ONE MORE REASON TO LOVE TAX SEASON

2019 will go down in history as the year Foundation Communities reached the milestone of filing 250,000 tax returns for Central Texans. Students and faculty at the University of Texas at Austin have helped the nonprofit hit that mark.

For many people, a tax refund is more than a benefit that results from owing less tax than they anticipated. That refund might provide funds for a coworker’s next rent payment, a friend’s utility bill, or put food on a neighbor’s table. Without assistance, many people in the Austin community would have difficulty accessing these funds.

Each spring semester, the Department of Accounting partners with Foundation Communities, a local nonprofit that provides affordable housing and a variety of free on-site services, to train and certify UT students to prepare personal tax returns for filers who earn less than $55,000 annually.

Ross Jennings and Steve Limberg created the Tax Practicum class in 2006. Ross, the Department Chair at the time, was exploring new ways to increase students’ opportunities for experiential learning. It came to his attention that several accounting students were volunteering at Foundation Communities to prepare returns, and an idea struck him. Why not offer a class to train students to file tax returns AND give back to their community?

“I asked Steve Limberg to design and teach the class, and he did a fabulous job. Steve taught the course for one year, and then turned it over to Brian Lendecky. During Brian’s first few years, the class grew to what it is today,” Ross said.

This semester, J Kamas and Gretchen Charrier are teaching the Practicum. In addition to completing return preparation training and preparing returns, the students also attend a series of classes that feature IRS guest speakers. For many participants, the class provides an inspiring and rewarding experience that comes from supporting the people of Austin. “Our students are really focused on giving back to the community,” J added.

This year, 208 UT students are enrolled in the class. 59 of those students are MPAs; economics, finance, and accounting undergraduates comprise the rest of the student population enrolled in the course. Fifth-year iMPA student Erin Markey said, “This work can really impact lives, and many clients share their excitement about what the money will do for their families.”

Before they begin volunteering, students are trained and certified by the IRS. Then, until April 15, they volunteer for 55 to 60 hours in order to meet their course requirements. In Austin, there are six locations at which clients can meet with a volunteer and have their return filed for free. Many clients especially benefit from the knowledge their student volunteers have of child tax credits and of the earned income credit. Often, Foundation Communities tax filers are unaware of these tax benefits and might otherwise have to rely on a tax professional to receive them.

“Foundation Communities simply could not serve as many clients and prepare as many tax returns without the student volunteers. In total, we’ve had over 2,000 students work in our program and help their Austin neighbors file their taxes correctly, saving folks over $7 million in tax preparation fees,” said Walter Moreau, Executive Director of Foundation Communities.

Since its inception 13 years ago, over 250,000 returns have been filed, resulting in over $382 million in refunds for those community members. We estimate that approximately one-third of all returns completed at the Foundation Communities sites were prepared by UT-Austin students. Brian Lendecky added, “The city gives so much to UT; it’s nice that UT can give back to the city.”

TAX PRACTICUM CLASS BY THE NUMBERS

- 110 Number of students in the first Tax Practicum class in 2006.
- 208 Number of students in the Tax Practicum class in 2019.
- 2,154 Number of Tax Practicum students since 2006.
- 250,163 Tax returns filed at Foundation Communities sites since 2006. UT students prepared 1/3 of these returns.
- $382 Total refunds (in millions) received by Foundation Communities tax filers in the Austin area.
- 11,500 Hours of service UT students dedicated to volunteer tax return preparation in 2018.
FROM THE CHAIR
MICHAEL CLEMENT

DEAR FELLOW ACCOUNTING LONGHORNS:

This semester marks an inflection point for the Department of Accounting. Professor Michael Granof retires after 47 years of service. Professor Granof joined the Department in 1972 from the University of Michigan’s doctoral accounting program. He began his career among a group of luminaries who created the Department’s strong legacy. Among his colleagues in that group are names that might bring back fond memories (or final exam nightmares) for some of you: C. Aubrey Smith, Charles Zlatkovich, Charlie Griffin, and Ray Sommerfeld.

For me personally, Michael has always been a great source of insight on a broad range of topics including accounting, the political climate, and athletics. Though we are sad to see Michael leave the Forty Acres, we are excited to see what retirement has in store for him (and we look forward to seeing him back on campus from time to time). And, fortunately, the Department of Accounting has a strong group of faculty and doctoral students who are ready to carry that reputation forward.

