

# capitalize

Fall 2021

Introducing Albertans to the CPA Profession

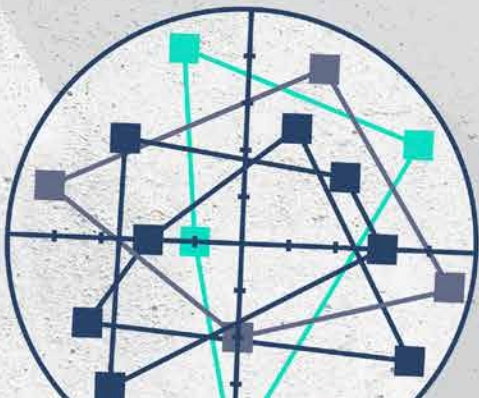
## THE BIG IDEAS

## OF CPAs



 **CPA** CHARTERED  
PROFESSIONAL  
ACCOUNTANTS  
ALBERTA

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**Priya Kapur is leveraging her CPA designation to map out her path at a Big Four**

**36**

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*Capitalize* is a semi-annual magazine that introduces students and others to the accounting profession in Alberta. Published by CPA Alberta, the magazine is distributed to more than 4,500 readers, including university, college, and high school students, as well as career counsellors and other student-oriented service providers.

Visit [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](http://capitalize.cpaalberta.ca) for even more *Capitalize!*

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## Message from Rachel Miller, CEO, CPA Alberta

Dear Alberta students:

Welcome back to campus after what is likely one of the strangest academic years you've ever had. I want to commend each of you for the ongoing resilience, adaptability, and creativity you've shown during these challenging times. There has never been a group of students who has experienced the difficulties you have, and your unfailing dedication to your education and studies, despite the circumstances, is incredible to see.

In fact, the qualities you're demonstrating and cultivating now—flexibility, versatility, innovation—are characteristic of the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) profession. There are more than 30,000 Alberta CPAs who apply their innovative thinking and resilience to benefit a wide range of industries and organizations around the world—anything from the non-profit sector to hospitality, public service to the film industry. This is a great time to consider becoming a CPA and taking a journey that will open doors of opportunity for you. Paired with the CPA designation, your proven resilience and ability to face challenges head on will enable you to effect change on the causes that matter to you and in the areas in which you're most passionate.

Of course, you don't need to wait in order to start making a difference. Earlier this year, CPA Alberta launched its *Capitalize* Campus Stars program to acknowledge outstanding post-secondary students around the province. We're pleased to announce the inaugural class of Campus Stars—six students who are creating a legacy of change on their campuses and in their communities. Each of these stars is dreaming of one day becoming a CPA and represent the future of the CPA profession. Check out page 12 to see which of your classmates is a Campus Star and be inspired by the stories of these outstanding future CPAs.

CPA Alberta looks forward to seeing you and hosting you at one of our upcoming information sessions. In the meantime, I hope you have a great 2021/2022 school year and that you and your loved ones stay healthy and safe.

Rachel Miller FCPA, FCA  
CEO, CPA Alberta

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CPA Alberta and *Capitalize* acknowledge the land we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous peoples. We are grateful for their stewardship of this land, and their histories and culture influence our community to this day.

Spanning generations, acknowledgment of the land is a traditional custom of Indigenous peoples. In the spirit of reconciliation and building respectful relationships, we recognize our offices are situated on the following traditional territories:

Amiskwaciwâskahikan, or Edmonton, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 6 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Nêhiyawak (Cree), Anishinaabe (Saulteaux), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Métis, Dene, and Nakota Sioux people.

Moh'kins'tis, or Calgary, is situated on Indigenous land in Treaty 7 territory. We acknowledge the language, culture, and heritage of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, and Piikani First Nations), the Stoney Nakoda First Nations (Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations), Tsuut'ina, Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, and the Métis Nation Region 3.

We make this acknowledgment as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on. CPA Alberta is committed to building a profession where Indigenous peoples and their voices and experiences are heard, valued, respected, and celebrated.





**Have you ever**  
owned your  
own business?



**Have you ever**  
had your job  
replaced by a robot?



**Have you ever**  
travelled abroad  
for work?



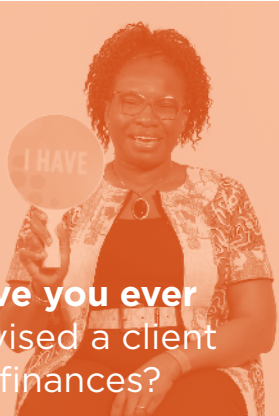
**Have you ever**  
struggled with  
mental health?



