

FUTURE PROFESSIONALS, IN THEIR OWN WORDS

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Exploring New Directions in Accounting Education

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Kurtland Lloyd Sullivan Nicolais School of Business, Wagner College

Why did you go into accounting?

When I started at Wagner College, I knew that I wanted to attend law school. Law school does not require any specific major, so when I was contemplating my future, I realized it was wise to find a field that would enable me to have a viable career on its own, apart from law. Accounting was the obvious choice, as I have always excelled in math and enjoyed it. Accounting is also a field that would allow me the opportunity to receive a professional license (i.e., CPA). After I took my



first accounting class during my sophomore year, I was so interested in learning more about the field, I knew that accounting was the right choice for me. I have since come to realize that it is not only enjoyable, but can also be seamlessly incorporated into my career.

Who were your influencers?

Many people have influenced and enabled me to get to this point. My mother and grandmother have always been there for me and support me in all that I do. They are voices of reason, but also allow me to dream big.

Dr. Walter Kaelber was the professor who made me consider a major in business administration. At the time, I was leaning toward majoring in political science or English, but Dr. Kaelber noticed something in me that he referred to as "business acumen." I find this ironic, considering Dr. Kaelber is not a professor for the business school, but for the philosophy and religious studies department.

When I finally made the decision to pursue business administration, Dr. Margaret Horan, the director of accounting and my academic advisor, guided me through the last four years at Wagner. We also coauthored a paper that we presented at the Business and Applied Sciences Academy of North America conference this past June.

What do you think about accounting as a profession?

I think accounting is a terrific profession. In an economy-driven world, it is such an advantage to function at and in a commerce-centric capacity.

Which areas of accounting are you interested in?

I have always been interested in tax and estate planning. The way these fields require navigating the various laws and regulations to meet clients' needs is intriguing.

While AI, RPA, and other technological advances are aimed at making professionals' jobs easier, I believe that they have the potential to displace more jobs than they assist.

Do AI, RPA, and other technology advances make you concerned about the security of your career?

AI, RPA, and other technological advances definitely concern me. While these advances are aimed at making professionals' jobs easier, I believe that they have the potential to displace more jobs than they assist.

Where do you want to go after graduation, and why?

After graduation, I plan on completing the necessary requirements for CPA licensure. I also plan to attend law school.

Where do you see yourself in 5, 10, or 20 years?

In 5 years, I see myself as a tax attorney. In 10 years, I see myself as an established professional in my field. In 20 years, I hope to become a professor and teach accounting and business law-related courses. I would like this opportunity later in my career so that I can give back and provide the same guidance and opportunities that I was afforded during my college career. □

Kurtland Lloyd Sullivan is a graduate assistant at the Nicolais School of Business at Wagner College, having completed his undergraduate degree at Wagner in 2018. He is working toward a master's of science in accounting and a master's of business administration in accounting. After graduating, he plans on sitting for the CPA exam. After obtaining his license, he intends to go to law school and pursue a career in tax law.