In terms of our reputation, in this edition we’re happy to showcase the leadership positions held by graduates of our doctoral program at universities across the globe. From the east coast to the west coast – and even Kuwait! – they are touching the lives of thousands of students and business professionals. As Lisa Koonce, our current PhD program director says (and I concur), “The research training our PhD students receive, which focuses on the rigorous analysis of difficult problems, prepares them well for many academic roles. Accounting departments and business schools benefit from the leadership of well-trained scholars. We’re proud that our PhD graduates are well represented in leadership positions at such a wide variety of universities and that they are using their training, in part, to support the mission of these institutions.”

In terms of the classroom, we will tell you about one of our most unique accounting classes, in which UT students give back to the community AND receive class credit by volunteering their time filing tax returns for low-income families. We share the story of a current integrated MPA student with a bright future, learn more about the MPA Internal Audit Certificate, and recognize student (and faculty) accomplishments and awards. And, Steve Smith, the Senior Director of the MPA program, tells us about his vision for the future of the program.

Finally, our strong reputation rests, in part, on your continual support. This edition spotlights a generous donor who graduated from our BBA accounting program (and whose name you have likely seen around campus), digs in to where your donation dollars go, and introduces you to two of our alumni who are making big strides in the Big 4.

Read on to discover the latest news from the Department of Accounting, and email accounting.times@mccombs.utexas.edu with your news tips. Your story might be featured in an upcoming edition! Hook ‘em!

THE BULLETIN

FACULTY AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2018, Donna Johnston-Blair received the Texas Ten award. Texas Exes nominate countless UT professors each year to receive this award; Donna was one of ten very special faculty honored with this designation.

Jeff Johanns, a former U.S. Assurance Risk Management Leader at PwC and faculty member since 2012, accepted the role of PCAOB Subcommittee Chair for the Professional Standards Committee of the Texas Society of CPAs for the 2018-2019 term.

STUDENT AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Ryan Hess was selected as a 2019 recipient of the Deloitte Foundation Doctoral Fellowship Award. Ryan is one of only ten doctoral students nationally to receive this fellowship in 2019.
TREVOR GRAY
THIRD-YEAR iMPA

Hundreds of students are admitted to Texas McCombs programs every year. Each of these students take a different path to the McCombs School of Business. Here we share the journey of one of our integrated MPA students who has a refreshing vision for his future.

Trevor Gray’s childhood was not particularly unique. Born in Philadelphia and raised in Houston, he enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, excelled in school, and loved playing sports.

When Trevor was in fifth grade, he noticed that it was getting harder to focus in class and on the court. After he failed his school eye exam, his mother took him to an optometrist. The doctor recommended glasses, but Trevor’s new prescription did not seem to help. For the next three years, he struggled to see the board and make a jump-shot, but he kept his frustrations to himself.

At age 13, Trevor visited a doctor who changed his life. This doctor noticed dark spots in his maculas and referred him to a specialist. After months of testing, the specialist diagnosed Trevor with Stargardt’s disease. This disease gradually affects central vision, color acuity and depth perception, and eventually causes vision loss. As disheartening as it was for Trevor to hear that he would eventually be legally blind, he was relieved to find out that he needed to be legally blind, he was relieved to finally have an answer to the battle he had been internally waging for three years.

With his new diagnosis, Trevor had more confidence and he began to advocate for the accommodations he needed to be successful. He became more comfortable in the classroom and learned to play basketball and football using his peripheral vision to defend against his opponents; he decided that Stargardt’s would not limit him.

In high school, Trevor discovered accounting. He took as many accounting classes as he could and taught himself financial fundamentals in his spare time. Even before graduating high school, he knew he wanted to attend the University of Texas at Austin and study accounting at its top-ranked program. When asked why he has continued to pursue accounting, his answer was simple: “It builds the foundation for any business.”

As a third-year iMPA student, Trevor relies on classmates, professors, and even his smartphone’s magnifying feature during class. He doesn’t mind asking for help when he needs it, and the accommodations he receives at UT not only help him to maintain his excellent grades, but also to take care of himself.