**Have you ever**  
creatively solved a  
business problem?



**Have you ever**  
advised a client  
on finances?



**Have you ever**  
busted a myth  
about accounting?



## Eleven CPAs sit in front of a camera and play a game of **NEVER HAVE I EVER**.

This isn't the start of a classic joke, it's the premise of CPA Alberta's brand new video series. Check out all the videos and discover the truth behind common CPA myths.

Now only one question remains: **which of these never have I evers have YOU ever?**

[cpaalberta.ca/neverhaveiever](http://cpaalberta.ca/neverhaveiever)



# events **CALENDAR\***

## CPA Alberta events

### CPA E.A.T. (Engage And Taste)

November 16 (Calgary) and 18 (Edmonton)

For more information, visit  
[cpaalberta.ca/cpaeat](http://cpaalberta.ca/cpaeat)



## CPA Alberta sponsored events

### September

#### IBSA Case Competition

International Business Students' Association,  
University of Calgary

#### Mid-September: Information Session

Management Information Systems Club,  
University of Alberta

#### Late September: BASS Kickoff Event

Bissett Accounting Students Society,  
Mount Royal University

#### Late September: Intro to Accounting Club

University of Lethbridge Accounting Club,  
University of Lethbridge

### October

#### Industry Meet and Mingle

Calgary Students' Association - Dhillon School of Business,  
University of Lethbridge

#### Late October/Early November: Industry Night

Accounting Students' Association, University of Calgary

#### Late October: Haskoween

Haskayne Students' Association, University of Calgary

### November

#### Calgary Business Student Conference

Commerce Undergrad Society, University of Calgary

#### Speaker Series

Commerce Undergrad Society, University of Calgary

#### Public Accounting Panel (Wine and Cheese Night)

University of Lethbridge Accounting Club,  
University of Lethbridge

#### International Business Night

International Business Students' Association,  
University of Calgary

CPA Alberta partners with post-secondary institutions across Alberta to sponsor events throughout the year. Find an event on your campus to network with fellow students, CPAs, and CPA Alberta staff.

#### Mid-November: Commerce Cage

Haskayne Students' Association, University of Calgary

#### Mid-November: University Case Competition and Gala

NXT-GEN, University of Alberta

### December

#### Holiday at Haskayne

Haskayne Students' Association, University of Calgary

### January

#### Ask Your Alumni

Haskayne Students' Association, University of Calgary

#### Soirée with a CPA

University of Lethbridge Accounting Club,  
University of Lethbridge

#### Study Abroad Night

International Business Students' Association,  
University of Calgary

### February

#### Early February: Haskayne Accounting Case Competition

Accounting Students' Association, University of Calgary

#### Wellness Round Tables

Haskayne Students' Association, University of Calgary

#### CPA Case Workshop

Bissett Accounting Students Society,  
Mount Royal University

#### Industry Accounting Panel

University of Lethbridge Accounting Club,  
University of Lethbridge

#### Etiquette Dinner

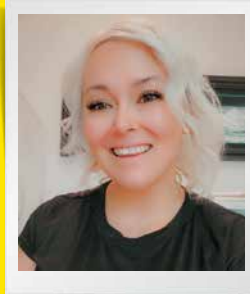
Dhillon Business Students' Association,  
University of Lethbridge

These are just a few of the events coming up, so be sure to check [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](http://capitalize.cpaalberta.ca) regularly for updates!

\*Events and their format are subject to change based on current public health guidelines at that time.

# Meet your 2021/22 CPA Campus Ambassadors

The 2021/22 Campus Ambassador team is here to assist you on the path towards the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation. The following ambassadors will be the primary point of contact for students to get information about important events and activities, as well as answers to their questions about the CPA Professional Education Program and the CPA designation.



**Sarah DeLeon**  
Concordia University of  
Edmonton  
[sdeleon@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:sdeleon@cpaalberta.ca)

**What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?**

All the learning opportunities outside of the classroom and to be able to connect with other ambassadors!

**Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?**

The learning aspect of it never ends; there are always new procedures or legalities involved. I'm also really excited to see how the profession continues to grow with the world around us.

**What pump-up jam do you listen to before a big test or presentation?**

"Get Up" by Mac Miller.



**LeeAnn Dirk**  
NAIT  
[ldirk@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:ldirk@cpaalberta.ca)

**Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?**

I want to be able to share my love for accounting with aspiring accounting students of all ages, to promote an organization I greatly respect, and to meet new and influential individuals within the CPA profession.

