cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience for more information.

Landing your dream job can come down to who you know. With a **Bachelor of Business Administration** from SAIT, you'll connect with industry leaders to build your network *before* you graduate.

Visit sait.ca/bba.



THROW OUT THAT FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Tina Thomas doesn't plan her career; instead, she focuses on keeping her resume interesting

By Sarah Maludzinski | Photography by Laughing Dog Photography

Tina Thomas CPA, CMA, Executive Director of Strategy and Innovation at Edmonton Public Library (EPL), never actually planned to become a CPA. In fact, she hasn't really planned much of her career; instead, she prefers to say yes to opportunities as they come her way.

"I don't have a five-year plan. I don't have a one-year plan. I take things as they come," she says. "I didn't think I'd be at EPL as long as I have been. When I did my MBA, I didn't think I'd come out with an accounting designation as well. When I started working at EPL, I never thought I would become a librarian. These are not plans that I had."

Without ever having made a five-year plan, Tina has managed to pack a lot of education into her schedule—she has a Bachelor of Commerce, an MBA, her accounting designation, and as of 2019, a Master of Library and Information Studies. She completed that last one in two years while being in a full-time senior-level position at EPL and raising two young children. (Phew!)

And, despite receiving her CPA designation in 2005, Tina has never worked a day in finance or accounting. In fact, getting an accounting designation is just one part of what makes Tina a self-described generalist.

"I've picked up things and done things that have made my general education more and more valuable," she says. "I think the smartest thing I ever did was be a generalist.... I have looked at whatever opportunity was available to me and thought, 'Hmm, that looks interesting. Should I do that?'"

"The reason I got a job right after I graduated was because my resume was interesting, even in university: I did an international year abroad, living and studying in Europe just as the European Union was taking shape; I did the co-op program as soon as I got back, working in both the private and public sectors; I had two years' worth of experience in a practical way. That made my background interesting," she adds.

Tina's first job out of university was at Nortel, a telecommunications company. There, she changed positions regularly—they encouraged it! She worked in communications, research and assessment, operations, product and solution marketing, and business development. Just over a decade ago, she landed a job at EPL, but she has no illusions that her career is anywhere near its twilight years.

"I still tell people I'm trying to figure out what I want to do when I grow up. I work at the library now, and I have a great job. I work with great people, but I have no perception that I'll never work anywhere else," says Tina. "Having that attitude [of being open to different opportunities] from the time I was 15 has opened a lot of doors and exposed me to a variety of ideas and experiences, and as a result, has made me an attractive candidate for senior management positions."

In many ways, the approach she's taken to her education and her career is perfectly aligned with what she loves most about working for EPL. "We're so innovative," says Tina. "I don't think I've had an idea at EPL that I haven't been able to explore or try."

"Even if it's a small pilot or exploring a new way to do something, we've been able to try a lot of things because there really is an appetite to think about how we can serve people better and differently. That's really exciting."

However, Tina does have just one small tongue-in-cheek caution about specializing as a generalist. "I'm never going to be a CFO. I'm never going to be a traditional chief librarian. I haven't specialized in those areas," Tina says with a laugh. "But I'm okay with that. My work is way more interesting." 🗣️



I think the smartest thing I ever did was be a generalist.... I have looked at whatever opportunity was available to me and thought, 'Hmm, that looks interesting. Should I do that?'

CPAs AND THEIR POOCHES

I LOVE MY DOG

Capitalize Magazine
goes behind the scenes
to meet the four-legged
friends who bring
balance to the lives of six
Alberta CPAs and their
families

By Ginny Ao
Photography supplied



Jan Nutting and Moose are all set for the big day—Jan's wedding!

It's said that a dog is a man's best friend, but did you know that a dog is also a CPA's best friend? These furry companions are present not only during happy and stressful moments, but also during life-changing events. From hikes in the mountains to cozy nights on the couch, they have been through it all with their CPA owners!

Capitalize Magazine caught up with six CPAs to shine a spotlight on their adorable pups, find out why these CPAs love their pets, and hear about the different ways their four-legged pals impact their lives.



MOOSE

THE FAMILY COMPANION

Jan Nutting CPA, CA, CFP, Partner at Fletcher Mudryk LLP, knows a thing or two about the benefits a pooch can have on a family. After months of research on dog breeds, Jan and his wife, Tonia Roffey-Nutting, knew that a golden retriever was right for them. That's where Moose, their two-year-old golden retriever, comes into the picture. When the Roffey-Nutting family met Moose—who was adopted from a farm near Grande Prairie—they knew Moose's demeanor would fit very well with theirs.

"When I'm home, I'm usually pretty low energy, and I just want to cool down or unwind. Moose is always in the same mood," explains Jan. "We enjoy spending time on the couch. Moose's laid-back personality is perfect for that."

Whether it's relaxing together at home or going for long walks around the local reservoir, Moose and Jan have become constant companions.

"I must admit, it was a lot tougher when Moose was a puppy because he needed a lot more attention," says Jan. "But as Moose has grown up, he's learned how to work around me and has picked up my habits. We've gelled and gotten into a really good rhythm."

Moose is a priority in Jan and Tonya's lives. That's why it is no surprise that he also participated in their wedding! Jan proudly shared photos from this special day, which include Moose dressed up for the occasion.

Moose is all smiles on Jan Nutting and Tonia Roffey-Nutting's wedding day!





Mina Church enjoys taking Olive (left) and Leo (right) to the river.



Olive and Leo take in the sites on a mountain hike.

OLIVE AND LEO

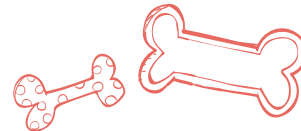
THE COMPLEMENTARY PERSONALITIES

What could be better than having one dog? Two, of course! **Mina Church CPA**, Senior Accountant at BDO Canada LLP, could not agree more. She owns two furry best friends—Olive, a 12-year-old pomeranian pug, and Leo, a four-year-old cocker spaniel poodle.

It's hard for her to imagine not having Olive in her life. Adopted eight years ago from Mina's husband's family, Olive's mature and relaxed personality is a source of comfort when Mina comes home from a long day at the office.

"Olive loves her food, especially vegetables like carrots and cucumbers," says Mina. "But when I just want a popcorn and movie night, it's also the perfect activity for the two of us. It can be difficult to always be on the go. So spending time with Olive is ideal for those days I just want to relax."

On the other hand, Leo, who still has the energy of a puppy, can be more energetic, but Mina and her husband, Eric Church, don't mind. Both Leo and Olive complement their personalities and lifestyles.



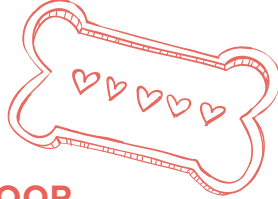
"We do everything with the dogs. We go hiking in Lethbridge and love taking them along," explains Mina. "We also like riding around the city on our bicycles. The dogs run alongside us, and if they get tired, we pop them into their carriages. Then Eric and I bike the rest of the way."

Making the dogs a central part of Mina's life brings a sense of calmness—this was especially the case when Mina was studying for the Common Final Examination. Olive and Leo were with her every step of the way.

"On August 23, 2019, I officially became a CPA. Olive and Leo were a great source of comfort when I went through the CPA Professional Education Program," says Mina. "People don't necessarily understand how stressful the program can be unless they're in it. But when I looked at my dogs, I felt like they actually understood my stress. I felt their support without needing words."



Ian Folinsbee and Rosie take a break from mountain biking and enjoy the breathtaking views.



ROSIE

THE CALM OUTDOOR ENTHUSIAST

An avid mountain biker, **Ian Folinsbee** CPA, CMA, Controller at Greg Martineau Projects Inc, loved taking his nine-year-old collie, Rosie, out on the trails with him.

