



Y-CPA BUZZ!



2011 AICPA Leadership Academy Building Tomorrow's Leaders

By Darryl Nitta, CPA



Former AICPA Chair, Ernest Almonte, established the AICPA Leadership Academy ("Academy") in 2009. The Academy aims to inspire, mentor, and empower young CPAs to become tomorrow's leaders in our

profession through a series of advanced leadership trainings facilitated by incredible speakers and numerous networking opportunities.

The 2010 Academy gathered on the Duke University campus in Durham, North Carolina where 30 young CPAs from across the country joined together for four days of learning.

My Academy Experience

Day 1 (optional half-day): Began with a one-on-one media interview, followed by a social media awareness discussion, and concluded with a welcome dinner / networking function.

Day 2: After sleeping off any lingering effects of jetlag, we convened for a session focused on empowering ourselves to realize our full potential using the Mind to Matter leadership learning module. To complement the learning materials, our pre-work included deep personal and professional reflection to better understand our own strengths and opportunities. Prior to dinner, we explored the amazing Duke University campus which included a trip inside the famous Cameron Indoor Stadium. The night concluded with a special reception dinner hosted by Barry Melancon, AICPA President & CEO, and Robert Harris, AICPA 2009-2010 Chairman, emphasizing the importance of achieving work-life balance and giving back to the community.

Day 3: We shifted our focus to the state of the CPA profession in the morning.

Mr. Melancon spoke about top issues facing our profession while Mr. Harris spoke about the challenges as Chairman. In the afternoon we each presented our personal leadership challenge. In smaller groups of five, we analyzed each challenge, gave unbiased feedback, and created an action plan to help resolve each challenge. We were rewarded that night at the Durham Museum of Life and Science with an authentic barbeque, live music, and outdoor lawn games.

Day 4 (half-day): Together with a handful of 2009 Academy alumni, we took an honest look at the CPA profession today. We created a priority list, implementation plans, and vowed to stay connected with other Academy Alumni to achieve our goals. The Academy concluded with closing remarks, awards, and an impromptu tour of the AICPA headquarters.

Once-in-a-lifetime Opportunity

The Academy is truly the succession plan for the CPA profession. Nurturing the younger generation of passionate leaders to understand the legacy of the profession and adapt to an ever changing business environment is the key to our future success. I am honored and forever grateful to the AICPA, HSCPA, and Accuity LLP for providing me with this once-in-a-lifetime learning opportunity.

The Academy planning team did a wonderful job keeping us engaged the entire week. In fact, being self-diagnosed with having borderline narcolepsy, I was amazed at my continuous level of attentiveness absorbing all the information! I was mentally exhausted when the week ended and did not even open my work computer.

One of my favorite "takeaways" from the Academy was the impact of positive thinking.

The idea is that a positive attitude or outlook will lead to a better life. Translate that into a business setting and a positive work environment will lead to efficient production. We have recently applied this philosophy to our weekly scheduling meetings where each team member shares a "positive" experience from the past week before the meeting begins.

Since participating in the Academy, the opportunities to get involved at the national level have been plentiful. I have helped judge an AICPA contest on sustainability. I am part of the Young CPA Network. And most importantly, I am one of 12 members of The Young CPA Leadership Academy Alumni Committee, where I am the lead on our webcast taskforce and will be assisting with the planning the 2011 Leadership Academy.

Go For It!

As part of the HSCPA's Y-CPA Squad, I am excited to continue working with dedicated, hard working peers to grow our local network of young CPAs. It is very reassuring that our goals of promoting the profession to students, community service, and increasing young CPA involvement are aligned with those at the national level.

The Academy was much more than I expected. It is by far the best learning experience I have ever had! The 2011 Leadership Academy is scheduled for October 4-6 in Durham, North Carolina. If you are interested in participating in this prestigious program, the application deadline is June 1, 2011 and information may be found at: <http://www.aicpa.org/InterestAreas/YoungCPANetwork/CPEAndEvents/Pages/2011AICPALeadershipAcademy.aspx>

¹ Certified Public Accountants under 36 years old