**How do you think technology will impact the future of accounting?**

I believe we will see a large shift in responsibilities and duties within an accountant's role as technology advances. I look forward to seeing what new progressive skills and opportunities will grow as the accounting field transitions into a partnering relationship with technology.

**Who do you listen to before a big test or presentation to pump yourself up?**

Lady Gaga!!



## Your on-campus contact



### **Ashley Drought**

University of Lethbridge  
[adrought@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:adrought@cpaalberta.ca)

#### **What is one thing the COVID-19 pandemic taught you?**

The COVID-19 pandemic taught me that even though the circumstances may not be ideal, you can still find ways to make the most of your time and improve your experience.

#### **Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?**

I want to pursue a career in accounting because I like being given the chance to challenge myself and work through problems as well as help people.

#### **What is something people might be surprised to know about you?**

One thing that might surprise people about me is that before I graduated high school, I went on a volunteer trip to Costa Rica to help with turtle research. The trip wasn't long, but it was very fun!



### **Frederick (Red) Enorme**

University of Alberta  
[fenorme@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:fenorme@cpaalberta.ca)

#### **What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?**

I am truly looking forward to building meaningful relationships with students, CPA Alberta staff, influential business leaders, and CPAs!

#### **What is one thing the COVID-19 pandemic taught you?**

The pandemic has taught me that we, collectively, are resilient and adaptable. For instance, with networking events, meetings, and school lectures being hosted virtually over this past year, many firms, professors, and organizations made an effort to make these events engaging and a positive experience for everybody.

#### **What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I am a big foodie and am obsessed with Gordon Ramsay! This summer, I challenged myself to perfect his signature dish—the infamous beef wellington.



### **Alexi Gladue**

MacEwan University  
[agladue@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:agladue@cpaalberta.ca)

#### **What was something positive that surprised you about online learning?**

What surprised me about online learning is how crucial a good night's sleep is for learning and focus. It is one of those things that you always hear people preach about but will never believe it until you experience it. Sleep is a bigger priority for me now.

#### **Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?**

Ever since I was a child, I really liked the idea of a professional job. At my sixth birthday party, I dressed up in a fairy costume and a blazer. I remember telling my mom I wanted to look "office-y." I also had a miniature desk with a stapler, cheque book, and other office supplies at my grandparents' house.

#### **What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I am very short; I sometimes get mistaken for a lost child in the grocery store.



**Yawen Guo**

SAIT  
*yguo@cpaalberta.ca*

**How do you think technology will impact the future of accounting?**

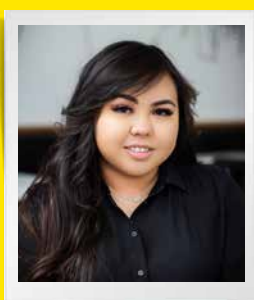
We have seen how accounting software and AI automation have saved accountants time on high-volume, repetitive work. Technology will continue to benefit future accounting in an efficient and effective way. One thing I cannot wait to see is the increased application of big data in auditing where issues can be identified with real-time access to the whole data set and transactions.

**What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?**

Accounting is not just about dry numbers and mathematics. The analytical and problem-solving skills taught by accounting are practical and can be applied in almost any industry.

**What is something people might be surprised to learn about you?**

I enjoy challenging hikes in the mountains throughout the summer months. The most difficult mountain I hiked so far is near Kananaskis Improvement and is called Mist Mountain.



**Shekinah Lim**

Red Deer College  
*slim@cpaalberta.ca*

**What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?**

Being able to make meaningful connections that will help me gain experience and being able to share CPA events with my fellow students.

**Why have you chosen to pursue a career in accounting?**

A teacher of mine inspired me and really got me into accounting. I also believe that learning about accounting is crucial if you're planning to build your own business.

**If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?**

Recently I have been very interested in the wedding industry. My dream business would be to have my own wedding venue and photography studio.



**Jay Park**

University of Calgary  
*ypark@cpaalberta.ca*

**What are you looking forward to most about being a CPA Campus Ambassador?**

I was a campus ambassador last year and things were much different than they have been previously for students in terms of virtual interactions and events. I am super excited to (hopefully) resume in-person gatherings, events, and interactions as an ambassador this year. I think it will also be extremely exciting for students that have yet to experience the in-person aspect of events for the CPA profession!

**What is one thing the COVID-19 pandemic taught you?**

I think that one thing the COVID-19 pandemic taught me is to appreciate the social interactions I have with my family and friends!

**If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?**

A heli-skiing company! Then I could use my own services since heli-skiing is at the top of my bucket list.