"She was a really fantastic trail dog. It didn't take her long to catch on to the trails. She was insanely smart," says Ian. "She quickly learned how to stay out of your way when she went ahead or when she came from behind. We spent a lot of time outdoors."

Rescued from the City of Calgary pound at two years old, Rosie was the model dog with a demure and sensitive personality. Not only was she an outdoor enthusiast, Rosie also enjoyed her daily routine of joining Ian in the workplace. Rosie was a staple at Greg Martineau Projects's dog-friendly office.

"If colleagues were getting worked up, Rosie would sit up with her ears perked," explains Ian. "She would slowly walk over to my colleagues and just look at them—almost checking in or breaking the tension and saying, 'Are we good? Is everyone okay?'"

Rosie's calm influence had a positive effect on Ian, whether he was studying for his designation or dealing with stressful days at the office, which earned her the unofficial therapy dog title.

"I have a tendency to overthink things, and Rosie, being a dog, of course would not. If I began to overthink, Rosie didn't react by getting anxious. Her response was to slide into therapy mode," says Ian. "Rosie would come over and sit with me, and that calmness, in contrast to my excitement or anxiety, really helped."



Sadly, Rosie passed away in August 2019, but Ian still has extremely fond memories of Rosie and her enthusiasm.

"If I left the office to go to a meeting, Rosie would just sit at the glass doors and wait for me to come back," says Ian. "Once I stepped into the building, she would be so excited. To have that kind of energy infused into that moment, you can't help but be influenced by it. It lifts your spirits, and you just think, 'Oh, I'm happy to see you, too!'"



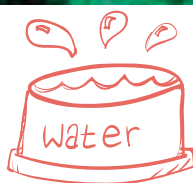


Snow doesn't stop Bob Marley, Louisa Ferrel, and Conrad Ferrel from taking on the outdoors.



Conrad Ferrel shows off his amazing strength by holding Louisa Ferrel and Bob Marley at the same time!

BOB MARLEY TRUE BÜCH MASCOT



As an entrepreneur, you get to set the rules. So, why not add your four-legged companion to the team? True Büch Founders **Louisa Ferrel CPA, CA** and **Conrad Ferrel CPA, CA** did!

Louisa and Conrad's labradoodle, Bob Marley, holds an important position with the company. He is the Chief Dog Officer.

"Bob Marley's responsibility is to be cute and friendly," says Louisa. "When we were just starting True Büch, we'd bring him everywhere and post photos of him on Instagram. He became a local celebrity and our #truebuchpooch mascot!"

When Bob Marley isn't tackling his responsibilities at the office, he works at the Alberta Children's Hospital, volunteering with the Pet Access League Society (PALS) program. Bob Marley meets with children and brings them a bit of happiness whenever he can. This was actually one of the reasons Louisa and Conrad were drawn to Bob Marley.

"We always knew that we wanted to participate in the PALS program. Since one of Bob Marley's parents was a therapy dog, we knew Bob Marley would have a very chill personality. He is never really agitated, which is great for us and the children's hospital," explains Louisa.

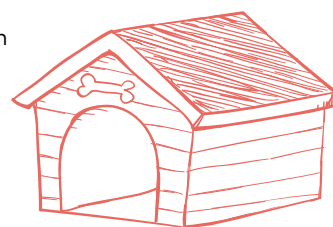
Louisa likes to joke that Bob Marley, with his kind and calm personality, is like a mini Conrad.

"Conrad has a very serious, grumpy, old man personality, and we joke that he turned our dog into a grumpy, old man," laughs Louisa. "It's funny because my husband was anti-dog at first. I was the one that pushed the dog on him, but now he's obsessed with Bob Marley. Conrad has now said that he could never imagine life without a dog. He's never going to be the same!"

Running their own company, Louisa and Conrad are able to squeeze in time with Bob Marley throughout the day.

"As an entrepreneur, you have the flexibility to do certain things on your own time. So, Conrad and I sneak home to let Bob Marley out or take him for a walk," says Louisa. "Bob Marley gets a lot of attention from us, just by virtue of our working arrangements."

Louisa and Conrad also make sure to treat Bob Marley to his favourite snacks: cheese and salmon skin. However, nothing could replace Bob Marley's love of swimming. Every summer, Bob Marley can be found enjoying the water—in his doggie life vest, of course—at the family cabin near Columbia Lake in British Columbia. It is the perfect opportunity for everyone to enjoy some family time in a beautiful landscape!



SODA

THE LOVED FUR CHILD



woosh

Meet Soda, an almost 12-year-old golden retriever, and her proud dog mom, **Trish Riccio** CPA, CMA, Senior Advisor at ConocoPhillips Canada. Soda may be considered a senior pooch at her age, but she still has the enthusiasm of a young pup.

Soda has been part of the Riccio family since she was a puppy. But how did Trish know that Soda was going to be the right fit? Trish's compatibility with the golden retriever's personality!

"My former colleague used to characterize people as different breeds of dogs," explains Trish. "Depending on their traits, for example, people would be called border collies, spaniels, or dobermans. Before she knew my love of the breed, she would say, 'Trish, you're a golden retriever!'"

Trish is not only passionate about Soda, but all animals as well. Since 2009, Trish has served on the Board of the Calgary Humane Society and took on the position of Treasurer in 2011. Trish has been able to use her influence in the community and her expertise in accounting to help animals and pet owners across the city.

"Pets can be entertaining and can add consistency and stability to people's lives. They make amazing companions, and it can be transformational," says Trish. "For example, dogs can be used for therapy or to help people cope. Dogs can also help relieve stress and can provide companionship and a sense of belonging. It's amazing what pets can do for humans."

These benefits ring true for Trish, too. Whether it's cuddling with Soda on the couch, giving Soda prescribed leg massages, or going on a short 20-minute walk with her, Trish knows taking the time out of her day to focus on Soda is essential.

The Riccio family enjoys the sun and sand on their first visit to Cannon Beach, Oregon with (then) one-year-old Soda!



Soda proudly supports the Calgary Humane Society's Annual Dog Jog Fundraiser. Participants set a Guinness World Record in 2016 for the largest gathering of dogs wearing bandanas!



"When we go on walks, it is all about the dog, and it's totally de-stressing," explains Trish.

As Soda gets older, Trish continues to make her a priority. "I have always had the good fortune of having managers who understand that my dog is a very important part of my family. If Soda needs to go for medical care or has appointments during the workday, they have always been supportive and have said, 'Yes, absolutely. We understand.'"

A senior in doggie years, Soda's level of care and the activities the Riccio family participate in are changing, but they have great family vacation memories to look back on.

"Soda loves to swim. We used to take her to Cannon Beach in Oregon. It was an amazing experience for Soda to run on the beach and be in the ocean," says Trish. "Soda was so happy and really enjoyed those trips. It was so much fun for her!" 🐾



A portrait of Salina Dharamsi, a woman with long dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark blue short-sleeved top with a knot at the waist. The background is dark and textured.

STUDENT FOR LIFE

***Salina Dharamsi shares how her
hunger for knowledge keeps
taking her to new heights***

By Sharon Ruyter

Photography by Trudie Lee Photography

Salina Dharamsi CPA, CA is an explorer. Her love for adventure is evident to anyone who meets her, and she enjoys sharing her story of growing up in Vancouver and dreaming of being a pilot. “I feel like I was all over the map when I was a little kid. I wanted to be a pilot because I liked the idea of using a technical skill. But over time, I realized that in addition to a technical profession, I enjoyed being able to buzz around and feel the energy of an office environment,” says Salina. Equipped with the gut feeling that she wanted a career where she could collaborate and work with others, she set her sights on becoming a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA).

