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Accounting recruiters look to OU's SBA for successful employees

With an increased focus on the field of accounting – an industry that's hot in good or bad economic times – accounting firm recruiters continue to look to Oakland University's **School of Business Administration** as a key school for potential hires.

Graduation from an Oakland program focused on a strong knowledge of accounting standards, the ability to analyze business transactions and the ability to identify risks within an organization and recommend controls, and more, are key to workplace effectiveness. This, combined with Oakland University's accounting accreditation from the AACSB means OU's accounting graduates are prepared to make meaningful contributions in the workplace when they walk in the door.

Pam Strohmeier, director, Campus Recruitment, for Rehmann, a large Midwest CPA and business-consulting firm, says in her 15 years as a recruiter, "OU is consistently a very important school to recruit accounting students."

"When I interview (at OU), I know I am speaking to bright students who are focused on starting their careers in public accounting. They know the value of their education, hold critical thinking skills, can adapt to change, and know how to build relationships with others, which are necessary skills for success," she says.

For Mike Dingwall (SBA '92), senior manager for recruiting at KPMG, OU students have the advantage of smaller class sizes and personal contact with instructors.

"When I started here, there was one person from OU, now we have about seven working in the Detroit office," says Dingwall, who represents the global accounting firm at many recruiting events on campus.

In few other majors are students in the unique position accounting majors are – the majority have jobs waiting for them upon graduation. Internships in an industry that's still hiring despite tough economic times are a significant reason for this, according to Brenda Paine, OU Career Services.

When students like senior Maher Faik participate in paid internships, they learn about public accounting and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills to potential employers. "They say each firm has its own personality," says Faik, an OU Accounting Club president who completed an internship with Ernst & Young. "For me Ernst & Young is a good fit. I was offered a job the last day of my internship." Faik starts his job in September.

Faik says opportunities such as job fairs, one-on-one interviews, workshops and meetings with OASIS and OU accounting organizations including Beta Alpha Psi and NABA, were key to his educational success.

"I stress to students that they should attend OASIS/NABA/BAP events which are instrumental in getting to know the firms, and show that you are an active participants."

Students can access career services information via the Oakland Web site, and all services – from job fairs, on-campus interviews, online resume posting and student-alumni workshops – are free for students.

"Our role is to help students prepare for a successful career," says Paine, who estimates that nearly 90 percent of accounting undergraduates have jobs upon graduation.

In her 30 years in public accounting, Strohmeier has seen the profession change, and notes that today's accounting student has a wealth of opportunities. "It is an exciting profession where people continue to learn and grow and can make a difference in our world today."

And despite the sagging economy, Dingwall says last year was one of KPMG's biggest ever. "There are new regulations and rules that companies have to follow and that drives up our auditing hours and services we provide," he says. "In bankruptcy, you need professional service advisers even more."

By Alice Rhein, a freelance writer from Huntington Woods

SUMMARY

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