To say Trevor is staying busy is an understatement. From successfully completing his courses to volunteering his time at Consult Your Community to participating in MPA Consulting Club to co-founding Upside-Down Innovation, he has not let his disease slow his progress or narrow his interests. “Trevor’s willingness to be involved, to take some risks, and to maintain an open mind, especially with difficult material, demonstrates his leadership skills and his commitment to his education and the educational community at Texas McCombs,” said Patrick Badolato, Trevor’s Financial Accounting Concepts and Research instructor.

As for his future, this semester he is fueling his love of traveling by studying abroad in Prague (Trevor is pictured above in Spain) and is recruiting for a spring 2020 internship. After graduation in May 2021, his goal is to start his career in consulting, launch his own business, and add value to others’ lives.

Trevor advises students who are in circumstances similar to his to ask for help, communicate, be honest, and lean on their support systems.

Even with all of his achievements, Trevor is quick to thank others for their contributions to his triumphs. “I would not be where I am without my professors and classmates,” he said. Trevor exemplifies the kind of student the Department of Accounting and Texas McCombs are proud to call a Longhorn.
Michael Granof was born and raised in New York City and graduated from the Bronx High School of Science. He then studied economics at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York. Two years after receiving his BA, he graduated from Columbia University with an MBA concentrating in accounting.

After graduating from Columbia in 1965, Michael enlisted in the United States Coast Guard. He served one year of active duty and a total of six years in the reserves as an electrician's mate. During two of the six years he was in the reserves, he worked as a Senior Accountant at Coopers and Lybrand in New York City. It was in the Big Apple that Michael discovered that his thirst for knowledge hadn’t been quenched. He decided to return to school to earn his doctorate in accounting from the University of Michigan. “I thought that I would enjoy teaching and the academic life,” Michael said. “Returning to graduate school was most definitely a decision that I never for an instant regretted.”

The move to Ann Arbor would change his life forever on a personal dimension, as well. It was on Michigan’s campus that he met his wife, Dena, at a graduate school coffee hour. The two have now been married 47 years.

After four years of graduate study at Michigan, Michael earned his PhD in 1972. He chose to teach at the University of Texas at Austin for three reasons: UT’s Department of Accounting was a top-ranked program, their faculty were involved in what he thought was an ideal mix of teaching, research, and professional engagement, and – most notably he claims – it was a great institution from which he could leave to teach at any other university after a few years. So he and Dena made the move to the Forty Acres. Much to their surprise, they loved UT and Austin and never left.

In addition to being on the faculty at the McCombs School of Business, Michael holds a joint appointment at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Over the course of his career, he was a Fulbright Professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and taught at universities in New Zealand and Finland. He has also been recognized for his outstanding teaching, and in 1997 was inducted into the University’s Academy of Distinguished Teachers. In 2017 he received the AICPA’s Distinguished Achievement in Accounting Education Award.

Michael is currently completing the second of two five-year terms on both the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB). The former establishes accounting standards for state and local governments; the latter for the federal government at-large and each of its components. He is the only academic to have served on both boards. “My most satisfying professional accomplishment (other than teaching) has been my service on the GASB and the FASAB. I believe that I have actually had an influence on a couple of the pronouncements that they have issued,” Michael said.

Also active in academic organizations, Michael has been chairman of the Government and Not-for-Profit Section of the American Accounting Association, was on the editorial boards of government-oriented journals, and was a member of the U.S. Comptroller’s General Educator Advisory Council for over 15 years.

Michael’s service has not only been to external organizations. He was heavily involved in University affairs as chairman of the Faculty Council and chairman of the UT Co-op’s Board of Directors. In 2007 he received the UT Civitatis Award, given for “meritorious service to the University above and beyond the regular expectations of teaching, research, and writing.” As fellow professor and friend Steve Kachelmeier said, “To this day, if the entire faculty of the Department of Accounting were to walk over to the central administrative offices at the Main Tower, Michael Granof would be among the first to be recognized. He epitomizes the spirit of academic service that elevates collective contributions over individual incentives.”

In addition to his service and academic publications, Michael is the author of textbooks on both financial and governmental accounting and has written op-ed pieces for the New York Times and other newspapers. He has testified before the Texas State House and Senate Committees and has appeared on NPR, CNBC, and MSNBC.