Before embarking on her CPA journey, Salina was already busy. She spent her early years volunteering whenever she got a chance. Her volunteer interests were diverse—from serving as a receptionist and peer volunteer for a children’s hospice to travelling as an ambassador for World Vision to Rwanda. Volunteering was a fun activity that allowed her to “connect with the globe,” meet new people, and play a small part in improving the lives of others. Although it was fulfilling, Salina wasn’t satisfied. “I wanted to contribute more,” she says, “so I made a commitment that when I had a few concrete, tangible skills, I would find a way to connect back in.”

Salina is currently a Senior Manager at PwC Canada, leading campus talent acquisition. She’s responsible for the strategy and execution of onboarding 950 hires a year. Her team of 12 travels the country hiring for several lines of service from assurance and tax to deals and actuarial sciences. She explains: “I’m at the forefront of thinking about what the future of talent is for PwC.”

Her job allows her to scratch her explorer itch. Salina is particularly excited about her most recent project: gamifying the student recruitment process. “Students play two games as part of their application,” says Salina. “What’s great is that they receive feedback after completing the games and a video interview, and we get to use the best technology to determine the best candidates without any unconscious biases

“Whatever issue a business is facing or an industry is looking at, there’s a CPA that has the skills and expertise to add.”

in the way.” Salina credits her designation with helping her be comfortable working with “large sets of data and to not be afraid of technology.”

Reading Salina’s story, one might wonder how a CPA with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in accounting, as well as multiple other accreditations, ended up leading talent acquisition at a major firm. The answer is simple: CPAs are more than accountants. The designation opens up a world of opportunities in all sectors of the economy.

Salina’s guiding mantra has been to pursue areas of interest where she can apply her foundational CPA skills and excel. She has a strong desire for life-long learning and also pushes herself to stand out from the crowd. “There is still so much to learn,” remarks Salina.

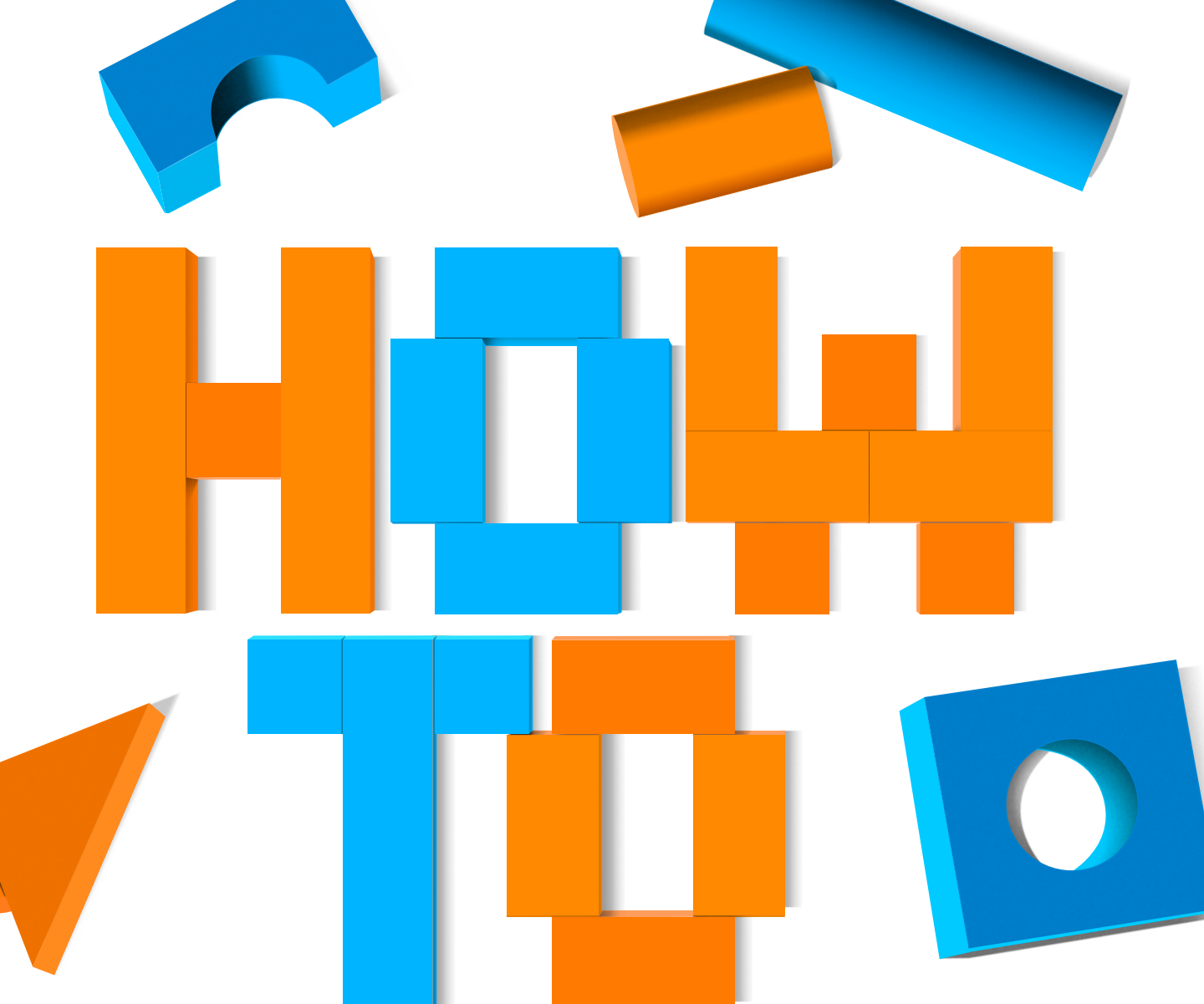
Salina has travelled as far as South Africa to work as an accountant and has reached an impressive point in her career. But she isn’t slowing down any time soon. She knows she’ll always have a mindset that pushes her, and she refuses to settle. Fortunately, her designation is the perfect fit for her drive. “Whatever issue a business is facing or an industry is looking at, there’s a CPA that has the skills and expertise to add,” she says. “I’m lucky this is a profession that is constantly changing and will never be at a standstill.” **C**

Salina’s tips for students who are thinking of becoming CPAs:

Aim high. While you’re a student, figure out what you’re passionate about and what skills you can develop. In addition to obtaining your CPA designation, continuously acquire new skills, and challenge yourself to stand out from your peers.

Meet a lot of CPAs. Meeting CPAs in diverse roles will help you get an understanding of the profession and the breadth of options you will have as a professional.

Enjoy the ride! Time might seem like it passes slowly while you’re a student and later studying to become a CPA, but it’ll be over before you know it. Take time to meet great people, build your network, and get involved in extracurricular activities beyond school.



Alberta CPAs provide building blocks to help you find wins at every stage of your career

As told to Andrew Moore | Photography by Laughing Dog Photography

Capitalize Magazine thanks the models for this article, CPA Campus Ambassadors Minal Patel and Michael Heung

CPAs are known for their business acumen and knowledge with data, but their savviness stretches far beyond the accounting and business world. We asked Alberta CPAs and candidates to share their wisdom on common subjects and scenarios that every responsible individual should know how to handle like a pro. Learn how to succeed in the real world: read on for tips on how to negotiate a job offer, how to get your recommended hours of zzz's a night, how to stay active at your desk, and more.

HOW TO SIGN A RESIDENTIAL LEASE AGREEMENT

Renting your first apartment is an exciting part of the adult experience. It signals to the world that you're independent and ready to take on adult responsibilities. But if you're renting or leasing a place for the first time, you might have questions or concerns about the process. To help make sense of it all, **Jackson Ho** CPA, CGA, Mortgage Broker and REALTOR®, suggests breaking down signing a lease agreement into three key processes: before signing, during signing, and after signing.

