

By Jeffrey C. Thomson, CMA, CAE



# Fulfilling the Needs of a Thriving Profession

From students to CFOs, IMA® is committed to helping management accountants and financial professionals navigate this critical time of role expansion and career evolution.

## Dear IMA members,

Technology, more sophisticated consumers, turbulent business conditions, and globalization have broadened the management accounting profession and the roles within it. The result? We have greater influence across the company value chain. The management accountant is breaking free of the bean counter persona and becoming more of a trusted advisor who can interpret the numbers to influence corporate strategy. These advisory and leadership roles now include regularly interfacing with internal auditors, external auditors, information technology professionals, and others in helping to create and protect sustainable value.

## The Profession Is Thriving

This past year, accounting was ranked third on the *U.S. News & World Report* “Best Business Jobs” list. In addition, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the number of accountants and auditors to grow 13% from 2012 to 2022, and a recent Manpower

study found that accounting and finance staff is one of the top 10 hardest jobs to fill.

As a result of these and other studies, various events are also concentrating on helping students and young professionals prepare to enter the workforce with as much knowledge about the accounting and finance functions as possible. For example, the more than 300 attendees at

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Beta Alpha Psi’s (BAP) Atlantic Coast Regional Meeting March 21-22 in Hartford, Conn., were eager to hear this information during my keynote speech, “Leading at the Crossroads,” which was very applicable. Former IMA Chair Carl Smith, BAP advisor and an associate professor of accounting at the University of Hartford, helped organize this prestigious event with IMA’s Hartford Chapter and the BAP

chapter at the University of Connecticut. Events like these—which involve business updates, education, networking, and testing different skills—will help mold the current and next generations of management accountants into successful business partners.

## IMA Is Helping

Continuing education, mentoring, volunteerism, and the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) certification are only a few areas of expertise where IMA can help professionals at all levels develop leadership and business skills. IMA’s webinar series and Leadership Academy offer relevant topics as well as a mentor program to help members continue along their career path. IMA’s Student Case Competition provides real-world examples of accounting problems and general skills that student participants will use to solve them, such as presentation skills, teamwork, leadership, networking, and team building. Volunteering at the local or regional level can enhance both personal and professional development as members experiment with leadership and com-

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munications skills in a safe environment. With more than 100 student chapters and more than 200 professional chapters, there are multiple opportunities for everyone to get involved!

It's an exciting time to be a management accountant. But all stakeholders have an obligation to step up and raise the competency and influence of the profession to enrich careers, organizations, and the public interest. We at IMA are up to this critical challenge! **SF**

Sincerely,

Jeffrey C. Thomson, CMA, CAE

*President and CEO*

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