**Isra Tanweer**

University of Lethbridge (Calgary campus)  
*itanweer@cpaalberta.ca*

**What was something positive that surprised you about online learning?**

The shift toward enhanced cooperation and communication. I have seen instructors and students alike (including myself) being more flexible when it comes to online learning.

**What is one thing you wish people knew about accounting?**

I wish they knew of the possibilities that accompany a degree in accounting. Technical skills aside, students are given the opportunities to enhance their soft skills.

**What is something people might be surprised to know about you?**

That I am originally from Pakistan. I am more than willing to assist international students that speak Urdu/Hindi with English as their second language.



**Jazmin Vidales**

Mount Royal University  
*jvidales@cpaalberta.ca*

**Why were you interested in becoming a CPA Campus Ambassador?**

I believe it will give me the opportunity to connect with fellow accounting students. Through this role I look forward to exploring the career opportunities gained by obtaining a CPA designation and helping my peers plan their own CPA career journeys.

**What was something positive that surprised you about online learning?**

One of the most positive aspects of online learning was the recorded lectures for all my courses. This supported my learning in an unexpected way as I was able to re-watch difficult concepts and not miss important material if I could not make it to the online lecture.

**If you could build your dream business overnight, what would it be?**

An Argentinian bakery where customers can order and enjoy warm drinks and delicious Argentinian treats. It would be a wonderful opportunity to share my culture and traditional foods with the rest of the world.




*Someone who can help!*



# *BUILDING DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE SPACES*

*How Morgan Bazin  
brings an LGBTQ2S+  
perspective to the  
profession*

By Kate Austin  
Photography by  
KTB Photography



**DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS** and walks of life bring valuable experiences and ideas to a workplace, which benefit everyone. But when **Morgan Bazin CPA, CMA** came out as non-binary in July 2019, they realized there was a gap in LGBTQ2S+ representation in the CPA profession.

It all started with their CPA Alberta online profile, where the honorific field was mandatory. “At the time, the online portal didn’t have the ability to select a non-gendered honorific,” says Morgan. “I believe there were only the binary options for gender available at that time.”

Determined to change their profile, Morgan contacted CPA Assist, who connected them with the Registrar at CPA Alberta. Together, they updated Morgan’s profile. “We made the updates to my profile on the back end to reflect what is authentic for me,” says Morgan.

The experience ended on a positive note and contributed to a lasting change: “Now the portal allows you to make those changes yourself,” says Morgan.

Now, Morgan is blazing a trail for those who come after them.


After coming out at NTT DATA Services, where Morgan was a Functional Analyst until recently, they joined the company’s Pride employee resource group (ERG), which was just getting off

the ground. After presenting at one of the ERG’s meetings, Morgan received an email from another individual in the company who didn’t realize people were using they/them pronouns in the real world and in a professional setting.

“They were really excited to see that and have that kind of representation,” recalls Morgan.

Currently, the ERG is finding ways to help other employees who are transitioning or wanting to transition—from providing resources on how to come out to a manager to having conversations about how to support someone who’s transitioning.

Morgan has started looking at an even bigger picture: they created a LinkedIn community geared toward Edmonton LGBTQ2S+ professionals, including CPAs. Morgan hopes the group can be a safe place for professionals to discuss their experiences at work and see how others handled coming out to coworkers or management. “It’s part of giving back to the community,” says Morgan.

In the workplace, Morgan strives to ensure LGBTQ2S+ employees feel included, and a big part of that is simply by existing as their true self. “Representation is important, and that’s why I really value being out,” says Morgan. “I try to make it as obvious as possible because if it makes it easier for one more person [to be out], then it was worthwhile. It makes the next person have a little bit better time.” 

*Representation is important, and that’s why I really value being out. I try to make it as obvious as possible because if it makes it easier for one more person [to be out], then it was worthwhile. It makes the next person have a little bit better time.*

Morgan Bazin CPA, CMA



# INTRODUCING THE *CAPITALIZE* CAMPUS STARS

These six students are leaders, high achievers, community builders, general movers and shakers—and they're already making a huge impact

By Sarah Maludzinski

Photography by HarderLee Photography and Laughing Dog Photography

**DRUM ROLL PLEASE!** *Capitalize* and CPA Alberta are proud to announce the inaugural class of *Capitalize* Campus Stars. The Campus Stars program recognizes amazing Alberta post-secondary students who are dreaming of one day becoming CPAs.

These six students are already leaving a legacy on their campuses and in their communities. One Campus Star is passionate about building their leadership skills through volunteerism; another is building a better campus through mentorship. A third Campus Star is leveraging their skills to do good, while another has been giving back to their community since they were in elementary school. Finally, we have a Campus Star who is an all-star teammate and thrives in competition, and one who combined two passions to create lasting change.