Before signing

Know the law: It is important to know that the lease agreement is governed by the *Residential Tenancies Act* in Alberta, and if there is a discrepancy, the Act prevails.

Are you rentable? Now that you have decided to rent, you must qualify and be accepted as a tenant. Plan ahead and make sure you qualify! When considering tenants, rental housing providers look for consistent and current employment, a good credit history, and good references (preferably from past landlords).

During signing

Sign here please! A Lease Agreement is a legally binding contract, and the terms and conditions must be adhered to during the contract period. Make sure you read through the entire contract, and ask questions or gain clarity before signing.

Security (AKA damage) deposit: Did you know that the amount of security deposit cannot be greater than one month's rent? Better yet, did you know that a tenant is not required to top up the security deposit if rent goes up?

Move-in inspection: It is important to inspect the residential property in detail. If there is pre-existing damage, take pictures and keep them as reference. You don't want to be liable for a previous tenant's damages.

After signing

You have responsibilities and rights! As a tenant, you must follow the lease agreement by (for example): paying rent on time, preventing damages, and not performing illegal acts in the residential property. But you also have rights. A rental housing provider must get a tenant's consent to enter the premises or must provide 24-hour notice before entry.

I have an issue, now what? You can contact the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Board (LTAB). LTAB provides advice and information to residential tenants and landlords to address issues and ensure they are aware of their rights and obligations. If a LTAB is not available in your area, you can contact Service Alberta.

Jackson Ho CPA, CGA
Mortgage Broker and REALTOR®





HOW TO FIND A MENTOR YOU CLICK WITH

Finding a mentor is a great way to build your leadership skills and invest in yourself, but you don't want to settle on a mentor just because they have a sweet job. For some tips on finding a mentor that you click with, *Capitalize Magazine* reached out to experienced mentor **Sally Banek** CPA, CMA, Executive Director of Finance at Connecting Care and Points West Living.

- Don't limit yourself to a specific mentor simply because you aspire to their job. Choose someone who you admire for both their success and their personal values. Spending time to choose the right person will pay off in the long run.
- Once you find someone you'd like to approach for mentorship, ask for a short meeting. Coffee is a great way to start. You can ask your initial questions in a conversational manner to see if you "click." If you do, have the courage to make the request for mentorship. Depending on your personal style, it can be a formal request or something as simple as, "I'd love to continue to learn from you. Would you be willing to chat and have coffee with me every few months?"
- Most importantly, once you have a mentor, remember that it is up to you to take action. The onus will be on you to continue the relationship and to listen to their advice. Your mentor is giving you two of their most valuable possessions: their wisdom and their time. Use them well.



Sally Banek CPA, CMA
Executive Director of
Finance, Connecting Care
and Points West Living





HOW TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

No different than eating well and exercising, getting enough sleep is critical to functioning your best. **Erin Schwartz CPA, MPAcc**, Manager of Employer Relations at CPA Alberta—and self-described lover of naps—shares her tips for getting that much-needed shuteye each night.

- Build in “getting ready for bed” time so that you get to bed on time. You’re likely familiar with this scenario: you say you’re going to bed at 10:00pm, but you’re still awake at 11:00pm because you’ve kept yourself busy right until 10:00pm. Give yourself time for your nighttime routine—brushing your teeth, cleaning your face, downtime, etc. Giving yourself 20 minutes to wind down and do something relaxing—like reading a book—will help you sleep much better.
- Arrange your extracurricular activities to work with the sleep schedule you need. For many people, transitioning from high school to post-secondary and then to the workforce can be a big adjustment. For example, if you got into the habit of participating in team sports that played late at night because your post-secondary schedule didn’t

consist of early-morning classes, you may now have to shift your sport schedule to accommodate an 8:00am start time for work. For Erin, that meant booking squash courts for 6:00pm, as opposed to playing volleyball at 9:00pm on the other side of the city like she used to do as an undergrad.

- Ensure you get enough sleep on weekends so that you don’t start the workweek in a deficit. That’s just setting yourself up for a rough week. (Also, research suggests you vary your regular wake-up time by no more than an hour on the weekends as excess “catch-up” sleep can throw off your body’s internal clock and result in Sunday night insomnia.)
- Don’t overburden yourself with commitments (personally or professionally)—if you’re burning yourself out by taking on too much, you’ll still be tired even if you’re getting enough sleep. Make conscious decisions when it comes to how you spend your time, and ensure that you’re prioritizing what you have the capacity for and what is important to you.



Erin Schwartz CPA, MPAcc
Manager of Employer
Relations, CPA Alberta

HOW TO NEGOTIATE A JOB OFFER

You did it: You completed your research, tailored your resume, made it through the nerve-wracking interviews, and have now been offered a job. But one last challenge lies between you and your awesome new cubemates: negotiating your offer. **Joe Gagliardi** FCPA, FCMA, Managing Partner at Recruitment Partners, provides his advice to help make sure you're on the right track towards getting what you want.

To start off, do you have all the information you need to negotiate details of the offer? Consider the big and complete picture. Many times, there are several significant components of the complete package that make it more or less attractive. For example:

- Do you have a strong understanding of the responsibilities of the role?
- Does the potential employer offer a variable pay component to the offer (e.g. bonuses)?
- Is vacation time negotiable?
- Are health benefits, continuing education, and corporate perks (such as trips) included?

If you feel the company's offer is too low, how should you approach asking for a higher salary? The key is to show the potential employer the value you offer and how and why you are worth the higher salary.

- Demonstrate how you will save them money or generate more revenue for them in the long-term. Make it about them, not about you.
- Show the potential employer you have done your homework and that you know the going rate for similar roles with the same responsibilities.
- If you provide a salary range, keep it relatively narrow, and make sure you are willing to accept the job at the low end of your salary range.
- Give the employer a finish line. Clearly articulate that when your salary expectation is met, you are done negotiating and are ready to accept the offer.

Early in your career, your job search should focus on gaining a strong foundation for future career growth. In other words, don't make it all about the money. Later in your career, when you are more established, your job search should focus on what you want to do or are good at. At this stage, money becomes a bigger factor, coupled with the responsibilities of the position.



Early in your career, your job search should focus on gaining a strong foundation for future career growth. In other words, don't make it all about the money.



Joe Gagliardi FCPA, FCMA
Managing Partner,
Recruitment Partners

HOW TO STAY ACTIVE AT YOUR DESK

While office work has always been on the sedentary side of the labour spectrum, technology is giving us fewer reasons to get out of our chairs and move around. But with these tips from **Kristie Nichol CPA, CA**, Practical Experience Specialist at CPA Alberta and a 500-hour Registered Yoga Teacher, you can make sure your body and muscles are getting the movement they need—right from your desk.

Abdomen contraction

It is common to rely on the backrest of a chair when sitting, which creates slumping in the middle of the body and weakness in the core.

How to: Sit away from the back of your chair, lengthen the spine to activate postural muscles, and contract your abdomen and gluteal muscles. Hold for a few seconds; release and repeat.

Leg lifts

The lower abdomen and quadriceps are some of the most relaxed muscles while seated. Activate and strengthen them with leg lifts.

How to: Place one foot on the floor, straighten and lift the opposite leg while contracting the quadriceps and pulling the lower abdomen in. Draw small circles with the leg both clockwise and counter-clockwise. Switch sides.

Neck stretch

Stress is often stored through stiffness in the neck and shoulders, which cause headaches or neck pain. Reduce stress and relieve tension by breathing deep during this neck stretch.