After retiring, Michael has a few things he’d like to accomplish, including traveling, spending more time with his grandchildren (he has three!), and giving back to the community by serving on a nonprofit board. But even in retirement, he’ll still be back on campus to visit his Longhorn family. Michael added, ‘I’ve often joked that the epitaph on my tombstone should read ‘He hung around with smart people.’ Nothing epitomizes that more than my colleagues, friends, and students in McCombs, the LBJ School, and the University at-large.’
THROUGH THE LENS

RIGHT AT HOME AT TEXAS McCOMBS. The McCombs School of Business is fortunate to have three Accounting faculty in leadership roles. Here they are, leading the way at Texas McCombs.

TEXAS McCOMBS PhD GRADUATES
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

SADIK AL-BASSAM
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
Kuwait University
PhD conferred: 1980

RAQUEL ALEXANDER
DEAN, FREEMAN COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
Bucknell University
PhD conferred: 2001

SHARAD ASTHANA
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
UT San Antonio
PhD conferred: 1995

BEN AYERS
DEAN, TERRY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
University of Georgia
PhD conferred: 1996

MARY CHRIST
HEAD, DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING
University of Northern Iowa
PhD conferred: 1988

SID CREDLE
DEAN, GRADUATE FACULTY
Hampton University
PhD conferred: 1989

BILL DILLA
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
Iowa State University
PhD conferred: 1987

MARK HOLTZMAN
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
Seton Hall University
PhD conferred: 1997

ALERIA JACKSON
DEAN, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Albany State University
PhD conferred: 1997

CRAIG LEFANOWICZ
ACCOUNTING AREA COORDINATOR
University of Virginia
PhD conferred: 1990

HAIDAN LI
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
Santa Clara University
PhD conferred: 2002

ROGER MARTIN
ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR ACADEMIC INNOVATION
University of Virginia
PhD conferred: 1996

BIREN德拉 MISHRA
ASSOCIATE DEAN, GRADUATE PROGRAMS
University of California at Riverside
PhD conferred: 1996

CRAIG REECE
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT CHAIR
St. Thomas University
PhD conferred: 1979

MARC RUBIN
DEAN, FARMER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Miami University
PhD conferred: 1985

RICHARD SANSING
AREA CHAIR, ACCOUNTING
Dartmouth College
PhD conferred: 1990

IRA SOLOMON
DEAN, FREEMAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
Tulane University
PhD conferred: 1979

KRISTY TOWRY
VICE DEAN, FACULTY AND RESEARCH
Emory University
PhD conferred: 2002

Our roots run deep. For over 85 years, Texas McCombs Accounting PhD graduates have participated in shaping future business leaders. These influencers launched their educational careers in Austin and are now spread around the globe. The graduates listed below are currently sharing their knowledge and experience in positions of leadership.

SANDRA VERA-MUÑOZ
INCOMING DEPARTMENT CHAIR, ACCOUNTANCY DEPARTMENT
University of Notre Dame
PhD conferred: 1994

“The support and advocacy from UT’s Accounting Department administrators, professors, and fellow PhD students paved the way for a rewarding academic career and instilled in me the confidence to embrace new challenges as Accountancy Department Chair at Notre Dame. I’m truly honored to join my fellow UT PhD graduates in my new leadership role.”

This mailbox will receive messages until August 31, 2019.
WHERE DO YOUR DONATION DOLLARS GO?

Donors are a vital part of the Texas McCombs family. Your contributions allow the Department to fund numerous initiatives that are fundamental to our mission and help us to provide a world-class education, setting our students on a path to professional success. We appreciate your support of accounting education at UT.

26 accounting-specific scholarship endowments are available to Texas McCombs students.

26

SINCE

1998,

THESE

ENDOWMENTS

HAVE AWARDED

797 totaling $1,157,200!

RESEARCH PRODUCTIVITY

Worldwide Business School Rankings,

UT-Dallas tracks all business-faculty research publications in 24 business journals over a five-year period. When the 100 schools that are tracked are ranked based on their research contributions, Texas McCombs holds steady at No. 12 in the world in 2019!

The UT-Dallas ranking includes publications in these three accounting journals:

The Accounting Review
Journal of Accounting and Economics
Journal of Accounting Research

Our Department’s researchers rank No. 4 in publications in these journals over the past six years. (byuaccounting.net)

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

WILLIAM P. O’HARA

The Texas Exes recently honored Will O’Hara with the 2018 Distinguished Alumnus Award. The award ceremony took place at the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center on Friday, November 2, 2018. The following photo and story were published on texasesxes.org.

