

My IMA Opportunities

By Katy Hone



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Spartanburg, S.C., was still new to me when I decided to go back to school to study accounting. I studied hard, but I knew that I needed more than good grades to get my dream accounting job. I didn't know anyone in the accounting field in Spartanburg, so I made it a priority to connect with individuals in the community who held certifications I was interested in pursuing. This led me to Denny Boll, CMA, and the rest—as they say—is history.

I attended my first IMA® meeting as a guest of Denny's in August 2013 and enjoyed everything about it—having lunch at the Piedmont Club and mingling with chapter members. I enjoyed it so much that I went back for the next month's meeting and then officially joined IMA as a student member in October. I recall the warm welcome I received after becoming a member. The feeling of being a part of something worthwhile and significant was instantaneous.

Since joining, I've had so many wonderful opportunities, including being one of two student members to receive a scholarship to the Student Leadership Conference last year. I still haven't stopped talking about how great the experience was. From Ken Bansemer's opening session speech to learning about the power of social media, forensic accounting, and career readiness, I learned more than I had ever hoped to. I also got to meet some incredible students and industry professionals.

Another opportunity presented itself after the Conference. The Spartanburg Area

Chapter was in the process of creating a new student chapter and encouraged me to take on a leadership position, so I ran for and was elected president of the Spartanburg Student Chapter in December. Since taking on this role, I've become a more effective communicator and have gained a newfound confidence in myself as a leader.

To add to the list of wonderful opportunities IMA has provided, I was invited to speak about my experience at the Student Leadership Conference at one of the Spartanburg Area Chapter's lunch meetings. It allowed me to share some of my goals with fellow members, among other things. Specifically, I shared my desire to achieve the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification by August 2014. I took Part 1 of the exam in January and recently found out that I passed. I'm looking forward to Part 2 in June. The truly amazing part is that, in an effort to encourage and promote the CMA, the Spartanburg Area Chapter is reimbursing a portion of the cost of each part for those who pass.

So far, my IMA life has been one of adventure, discovery, growth, and development. I don't know where I'd be today if it weren't for IMA. Thanks to the constant support, encouragement, and opportunities I've received, I have grown into a professional in such a short amount of time. I went to that first meeting looking for a few new contacts, but what I ended up with was something much more profound and lasting—my network. **SF**