How to: Bending at the elbow, place the right hand on the lower back, palm facing outward. Bring your left ear to the left shoulder—you can adjust your chin down or up slightly to find an area of more sensation. Take three to five slow, deep breaths and switch to the other side.



Kristie Nichol CPA, CA
Practical Experience
Specialist, CPA Alberta



Hip release

Tight hip flexors are a common complaint after sitting at a desk all day. This technique helps relieve compression in the hip flexor.

How to: Stand up with your chair behind you. Then bend one knee, rest the top of your foot on the seat of your chair, and press your hip forward. To deepen, step further away from the chair until your knee is in line with your hip, or clasp the back foot and bring it toward your sitz bones (AKA the bottom part of the pelvis that bears weight in seated positions).

Seated twist

Twisting the core of the body is akin to wringing out a washcloth. Many of the body's toxins are flushed and released in this posture, while long, deep breaths soothe the nervous system.

How to: Sitting away from the back of the chair, cross the right leg over the left, lengthen the spine, and place your left palm on your right knee. Begin to twist to the right from the base of the spine. If you can, gaze over your right shoulder. Take three to five long, slow breaths, and repeat using the opposite side.

HOW TO DINE OUT ON A BUDGET

Dining out is usually first on the chopping block when putting together a budget, and nobody—especially if you're a foodie—wants to see food get cut (unless you're eating a steak). Thankfully, with a little bit of research, eating out doesn't have to be a bank-breaker. Keep these tips in mind to help you eat well and not go broke when looking for your next feast on the town.

Seek out happy hours and daily specials: Meatball Monday, Taco Tuesday, Wing Wednesday—you get the idea. Many restaurants and pubs offer great deals every night of the week. Find one you like and take advantage of it. \$2.00 tacos? Yes, please!

Use apps/stamp cards for discounts or rewards: Many restaurants have branched out into the app game and offer reward points for customers who download their apps. There's also no shortage of food delivery apps on the market. Skip the Dishes, UberEats, and Doordash are just a few. Keep an eye on promos from them, and only use them when it's worth the investment (or your fridge is empty and you're going into starvation mode).



HOW TO READ A PAYSTUB

Getting a paystub can be exciting. Reading it, however, not so much—unless you know what you're looking at. On the sample paystub below, CPA candidate **Rhema Lee**, Financial Analyst at CPA Alberta, defines the different components of a paystub, while clarifying a few acronyms.

Rhema cautions, though, that the layout of a paystub may vary from organization to organization. And depending on the benefits an employee receives, the contents may vary as well. For example, term life insurance, lifestyle spending account, or accidental death insurance may not appear on every paystub. But there are three categories you are sure to see on your paystub, regardless of where you work: earnings, taxes, and net pay.

Gross earnings is a total of all earnings, including taxable benefits. Almost every earning is taxable, with a few exceptions. Health and dental benefits, for example, are non-taxable earnings.

A benefit allowance is money that a company or government agency provides to an employee for a specific purpose, such as transportation, healthcare costs, or a flexible spending account. In this instance, Dunder Mifflin, the employer, provided \$20.40 to Jim Halpert to cover his long-term disability (LTD) cost.

Taxable benefits are included in tax calculation but not included in net pay.

Accidental death and dismemberment insurance

Term life insurance

These may include holiday bonuses, gift cards, trips, etc.

Employee's Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) contributions matched by employer.

Lifestyle spending account

If a company subsidizes an employee's transit pass, the amount of the subsidy is calculated as a taxable benefit.

Post-tax deductions are taken out of an employee's paycheck after all applicable taxes have been withheld.

Long-term disability

Holiday Pay (HP)

Most employees are entitled to general holidays and receive general holiday pay if one of the following applies to them:

- a general holiday is a regular day of work, or
- they have worked on a general holiday that is not a regular day of work.

Retroactive Pay (RP)

Retroactive pay is a payment made in the current pay period for any increase in wages or salary earned during a past period. 



Rhema Lee
Financial Analyst, CPA Alberta

PAY STATEMENT		
Employee Name: Jim Halpert Employee #: 12345 Pay Frequency: Semi-monthly Pay Date: December 31, 2019 Pay Period: December 16 - 31 Sequence #: 987 Employer Name: Dunder Mifflin		
	Current 12/16/2019 – 12/31/2019	YTD As of 12/31/2019
	Amount	Amount
Earnings	\$ 3,797.06	\$ 80,882.35
Regular	\$ 1,233.05	\$ 77,502.34
Vac Payout	\$ 2,543.61	\$ 2,543.61
Benefit Allowance	\$ 20.40	\$ 836.40
Taxable Benefits		
AwardNC		\$ 10.00
AD&D	\$ 0.45	\$ 28.03
Life	\$ 4.83	\$ 270.59
Gifts	\$ 100	\$ 100.00
LTD TB		\$ 427.04
RRSP Employer	\$ 73.98	\$ 801.44
LSA		\$ 500.00
Transit	\$ 17.38	\$ 416.26
Special Information		
Dental ER	\$ 24.00	\$ 1,496.00
Health ER	\$ 39.94	\$ 2,489.44
Pre-Tax Deductions	\$ 36.99	\$ 604.65
RRSP\$		\$ 267.12
RRSP Employee	\$ 36.99	\$ 337.53
Taxes	\$ 1,184.23	\$ 20,077.06
CPP (Canada Pension Plan)		\$ 2,544.30
EI (Employment Insurance)		\$ 955.04
Fed Tax	\$ 1,184.23	\$ 16,577.72
Post Tax Deductions	\$ 43.66	\$ 1,407.64
Dep Life	\$ 0.38	\$ 23.38
LTD	\$ 20.40	\$ 836.40
Transit	\$ 22.88	\$ 547.86
	Amount	Amount
Net Pay	\$ 2,532.18	\$ 58,793.00
	\$ 2,532.18	

Dental insurance is a non-taxable benefit.

Health insurance is a non-taxable benefit.

If you want to put aside some money for retirement, you can do that through a RRSP. RRSP contributions are not taxed on your paycheck. They're taxed upon withdrawal. RRSP benefits are still subject to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Employment Insurance (EI) premiums.

Source deductions are withheld by employers and remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency. These deductions can include CPP, EI, and federal and provincial taxes.

Most of the earnings paid to employees are insurable, which means they are subject to EI. The EI premium is deducted from insurable earnings and remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency.

Net pay is the amount that is paid to you after all the deductions. Usually, the net pay amount is shown at the bottom of the paystub. It is calculated as follows:

Net pay = earnings - pre-tax deductions - taxes - post-tax deductions

Actual amount deposited to your bank account

7 steps to paying off student loans (or debt)

Albert Einstein once said, “Compound interest is the eighth wonder of the world. He who understands it, earns it.... He who doesn’t...pays it.” I’d rather earn interest than pay it. What about you?

By Jolie Viguers CPA, CMA

Investing in your education can provide a great return on investment. However, our reality is that sometimes education requires debt. With record-breaking rates of consumer insolvencies and debt load, we need to take an active role in our finances. Here is an empowering strategy to pay it off:

1 Stop increasing your liabilities

The best advice is to avoid unnecessary debt. Commit to making a change to improve your financial future by reducing your debt load. Live frugally and within your means.

2 Take inventory

Start with a spreadsheet listing all your debts, including current balances, interest rates, and minimum payments. Consider credit cards, car loans, student loans, mortgages, unpaid utility/cell phone bills, Canada Revenue Agency payments, and lines of credit. Check your credit report to ensure that it is correct and that your list is complete. Bonus points go to individuals who want to do a Net Worth statement (personal balance sheet!), which would also include assets to know the full picture.