William P. O’Hara, Accounting BBA ’68 and Life Member, turned his leadership experience in the corporate world into an opportunity to serve future generations as both an educator and a philanthropist. O’Hara began his career with Sears, Roebuck & Co. In 1987, he joined the senior management of the Dean Witter Financial Services Group and stayed with the firm through its merger with Morgan Stanley. He retired in 2000 and decided to give back as an accounting lecturer at the McCombs School of Business for ten years, earning numerous teaching awards. He serves on the school’s Advisory Council and is chair of the University of Texas at Austin’s Audit Committee. In 2015, O’Hara was inducted into the McCombs School of Business Hall of Fame. He serves as treasurer and chair of the Finance Committee for the board of the Texas Exes. During 2017, he served as interim co-executive director of the Texas Exes.

Created in 1958, Distinguished Alumnus Awards are granted annually to alumni who have distinguished themselves professionally and through service to the University of Texas. The awards are given on a Friday evening before a home football game. The Texas Exes recognizes as many as six recipients each year.

Will and his wife, Beverly, have been married 53 years, and their family has continually supported the University of Texas at Austin.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT, BEVERLY AND WILL!

THE ACCOUNTING TIMES

DEPARTMENT CHAIR
Michael Clement

ASSISTANT CHAIR
Kristina Zvinakis

INTERFACE MANAGER
Candace Misko

EDITOR AND DESIGNER
Chelsey Stewart

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YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Student scholarships, faculty development, and curricular innovations are made possible through the generosity of our alumni and friends. Join us in our commitment to excellence in accounting education at the University of Texas at Austin.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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YEAR GRADUATED FROM UT ___________ PROGRAM ___________ (IF APPLICABLE)
AMOUNT OF GIFT $ ________________________

To make a donation, fill out this form and write a check payable to: The University of Texas at Austin (note “Department of Accounting” on the memo line)

Your contribution may be sent to: The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Department of Accounting, Office of the Chair 2110 Speedway, Stop B6400, Austin, TX 78712-1281

RETURN TO UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN ACCOUNTING TIMES
THE TAKEAWAY
WILL BRAEUTIGAM, DELOITTE
KATY McNEY, KPMG

HI, WILL!

WHAT DID YOU STUDY WHILE AT UT?
I actually started my studies in computer science and soon decided that was not the career path for me. I then transferred into the College of Liberal Arts and majored in Economics. After completing that degree, I continued my studies and obtained a Master in Professional Accounting degree from Texas McCombs.

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM ATTENDING THE UNIVERSITY?
There isn’t just one. The University of Texas has incredible students, professors, and facilities. And, of course, Austin is fantastic! I think my favorite memory is just being on campus, whether that was studying, attending class, grabbing food at the Union, or attending a football or basketball game.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE AT DELOITTE.
I am an Oil and Gas Audit Partner and Deloitte’s Oil and Gas IPO Readiness and Execution leader. My role involves daily interaction with clients while providing auditing, advising, and consulting services. I also serve as the lead recruiting partner at the University of Texas for the Houston Audit practice. When UT students join the firm, I help guide them along their path and watch them become fantastic professionals (whether at Deloitte or in another industry).

HOW DID THE MPA PROGRAM PREPARE YOU FOR PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS?
The high quality of the program’s curriculum, faculty, and graduate students are why so many companies focus their recruiting efforts here. First, the program’s core accounting curriculum and teachers are unrivaled by other universities (I might be a little biased as an alum). Second, group projects helped prepare me to work on large teams with common goals. And third, the technology and finance classes helped me immediately execute work and innovate on the job. Also, while I was a student, I took the opportunity to be a teaching assistant and this helped me become a better teacher and mentor within Deloitte’s apprenticeship model.

WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT AUSTIN?
Well, Austin is home to the University of Texas so that’s hard not to miss! I miss all the activities and events that go on in Austin. The city has outstanding food, an incredible night life, fantastic weather, and world-class concerts and festivals.

HEY, KATY!

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO STUDY ACCOUNTING?
I was originally a Finance/BHP major. However, I was a junior in the fall of 2008 when the stock market crashed, which highlighted the volatility of the finance industry. I realized that I could always work in finance if I had an accounting degree, but couldn't work in accounting long-term without a CPA license. I liked the flexibility this offered and I started the MPA program my senior year.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE ACCOUNTING CLASS AT TEXAS McCOMBS?
ACC 384: Research and Planning in Federal Taxes (Tax Research). Professor Zvinakis is an outstanding teacher. She does an excellent job at explaining challenging concepts and conveying the “why” underlying policy decisions that influence tax law. Being a tax professional, I use the skills I learned in her class on a daily basis.

