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Patrick Lee, CPA, MST

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read?

I am always on finance.yahoo.com if you're ever passing by my office. I'm sort of an equities market junkie and I love reading about companies and what decisions they are making. Although I'm in the academic profession, I don't read too much academic journals as I read a lot of articles of what companies are doing now. When I pull up Yahoo.com, it is now full of finance.yahoo.com stories because I'm always on that section of the website reading stories.

You'll also see me reading off Southwest Airlines' Community Blog (Formally Nuts' About Southwest Blog). My students will tell you that I know more about Southwest Airlines and their operations than a Southwest Airlines employee. I really get a lot out of Southwest Blog in terms of how companies operates because Southwest is so candid about their business and how they've become the domestic leader in airline travel. They are also really good at putting information out quickly when an incident occurs in their business in order to avoid speculations and rumors to form and that's really cool to read and see happen.

In what ways have you contributed to your firm/company to make it better?

The increased usage of technology in our world today has not only made our jobs easier, but it has allowed us to cater to our student's learning preferences better. At Southwestern College, it has been my goal to increase the accessibility to the accounting program by way of finding new ways to help students learn and not feel lost when they step into my classroom. One of the ways I have contributed to the success of our program and the increased enrollment in our accounting program is the development of online lectures and video teaching. Although not new technology, video teaching has allowed my students to go back and redevelop the skills they learned in the classroom without feeling lost or confused by the content being provided to them. This has allowed for better retention of material, but also

my students know accounting, not memorized it. It is apparent that it is working

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As a college professor, I believe it isn't enough for me to just prep for my classes, teach my classes, and then head home for the day. I always tell my students that I am truly a business professional who happens to teach. Therefore, it is so important for me to stay connected to the profession as a professional rather than just be an educator. One of the ways I stay connected to the accounting profession is being very active in my state CPA society. I try to stay very active in the Kansas Society of CPAs during the academic year. A few of the ways that I stay active is by taking students to conference & workshops and sitting on steering committees to help CPAs in the state of Kansas succeed in their jobs of protecting the public's interest. Recently I was nominated to join the Board of Directors of the Kansas Society of CPAs which will help further my participation in improving the accounting profession.

In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?

One of the ways I participate in my local community is through a student organization I advise and lead called Enactus. Enactus is an international organization whose goals is to enable progress through entrepreneurial action through partnerships between our local Enactus organization and the community. I often use Enactus as a vehicle to helping in my local community because it not only allows me to participate in my local community, but also gives my students an opportunity to participate as well. In the past year, through a partnership with our local Ford Dealership, we were able to secure \$8,000 towards our local community food bank, which for a community of 12,000 people, \$8,000 is a lot of money that goes to a great cause.

What changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near future (3-5 years)?

The biggest change in the next 3 to 5 years that I see in the accounting profession is

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This has a trickle down affect to the profession in that it means less qualified professionals entering the job market and obviously less students entering the accounting workforce because programs aren't able to accommodate more students to a faculty restricted program. We are already seeing this happening now with public accounting (especially in the Midwest) and the need for more entry level staff members and entry level managers (such as engagement seniors).

The requirement of needing terminally degreed professors will need to change in order to be nimble in the greater aspect of the accounting profession or we're going to need to graduate more doctoral level students. We're seeing colleges come up with new positions such as clinical assistant professor of accounting and clinical lecturer as a way to bridge the need for more professors in the accounting program who may not be terminally degreed (many institutions have instituted a clinical position as a way to avoid having a terminally degreed professor as a clinical professor can have a masters with experience).

How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?

My goal in my own profession is to provide the accounting industry with the best accounting professionals possible. This goes from the way they learn the basics in accounting to critically thinking about what is going on in their position and the profession around them. In addition, I hope to continue my work in providing accounting to a broad audience spectrum through my online lectures on YouTube which has seen a lot of traction from those individuals taking the CPA exam and needing to brush up on some very specific and complex topics.

I also see my involvement in the profession through the Kansas Society of CPAs as an important one in helping shape the future of the accounting profession at a local level, but opening up that experience to professional speaking engagements and

consulting opportunities that allow me to shape how we engage individuals within

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the CPA Practice Advisor with the 40 under 40 Accounting Professionals who are helping lead the profession in the future. Although I'm very proud of these accomplishments and opportunities, it came through the sum total of all of the hard work I've been doing in my career and in my office on a daily basis to help advance the knowledge of my students in their pursuits of being a great accounting professional.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped change your life.

One my important mentors in my life has been one of my academic advisors at the University of La Verne, Rita Thakur. Dr. Thakur was a visionary when it came to knowing where I should go in my professional career. I remember being in her office my senior year and her nudging me to attend a doctoral program because she knew I was great at teaching. However, my out of college plans included joining the public accounting firm of Deloitte and Touche, LLP as an auditor. Along the way, I've made it back to the academic profession (without a doctoral degree, but I've made it back to academia). Dr. Thakur's way of telling people what they're good at and not only accepting where they want to go, but also supporting them even if it isn't where she sees them going is a powerful skill. What I also love about Dr. Thakur is the way she has treated her students over the course of her career as a professor. It was that experience that I've translated into my own career as I mentor students in my program. Still have once off conversations about me getting my doctoral degree and how much impact I'm having with our profession.

[Learn more about this year's 40 Under 40 Honorees.](#)

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