3 Request reductions

Contact your creditors directly to investigate options to reduce the debt, reduce the interest rate, or change the payment schedule. Know your repayment terms and any penalties for prepayment. Investigate government programs such as a Repayment Assistance Plan for student loans. Consider a short-term consolidation loan, but be cautious and ensure it is beneficial.

4 Play with calculators

Consider whether you are a “Mind” or a “Math” person when it comes to your own finances. Use online tools that show the repayment schedules and interest costs. It should be motivating to reduce the total interest charges for the life of your loans.

Mind



Faster morale boost
Suffering from debt fatigue
Motivated by little wins

Math



Long-term plan
Patient
Motivated by \$ savings

Snowball method “Mind”	Avalanche method “Math”
Sort list of debt in order by outstanding balance	Sort list of debt in order by interest rate
Pay off smallest balance first	Pay off debt with highest interest rate first
Provides small wins that build momentum	Provides biggest bang for your buck
Likely takes longer and costs more in interest	Likely faster and costs less in interest
Popular with Dave Ramsey* followers	Popular in the FIRE** community

5 Budget your cash flow

It is important to first analyze monthly spending (personal income statement!) prior to setting a maximum debt repayment amount. Live frugally, understand the consequences of compound interest, and decide on the most you can realistically afford to direct towards debt.

6 Implement an appropriate payment method

Choose the method that suits your money personality from step four, and set up automatic transfers for the total amount decided in step five. For easy budgeting and scheduling, set them for your pay deposit date.

The key to both payment methods is that you must make the minimum payments on each debt. When one debt disappears, consider closing that account completely, then rollover that payment amount to the next debt on the list.

7 Follow the process

To maintain your resolve, join online “debt free” communities to follow others on their journey, share your progress, and find other tools. Track your journey on your spreadsheet and create graphs if you like. Or, if you’re more visual, download a free debt repayment graphic. When you’re completely done paying your debt, CELEBRATE! Then shift that focus to wealth building.

Living without debt will give you more freedom and choice with your money. Removing the debt weight will catapult your ability to invest and provide you with the opportunity to have flexibility in your work arrangements. Fewer financial constraints allow you to live your best life. 🍷

Special considerations for debt repayment

- Debt repayment doesn’t exclude you from saving and investing, especially if there is an employer match.
- Remember the tax credits on the interest paid on your student loans, which online calculators don’t usually incorporate.
- Weigh the opportunity cost of paying off debt at a low interest rate compared to potentially higher investment gains.

Bonus debt busters

- Accelerated biweekly payments will pay off debt even faster.
- If you receive a raise, direct that extra money straight to debt repayment.
- Start a side hustle and funnel those funds towards debt.
- Periodically review your budget and try to add 5% more to each payment.
- Use an app that rounds up purchases to the next dollar, and save the difference to put towards debt.
- Find an employer that contributes to student loan repayments as an incentive to attract and retain great employees.



Commit to making a change to improve your financial future by reducing your debt load. Live frugally and within your means.

Jolie Viguers CPA, CMA



**Dave Ramsey is an American leader in personal finance. He is famous for creating the “Seven Baby Steps” to financial freedom.*

***FIRE stands for “Financial Independence, Retire Early,” and there is a growing community of people striving to optimize and be intentional with their money.*

Jolie Viguers received her accounting designation in 2003 and has spent most of her career working in private industry. She is currently the Controller for an IT firm and a financial coach, working with clients to increase their financial literacy and confidence. You can find her at www.wellbeancoaching.com and also on Facebook and Instagram @wellbeancoaching.




CPA

 CHARTERED
PROFESSIONAL
ACCOUNTANTS

 EDUCATION FOUNDATION
ALBERTA


“SCHOLARSHIP”

A FANCY WORD FOR FREE MONEY

Whether you want to call it scholarships or free money, the CPA Education Foundation has the means to support you as you forge your path towards becoming a CPA. We have scholarships for all types of students—take a look at the selection and you may find you’re eligible to apply for more than one!

Application deadline: February 28, 2020

Does volunteering and helping out in your community give you the warm and fuzzies? If so, the post-secondary scholarships below may be right for you. We want students who are passionate about their volunteer activities, have satisfactory academic standing, and have an interest in pursuing the CPA designation. If that sounds like you, we can’t wait to read your submission!

J. Lorne Baxter FCPA, FCA Memorial Scholarship
Value: \$1,500

David Bentley FCPA, FCA and Janet Bentley Post-secondary Excellence Award
Value: \$3,000

James C. Miller FCA Bursary in Accounting
Value: \$1,250

Peter Kruczko CPA, CA Award in Memory of Gordon Woodman FCA
Value: \$2,000

Richard Schulli CA Memorial Scholarship
Value: \$2,500

Are you a born leader and mentor? Do you thrive on helping others succeed, and enjoy being a leader in your community or on campus? If you are a post-secondary student and professionalism, integrity, and leadership are what make you tick, we want to hear from you!

Don Wilson CA Memorial Scholarship
Value: \$2,000

Kenneth Biggs FCPA, FCA and Leona Biggs Scholarship
Value: \$2,000

CPA Alberta Young Emerging Professionals Award
Value: \$2,500

Think you know all about the CPA Education Foundation awards for post-secondary students? Think again! Read on for interesting tidbits about our scholarships and apply for ones that pique your interest.

Calgary CPA Small Practitioners' Forum Award

Value: \$1,500

DID YOU KNOW?

The CPA Small Practitioners' Forum was first held in Banff in 1984.

Douglas R. Hagerman FCA Entrance Scholarship

Value: \$2,500

DID YOU KNOW?

Douglas Hagerman served as a navigator in the Airforce in World War II. The scholarship fund in his name was established by friends, family, and professional colleagues to recognize his significant contributions to the accounting profession.

Vic Dzurko Generations of Excellence Award

Value: \$2,500

DID YOU KNOW?

If your parent or grandparent is a CPA, you're a good candidate for this award. No time like the present to follow in family footsteps!

New Canadian Achievement Award

Value: \$2,500

DID YOU KNOW?

There is one award available to an individual who has become a new Canadian or permanent resident within the last five years (i.e., on or after January 1, 2015).

Are you a high school student who demonstrates professionalism, integrity, ethics, and leadership? Do you have good academic standing and a good head on your shoulders? Then one of the awards below may be right for you!

CPA Alberta Young Emerging Professional Award

Value: \$1,500

David Bentley FCPA, FCA and Janet Bentley High School Excellence Award

Value: \$2,500

If you are Indigenous, driven, and a born trailblazer, then we have an award for you! Regardless of where you are in your academic journey—perhaps you are still in high school or maybe you are a mature student—the CPA Education Foundation proudly offers a variety of awards for your consideration.

Aboriginal Student Business Award

Value: \$2,500

Alex Tutschek FCPA, FCA Award for Indigenous Student Post-Secondary Achievement

Value: \$1,500

Alex Tutschek FCPA, FCA Award for Indigenous Student High School Achievement

Value: \$1,500

Alex Tutschek FCPA, FCA Award for Mature Indigenous Students

Value \$1,500

Crowe MacKay No Limits Award

Value: \$3,750

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is no joke! Don't let the financial burden hinder your motivation to achieve the CPA designation. The following awards are available to those enrolled in CPA PEP and who are in good academic standing. We encourage you to apply for more than one award.

David Bentley FCPA, FCA and Janet Bentley CPA PEP Excellence Award

Value: \$3,500

Claire Dallaire CPA, CGA CPA PEP Encouragement Award

Value: \$2,500

For more information on any of the CPA Education Foundation scholarships, please visit cpaalberta.ca/foundation.

