

Davidson writes on being a profession shaper

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Sharon M. Davidson, C.P.A., C.M.A., associate professor of accountancy at Alfred University, has written an article on how to improve accountancy education entitled "Be a Profession Shaper: Collaborate with an Educator." Rebuilding the public confidence in the accounting profession is critical, says Davidson. The typical approach to accounting restoration has been to begin with industry leaders and filter down to the everyday practitioner, but Davidson believes the wrong end of the process has been the focus. The accountant education process is where restoration needs to start, she says. Accounting practitioners who collaborate with educators can help improve the quality of accounting education, for who knows better than accounting practitioners what capabilities these future C.P.A.s need? she asks. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has more than 40 colleges and universities with accounting programs, and more than 9,000 members of the Massachusetts Society of C.P.A.s. Significant collaboration between these two groups could produce more capable accounting graduates, who will be better prepared for their professional responsibilities, Davidson maintains. The accounting education process of the past was sometimes criticized for being outdated. In the last decade, colleges and universities across the country have been working on revising their curriculums, says Davidson. Accounting programs are now focusing more on skills used in the workplace and less on memorization of facts. More ethics, forensic accounting and fraud courses are being taught. It is critical that the accounting education process adequately prepares students to become valued and trusted members of the C.P.A. profession. Accounting practitioners who collaborate with educators can help enhance the quality of accounting education, says Davidson. C.P.A.s can become actively involved with their local colleges' accounting program by offering to be guest speakers and promoting classroom discussions on current business issues. An improved accounting education process would create graduates with increased skills and capabilities. Practitioners and educators can work together to rebuild the accountant's image and restore public confidence in the accounting profession. Davidson urges C.P.A.s to be profession shapers, help restore public confidence, and invest in the future. Davidson received her bachelor of science degree in accounting from Bucknell University and her master of science degree in accounting from Rochester Institute of Technology. She can be contacted by e-mail at fdavidson@alfred.edu.