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ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

Program Aims to Increase and Diversify Talented Accounting Students

The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and NAF today announced the launch of a high school program aimed at increasing and diversifying the pipeline of talented students who enter the accounting profession. The announcement was made at ...

Jul. 18, 2016

The [American Institute of CPAs](#) (AICPA) and NAF today announced the launch of a high school program aimed at increasing and diversifying the pipeline of talented students who enter the accounting profession. The announcement was made at NAF Next 2016, NAF's annual professional development conference that brings together education, business, and community leaders to address some of the biggest challenges facing education and the economy, located this year in Orlando, Florida.

The AICPA/NAF Recognition Program will launch nationwide this fall in 209 Academies of Finance in 117 school districts across 32 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The program utilizes multiple learning platforms to engage NAF Academy of Finance high school students early in their career decision-making process and teaches them about the long-term career opportunities that are available to Certified Public Accountants. During the 2015-2016 school year, a pilot version of the program educated students in Florida, Maryland, New York and North Carolina.

The nationwide recognition program will teach students technical accounting and finance skills, as well as soft skills – such as leadership, communication and time management – that will increase their chances for success and prepare them to pursue an accounting degree at a post-secondary institution.

“We’ve been extremely encouraged by the results thus far from the AICPA/NAF Recognition Program and are excited to expand our work with NAF to a nationwide model this school year,” said Kim Drumgo, AICPA director of Diversity and Inclusion and vice chair of the National Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. “We’ve seen repeatedly that early exposure to accounting courses and information about the opportunities that being a CPA offers increases the likelihood that students decide to enter the accounting profession. This program is a way to increase the diversity in the profession by drawing from the widest pool of talented students as possible.”

The [U.S. census projects](#) that minorities will comprise the majority of the population in the U.S. by 2045. The AICPA/NAF Recognition Program aims to address shifts in entrepreneurial capital amidst changing demographics by broadening the pipeline of talent and creating a more diverse and inclusive accounting profession.

NAF President JD Hoye, said, “We are honored to stand here today, alongside AICPA, and be able to offer more students the opportunity to truly understand the wide variety of career paths an accounting focused financial education can lead them to. This is AICPA’s first-ever endorsement of an educational approach that certifies students as ready to pursue careers as CPAs. This is a true testament to the effectiveness of NAF’s educational design and the importance of the education and business communities coming together. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that all Academy of Finance students are college, career, and future ready.”

NAF’s Academy of Finance connects high school students with the world of financial services, offering a curriculum that covers entrepreneurship, banking and credit, financial planning, international finance, securities, insurance, accounting, and economics, among other topics. Today, the Academies of Finance serve more than 24,000 students annually, 63% of whom are from low- to moderate-income families (determined by eligibility for free and reduced price lunch.)

The year-long program is intensive. To be recognized by the AICPA/NAF program, students must pass at least two finance or accounting courses, graduate high school and participate in a paid internship facilitated by NAF. They also must complete an

online enrichment program and register as a student affiliate member on AICPA's [Start Here, Go Places. website.](#)

In addition, students complete AICPA surveys before and after the program to assess their perceptions of the accounting profession and their likelihood to take future accounting courses. AICPA and NAF will use this feedback to continue to tailor the program to meet students' needs and ensure the goal of increasing the pipeline of skilled and diverse talent entering the accounting profession.

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