THE CPA EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Supporting business education in Alberta through a variety of initiatives including scholarships, events, and more

By Kayla Gaffney

The CPA Education Foundation is here to make your journey through post-secondary studies in business and accounting as enriching as possible. Wondering what the Foundation has to offer? Scholarships—check. Networking events—check. Case competitions—check. All that's missing from the equation is you!

The CPA Education Foundation is the charitable arm of the CPA profession in Alberta. The Foundation provides accounting education opportunities, and inspires and develops future Alberta CPAs. As a non-profit organization, our mandate is to strengthen the future of the accounting profession in Alberta through partnerships, and to

support business education and students, as well as the development of innovative ideas.

By offering a variety of initiatives and resources, the Foundation hopes to help the next generation of CPAs achieve their professional goals and pursue successful careers.

Every year, the Foundation gives out over 100 awards and scholarships to deserving students and new professionals based on their academic, leadership, and community achievements, as well as financial need. The Foundation provides support for aspiring CPAs during their entire education journey—from high school through to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP).

Here are three of the students the Foundation has supported through scholarships:

Megan Tsang, recipient of the Kenneth Biggs FCPA, FCA and Leona Biggs Scholarship: "I feel honoured to receive this award and will keep looking for opportunities to gain more experiences and give back in an even greater capacity. It is encouraging to know that the Foundation is here to help post-secondary students and CPA candidates through their university studies and career paths."

Megan is gearing up to graduate from the University of Alberta and hopes to pursue her designation shortly after.





Larysa Romaniuk, recipient of the Don Wilson cA Memorial Scholarship: “I’ve chosen to pursue my CPA designation because of the exciting, dynamic, and successful career opportunities that would be made available to me. The long-lasting history and vast network of CPA professionals create a very stable and virtuous environment for new professionals.”

Larysa is now working as a Financial Analyst at TELUS while enrolled in CPA PEP.

Nicolas Brown, recipient of the David Bentley FCPA, FCA and Janet Bentley CPA PEP Excellence Award: “I’ve been paying most of my CPA Professional Education Program fees myself, so the support from the Foundation will really go a long way. Beyond the financial support, receiving this award affirms that my volunteering is having a meaningful impact.”

Nicholas is passionate about accounting, management, and governance. He recently wrote and passed the Common Final Examination.



Scholarships are just a piece of the pie. The CPA Education Foundation also supports students and CPA candidates by organizing events such as the Business Challenge in Calgary, Bowl-a-rama in Edmonton and Calgary, and the Conference for Accounting Educators in Red Deer.

The annual Conference for Accounting Educators brings together Alberta post-secondary accounting instructors and representatives of the CPA profession for a day and a half of discussions, networking, and presentations. A highlight of the 2019 conference was the Teaching Prize Awards, in which accounting instructors were nominated by their school’s student body for a special prize.

To help students meet future employers and find out what being a CPA is actually like, the Foundation sponsors annual Get Connected events in Edmonton and Calgary. In 2019, students sported their best business attire and spent their evenings networking with Alberta CPAs.

Putting yourself out there can be pretty tough, especially when you are rubbing elbows with the best in Alberta’s business community. That’s why the Foundation launched the Bowl-a-rama events! It’s an opportunity for students to chat and be paired with potential CPA mentors in a low-pressure environment. Plus, who doesn’t love bowling and pizza?

These are just a few of the ways that the CPA Education Foundation can help you achieve your educational goals. For more information, visit cpaalberta.ca/foundation. 



REDEFINING THE CAFETERIA EXPERIENCE

With technology, his CPA designation, and other skills, Amit Vadan is disrupting lunch dining (in a good way)

By Ginny Ao

Photography by Trudie Lee Photography



The simple fact is, you need to know finance and accounting to run a business. You need to know where you stand financially at all times.

Amit Vadan CPA, CMA is an entrepreneur at heart. He recognizes that to succeed in the food service industry (or any business), he must be innovative while taking calculated risks. This Alberta CPA is modernizing cafeteria operations, not only locally but in other provinces as well.

Amit is the President of the Mercatino Group of Companies. Mercatino—"little market" in Italian—is a modern cafeteria experience with a strong focus on fresh, healthy, and local offerings. The Mercatino brand spans eight retail locations across Canada and has over 100 employees. Amit's business strategy is to disrupt the eating space, change our notions of lunch dining, and break the cafeteria stereotype.

By tackling this conventional market, Amit is consistently asking, "How can we apply technology to this?"—something he learned from his CPA training.

Mercatino established its first location in Calgary in 2014 and has now expanded to Winnipeg and Toronto. It operates in education centres, long-term care facilities, and on remote and corporate campuses. Amit uses technology and modern equipment to offer higher quality products at these locations.



In addition, Amit has built a large-scale commercial kitchen or "ghost kitchen" that drives efficiency and quality assurance, and services Mercatino's existing retail locations. The "ghost kitchen" serves as a central commissary where food is prepared but there isn't a dining area for walk-in customers.

A natural leader with strong business acumen, Amit has always been interested in management accounting and the mechanics around how a business works. This led him to obtain his CPA designation after completing his MBA from Queen's University.

Amit says he uses his CPA skills every day. "The simple fact is, you need to know finance and accounting to run a business. You need to know where you stand financially at all times," says Amit. "The deep learning I received through the CPA program helped. It essentially enabled me to run and scale a business at a fast pace."

Amit recognizes that technology has rapidly affected his business and will continue to do so.

"Since I received my designation, the market and economy have pivoted quite a lot. I give a lot of credit to the CPA profession for continuing to deliver learning opportunities that are relevant to what is happening in the marketplace," says Amit. "Continuous education has been critical for me to ensure my business stays current."

As Amit disrupts the traditional cafeteria environment, the essence of Mercatino remains intact: sourcing high-quality, local ingredients; making best-in-class lunch offerings; and delivering this vision across Canada.

"Our real focus has been on product quality and the guest experience," explains Amit. "The idea is to disrupt the larger players and say, 'How can we provide a better offering from a Canadian company?'"

As any entrepreneur knows, challenges come with the territory, but what sets Amit apart is how he handles these obstacles.

"When you live life as an entrepreneur, you're always riding on highs and lows," says Amit, "and when you're riding these waves, what matters the most is focus, hard work, and ultimately, just never giving up." 

STUDENT
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**By stepping up and honing their leadership skills
now, students set themselves up to succeed in
their education and careers**

By Lauren Gallimore CPA

Employers are looking for leaders—people who can communicate, are self-motivated, and are good at solving problems. Seeking out volunteer and extracurricular activities while in university, and once you become a CPA candidate, will help get the ball rolling towards the path to success.

As a University of Lethbridge Faculty of Management student, I took advantage of two co-op work terms, participated in case competitions, was the Accounting Club President, and became a CPA Campus Ambassador. Looking back, I can appreciate that these extra responsibilities made me a leader within my peer group—even if it was unintentional. My motivation when taking on these roles was simple: They would better prepare me for the CPA program, look good on my resume, and would be something fun to do.

At that time, the unification of the accounting profession was underway and the new CPA program was about to start. This was an exciting time to be involved as a CPA Campus Ambassador because it gave me the opportunity to learn about the program and prepared me for what to expect.

coming up behind you by offering advice on which events to attend and providing insight on interview protocol to better their odds of securing sought-after CPA articling positions.

While working as a CPA candidate, it is still important to gain leadership experience even though you will be juggling modules with all your other responsibilities. The bottom line is that all employers want to see their staff committed to the profession and their organization. Helping organize events such as tax clinics allows you to interact with CPAs and other respected professionals in your community. Expanding your circle will create new opportunities, as well as a chance to meet future clients or even employers.