WHERE HAS LIFE TAKEN YOU SINCE GRADUATING?
Around the world and back again! After working at KPMG Dallas for three years, I pursued my dream to work abroad. I went on a 1.5 year secondment to travel all over Asia, and I’m continuing to travel after returning to the U.S. I visited my 35th country last year: Iceland!

WHAT HAS WORKING AT KPMG FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS BEEN LIKE?
Not like I had expected. I thought I would be in and out in a few years. The thing I’ve enjoyed most about KPMG is its size and the breadth of work. There are always opportunities to take on a new project or role and reinvent what I am doing within my job. I’ve done an overseas rotation. I’ve also served on our national Tax Leadership Council, attended training sessions across the country, worked on a long-term project out of the NYC office, and taken on a variety of projects within the Dallas office. These opportunities keep my role interesting and challenging enough to captivate my attention year after year.

WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT UT?
All of my friends and classmates. I enjoyed being surrounded by so many amazing and talented individuals. I was (and still am) constantly inspired to do better because of them.

Meet MPA alums Will Braeutigam (Deloitte Audit Partner, iMPA ‘05) and Katy McNEY (KPMG Senior Manager, International Tax, iMPA ‘11). From the MPA program to the Big 4, Will and Katy are putting their knowledge of accounting to good use. Let’s learn more about their journeys from the GSB building to professional success.
TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELF, STEVE.
I’ve been happily married to Stuart (a Texas McCombs BBA grad) for 22 years and am a proud dad of two wonderful kids: Mackenzie, who is in her second year at Northwestern University, and Whit, who is graduating from Anderson High this year. I am a native North Carolinian and enjoy hiking and skiing every chance I get. My undergraduate accounting degree is from NC State, and I hold an MS in Accounting from the University of Virginia. I worked in public accounting with Arthur Andersen and PwC, as well as in industry with Dell.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO COME TO UT-AUSTIN?
Stuart and I originally moved to Austin 20 years ago when I entered the accounting PhD program. After one year in the program, I realized it wasn’t for me and went to work at Dell. Luckily, eight years later, Ross Jennings asked if I would teach a section of managerial accounting, and Brian MacDonald (the former treasurer at Dell) gave me the go-ahead. Three months later, I left Dell and have been teaching ever since. I took a leadership role in the MPA program three years ago.

WHAT’S YOUR VISION FOR THE MPA PROGRAM?
I have two main goals for the program: increasing student diversity and developing a stronger MPA community. We can achieve success in regards to diversity with a more proactive marketing effort. As for building community with our current students, I’d like to create more opportunities for students to engage outside of the classroom through activities like tailgates, dinners, trivia nights, and escape rooms. In terms of community for alumni, I’d like to have even more MPA alums stay engaged with the program in the role of mentors to current students and as a resource to help prospective students understand the benefits of an MPA degree.

WHAT MAKES THE MPA PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PROGRAMS?
There are four things that distinguish our program. It starts with our students. We are fortunate that such a densely talented group of students come to Texas McCombs and the MPA program. Second, we have a faculty that is dedicated to both research and teaching; they create a rigorous, relevant, and stimulating academic environment. Third, the MPA Program Office carefully works with each student to develop a degree plan and offers significant amounts of career counseling. Last but not least, we have great relationships with an engaging and diverse group of employers. This enables our MPA students to learn about the many employment options available to MPAs as they launch their careers.

WHAT CLASSES ARE YOU CURRENTLY TEACHING?
I teach ACC 311 (Fundamentals of Financial Accounting) and ACC 312 (Fundamentals of Managerial Accounting). I enjoy being many students’ first professor for a business course and work hard to spark an interest in accounting.

WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU?
I played racquetball competitively in high school and early on in college. I won two state junior championships and competed at a national level. Some of my longest and deepest friendships began through racquetball. I tried something new this semester and played doubles intramurals with current MPA student Andrew Bramlett. I don’t move quite as quickly as I once did, but we had a blast! Since Andrew is graduating this year, I’ll be looking for a new partner next year.