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with Bentley University and AICPA

Feb. 26, 2020



The [Massachusetts Society of CPAs](#) (MSCPA) has joined with Bentley University and the American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) to create a new way to educate accounting firm leaders in Massachusetts on how to boost diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The innovative series of training sessions will focus on bridging gaps in recruiting, retaining and advancing employees from underrepresented communities within the accounting profession. The program, called Bridging the Gap: A Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Series, started in January and runs through 2020.

The MSCPA is leading the way as the first state accounting society to establish such a series on diversity.

The extensive training is a manifestation of an urgent priority among MSCPA members: to help make the profession's workforce reflective of the diverse communities it serves. Data from the AICPA shows that less than one-third of employees at accounting firms are non-white, a statistic the MSCPA is working to change.

“The training is about taking the good intentions around diversity to the next level

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MSCPA was the first state accounting society to sign the pledge. Since then, with the support of the AICPA, several other CPA state societies have joined the initiative.

Bentley will provide four half-day workshops on: unconscious bias for inclusive workplaces; bridging differences with courageous conversations; the power of mentorship, sponsorship and networks; and communicating diversity and inclusion strategies to various stakeholder groups. The classes are designed to help members take diversity hiring and retention to the next level by educating them on strategies they can implement in their respective firms.

Cecilia Frerotte, principal of Wolf & Company, P.C. and co-leader of the firm's diversity & inclusion initiative, attended the first training on unconscious bias.

“I had an idea of what ‘unconscious bias’ meant, but had never attended a formal training. One thing that this session really highlighted for me was how people naturally gravitate toward others that are of common backgrounds or identities, and as a result, how proactive you must be to be truly inclusive,” said Frerotte. “Wolf understands that we need to look at and create systems and processes to make diversity and inclusion an ingrained part of our culture and recruiting practice, as well as relying on each individual to make an effort. We look forward to continuing these trainings with the MSCPA and bringing what we learn back to the firm.”

Managing partners, human resource executives, firm leaders and staff make up the group of 40 individuals attending the leadership series. Participating firms include:

- AAFCPAs
- ALL CPAs
- blumshapiro
- Burkhart Pizzanelli, PC
- Edelstein & Company, LLP

- KPMG, LLP

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developed the curriculum especially for the MSCPA.

“We are delighted to partner with the MSCPA to build more diverse, inclusive and equitable organizations,” said Deborah Pine, executive director of the Gloria Cordes Larson Center for Women and Business & Bentley University Executive Education. “They are leading the way for their members with resources and vital information. We, at the Center for Women and Business, look forward to delivering workshops and programming to help the MSCPA drive real change, and we applaud the important work they are undertaking to address these issues for its members and the greater community.”

This leadership series is a one-year pilot program sponsored by the MSCPA and AICPA and is part of the Society’s ongoing advocacy efforts to [advance the profession](#) and [grow the accounting pipeline](#).

Accounting

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