University students and CPA candidates have a wealth of knowledge (even if it doesn't feel like it yet). So, at this point in your studies or career, being a leader means sharing your experience and improving the training process for the next group of students. I took the opportunity to pay it forward by passing along the information and advice I gained through my own CPA program experience and from my mentors.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

This involvement proved my worth to my future employer, KPMG Lethbridge. They offered me a CPA articling position after I completed a co-op term with the firm, and I was determined to show them that I was not just going to phone in the rest of my education now that I had secured one of their coveted positions.

I encourage you to develop good leadership characteristics as a university student, even if you don't hold an official role within the school. Being a leader is more about your attitude and actions than having a title. When working with your peers on projects, be a good teammate, follow through on your promises, and create solutions, not conflicts. When you do these things, leadership occurs naturally, and your peers will respect and look to you for guidance.

For students planning to pursue the CPA designation, once you secure a CPA articling position, you become an expert on how the whirlwind of the CPA recruiting season works. Now is your chance to help those

The leadership roles I held—both formal and informal—made my university and early-career experiences so much more interesting and fun. Looking back, it is the extra opportunities I took part in, not the day-to-day tasks, that stand out as the most fulfilling parts of my career to date.

As I grew into my career at KPMG, and even now that I have taken the leap to industry at Precon Manufacturing, having the background experience in more than just accounting has paid me back in spades. Also, by taking on leadership roles early on in my career (or even before it began), I am now more confident in taking charge and managing people and projects. 



Lauren Gallimore CPA is a Senior Financial Analyst at Precon Manufacturing in Lethbridge. She graduated with great distinction from the University of Lethbridge and articulated at KPMG. She loves to travel and is an outdoor enthusiast who spends her spare time in the mountains kayaking, hiking, and skiing.



Never be out of the loop

The Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre cuts through the noise and showcases inspiring stories and perspectives (through podcasts, books, and videos) straight from Alberta CPAs

By Danielle Blackburn

Do you know that feeling you get when everyone around you seems to know something you don't? When it comes to the gossip around campus or your classmate's joke that you don't quite understand, there might not be much you can do. But taking advantage of the resources at the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre will keep you in the know on happenings in business and accounting so that you're always in the loop when it truly counts.

Since its start in January 2019, the Knowledge Centre has launched two major initiatives: the *Straight From the CPA's Mouth* podcast and the *CPA Smart* video series. Both allow students and the general public to engage with the knowledge and ideas of Alberta CPAs in all areas of business, accounting, and finance. The Knowledge Centre is an initiative of the CPA Education Foundation.

Each episode of the podcast begins with a thought-provoking question such as "At what point should you consider yourself good enough?" or "What is your approach to resolving conflict?" Episodes then dig into the unique experiences and expertise of the featured CPA.

Want to know how a genetics major ended up as an accountant? Or how one guest declared bankruptcy in her early twenties, only to turn things around and retire early? These stories and more are explored on *Straight From the CPA's Mouth*.

The podcast also released a special Financial Literacy series that deals with everything from creating budgets to knowing how to invest your money. The series includes a student and an early-career professional interviewing a CPA on debt; showcases a panel of CPAs discussing how to save and spend wisely; and takes to the crowds at CPA Alberta's Meet Your Employer events to get real questions from attendees about smart money management, with various CPAs sharing their expertise in return.

The *CPA Smart* video series allows viewers to gain a lot of knowledge in a little bit of time. The first installment of the series features six CPAs from all over the province. While one episode describes a marathon on the Great Wall of China with a manager from Pembina Pipeline, another takes audiences to the majestic town of Canmore for a brewery tour. Viewers get a glimpse into the diverse worlds of Alberta CPAs and learn just how far the designation can take them.

A future second installment of *CPA Smart* will feature topical videos on business know-how like career building, entrepreneurship, and emotional intelligence.

When you visit the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre, you get in the know. Explore what's available at the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre and never be out of the loop when it matters. 



...MAKE THE MOST OF THEM HERE.

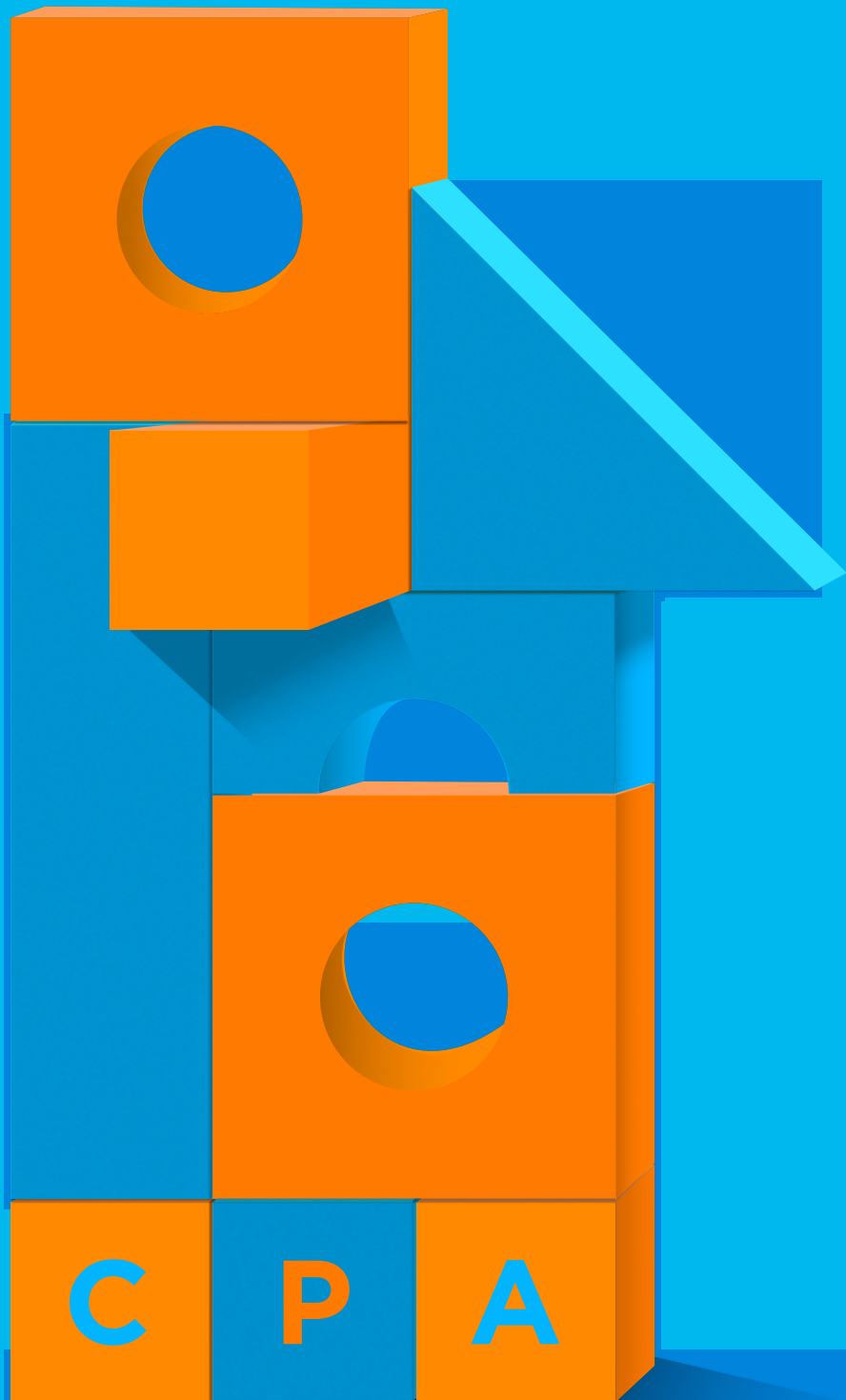
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