

**Message from the Chair**  
By John C. Macaulay, CMA



# Supporting Student Leadership

One of the best ways students can understand the concepts they learn in class is by interacting with practitioners in outside settings.

One of the benefits of being a member of this great organization is the opportunity to interact with and learn from other members at different stages in their professional careers. Over the years, I've met well-established leaders in the fields of industry, government, and education. I've also had the privilege of meeting those at the beginning of their journey—our student members.

As I hope you're aware, IMA® offers a variety of benefits to student members whether they are just beginning their college studies or are working on postgraduate degrees. Every year our association provides scholarships, grants, publishing opportunities, and leadership training to hundreds of student members through our globally sponsored programs, chapters and councils, groups such as the Stuart Cameron McLeod Society (SCMS), and IMA student chapters, which connect campus activity to our professional/practitioner chapter and council network. And as one of the only accounting organizations that lets you join as a student and maintain

your membership throughout your career, IMA provides unparalleled networking opportunities.

The centerpiece of IMA's networking opportunities for students is the Annual Student Leadership Conference. Now in its 13th year, the Conference gives students from across the United States the opportunity to learn from veteran practitioners about the critical role of accountants and financial professionals. This year's Conference, which will be held in San Antonio, Texas, in early November, promises to deliver another outstanding slate of speakers, including keynotes by leaders from Dell, Inc.; NatureSweet Tomatoes; and Robert Half International. Of course, there will also be concurrent sessions from other industry and IMA leaders, as well as plenty of time for networking and fun.

As a speaker at last year's Student Leadership Conference in Cincinnati, I can attest to the value of this event. The students who attended possessed a passion to succeed. They cared about their careers and were eager to learn about topics such as ethics, job search techniques, the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification, and leadership development. I was

particularly impressed by the confidence and enthusiasm of these students: Most walked up to me and introduced themselves, something I would have found intimidating at their age. Judging from the students I met (as well as ones I've spoken to at other IMA-sponsored events), our future is in good hands.

And that's what supporting IMA's efforts on behalf of students is: support for developing the young leaders of our profession and the next generation of management accountants. How can IMA members do that? First, consider being a mentor to a student, who would no doubt benefit from guidance from a seasoned professional about what it's like working in the "real world." Second, consider offering internships to students in your area so that they can gain experience in applying what they learn in the classroom to the world outside their campus. Third, consider providing service to a local IMA student chapter in your area either as an event volunteer or as a speaker at one of their gatherings.

Finally, through a new campaign titled IMA Annual Giving, members can support students (and particularly the IMA Student

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## Perspectives

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Leadership Conference) by making a financial contribution to help subsidize the cost of the Conference or to drive scholarship opportunities for students. During the past two years, the IMA Global Board of Directors has engaged in a development campaign to raise funds for this purpose. Thus far, more than 80% of the Board members have participated, and that number continues to grow. If you are interested in supporting students this way, visit [www.imanet.org/IMAGiving](http://www.imanet.org/IMAGiving) to learn more.

I hope you'll consider ways that you can provide support to our student members—those who need leadership skills, mentoring, and education to succeed as professionals, scholars, and even accounting professors. Our future really does belong to them.

Please share your thoughts with me on this or any other subject at [jmacaulay@imanet.org](mailto:jmacaulay@imanet.org). **SF**