

Breaking the Ice: Career Development Activities for Accounting Students

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ABSTRACT

In *Issues Statement No. 4, Improving the Early Employment Experience of Accountants*, the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) recommended that students should

- Seek opportunities to obtain first-hand knowledge of the business world and practice environment.
- Obtain information about career opportunities and the job search.

Accounting departments can help students undertake these objectives by facilitating their interaction with accounting professionals. Indeed, we incorporated similar phrasing in objectives for our Accounting Program Mission and Assessment Plan, namely:

- To prepare graduates of the Program for their first position in the field of accounting.
- To promote and enhance employment opportunities for graduates of the Program.

The objective of this paper is to describe the development of two co-curricular career development activities, mock interviews and speed networking, with the goal of enhancing our students' interview skills and networking abilities, thus facilitating their employment opportunities. Indeed, obtaining such a competitive advantage is more important than in past years, given the most recent supply and demand survey results published by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) that indicate the supply of accounting graduates is increasing, but demand for accounting recruits is flat or decreasing.

Results indicate that both activities are successful, as a high proportion of students agree/strongly agree that the activities meet their objectives, and virtually all of the students agree/strongly agree that the activities are a worthwhile use of their time.