



Training Tomorrow's Leaders Today

Student members are a vital asset to IMA® because they will be leading the organization and businesses in the future. We need to make sure they have all the skills and knowledge to do that.

Many of us can probably recall our first IMA meeting: where we were, when it was, maybe even the people we met. My introduction to IMA was as a student: My father, an active and long-time member, more than gently encouraged me to attend a chapter meeting in the city where I was completing my undergraduate degree. I joined IMA soon afterwards, and I've proudly been a member ever since.

Recently, I got to reexperience the energy and enthusiasm of IMA student membership at the 12th Annual Student Leadership Conference, which was held in Cincinnati in mid-November. Although I'm a professional educator and interact frequently with students, it was a special privilege to attend the Conference as IMA Chair and to address the students about the role IMA can play in shaping their future careers.

The Conference was a resounding success, attended by a record-shattering nearly 500 students and their advisors. Speakers at the event covered some of the most

popular topics in the profession today, many of which students don't often hear about in their classroom studies: International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), forensic accounting, and ethics, plus useful information on job-search techniques, business etiquette, leadership (including IMA's Leadership Academy), and the value of the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification.

The Student Leadership Conference is just one way that IMA supports its student members. We also sponsor many annual scholarships, awards, and competitions. Scholarships, including those of the IMA Memorial Education Fund and the Stuart Cameron McLeod Society's Memorial Fund, offer generous financial assistance to those pursuing management accounting studies and who have demonstrated leadership abilities. Awards and competitions, such as our National Student Case Competition and our Student Manuscript Award, provide an opportunity for students to exercise skills they are learning in school and apply them to a real-world situation.

In addition, the IMA Research Foundation offers a research grant program for doctoral students who are pursuing research in account-

ing. IMA also sponsors an annual IMA Doctoral Colloquium, in collaboration with the American Accounting Association (AAA), for accounting doctoral students.

The best way for students to learn about these and other benefits of IMA membership is through an IMA student chapter. IMA currently supports more than 70 student chapters on college campuses across the United States, and that number continues to increase. These chapters not only provide excellent networking opportunities, but they also help students acquire and hone skills in the areas of leadership and public speaking. Student chapters also are eligible to participate in annual competitions, including the Clark Johnson Achievement Award and the Award of Excellence (information about these and other student competitions and awards is available on the IMA website at www.imanet.org/ima_student_programs/scholarships_and_grant_programs.aspx).

Also, we are gradually expanding our student member activities beyond the U.S. For example, we recently established our first non-U.S. student chapter at KFUPM University in Saudi Arabia. And

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last fall, an astonishing 1,600 students participated in the 2nd Annual China Student Case Competition, one of IMA's most popular student competitions. The record number of participating students from the People's Republic of China hailed from 26 universities. Organized into 370 teams, the students underwent a rigorous selection process that lasted from September through November 2010, with the winning team being announced in late November. The dedication and commitment of our international students is truly inspiring and encouraging, and we will continue our outreach to them.

Of course, IMA's investment in student members is really an investment in our future: They are the future leaders of the profession and the future leaders of this organization (as my own case attests). I hope all members will join me in reaching out to this portion of our membership and taking the time—be it as a mentor, an employer, or simply a colleague—to support the younger generation. I can almost guarantee it will make you feel both forever young and eternally old at the same time.

As always, I welcome your thoughts on this or any other topic. Please share them with me at bmcguire@imanet.org. **SF**