These students represent the future of the CPA profession and Alberta as a whole. We are proud to introduce them as the first-ever class of *Capitalize* Campus Stars.

*The search for the next class of Capitalize Campus Stars will start soon!  
Nominate a student at [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](https://www.capitalize.cpaalberta.ca) early next year.*



## **Frederick Enorme**

**University of Alberta,  
Bachelor of Commerce**

Like many teenagers, **Frederick (Red) Enorme** graduated high school not quite sure what he wanted to do next. He liked math, so he decided to give that a try in university, but he soon realized he didn't love math that much. He switched to business and enjoyed a co-op term at Kingston Ross Pashak. "I absolutely loved it," says Red. "I went into accounting because it's not just about the numbers. It's also about the connections you make."

While in school pursuing his degree, Red has also been involved with his university's Rotaract and accounting clubs, the Edmonton Youth Choir, the Cooperative Education Students' Association (CESA), and *Lazy Faire* Magazine. This year, he's very excited to serve as the president of CESA and the Editor-in-Chief of *Lazy Faire* Magazine and take on some new challenges.

He's passionate about building his leadership skills and looking towards the future. "All the things I do relate to my future career aspirations," says Red. "I aspire to be a CPA and to be a successful business leader someday, so taking on these leadership positions on campus will really help me get there."

**One of Red's biggest inspirations:** His mom. "She pushes me to always be my best and to be very independent, to look at things with an open mind, and to take challenges head on," says Red. "In short, she motivates me to be my best every day."

**Red's tip for students just starting university:** Be comfortable with being uncomfortable. Take on things you might not have pictured yourself doing and see where that opportunity might lead.



## Arvie Justine B. Isidro

**SAIT, Bachelor of Business Administration**

"I was sitting in the library, and I received a notification that SAIT was looking for mentors for international students," recalls **Arvie Justine B. Isidro**. "I automatically signed up."

And so began Arvie Justine's journey as a mentor. They didn't quite know what they were doing at first, but they pushed forward. "I let my experience guide me," says Arvie Justine. "I asked myself what I would have wanted to have when I was first starting in university."

Arvie Justine took their passion for mentorship a step further and even volunteered to supervise the Peer Mentorship Program at SAIT, a role in which they were able to inspire their fellow students to make connections and help each other out. "We all want someone to guide us, support us," says Arvie Justine. "Life is full of challenging choices, and it's great to have someone to learn from."

They consider their mentorship going hand-in-hand with another passion of theirs: learning. "I'm a big believer that everyone can learn from one another," says Arvie Justine. "Even if I am a mentor, I can learn from you. Even if you are a mentee with a lot of experience, you might learn from me."



**One of Arvie Justine's biggest inspirations:**

Their younger self. "I've experienced a lot of bullying and such because of how I present myself to the public," says Arvie Justine. "My younger self was able to push through it and get to the place I am right now. I think my younger self really inspired me to be who I am and not change myself to fit in. You don't have to fit in."

**Arvie Justine's tip for students wanting to blend in:**

Don't! Be courageous, and don't be afraid to be who you are. Don't be afraid to speak up for what you want. Embody your uniqueness.



## Priya Joshi

**MacEwan University,  
Bachelor of Commerce**

When **Priya Joshi** first immigrated to Canada, she was convinced she wanted a science degree. It didn't take her long, however, to realize this was not her calling. "After upgrading [my education], I knew science was not my field. I knew it would not encourage me to do something good," she says.

For Priya, her priority always comes back to using her skills to do something good. One of her professors encouraged her to consider accounting because of her natural ability to problem solve and be analytical. Suddenly, it all clicked. "In accounting, I can use my skills plus knowledge to do something good in the world," she says.

But Priya isn't waiting until she's done university to start. In addition to working part-time and maintaining a high GPA, Priya joined the MacEwan University Accounting Club in her very first year.

She participated in the club's initiative to help low-income community members and fellow students file their taxes. She enjoyed this so much, the next year, she volunteered to lead the tax clinic team. Now, as Vice-President of Operations for the club, she oversees all events and projects.

**One of Priya's biggest inspirations:** Her mom. "My mom always says, 'Simple living and high thinking.' So that's what I'm following right now," says Priya. "She's my biggest inspiration."

**Priya's tip for students trying to balance it all:** It's all about organizing. Use a Google calendar and map it all out, including your rest time. Don't sacrifice your rest!





## **Kelsey MacLeod**

**University of Alberta,  
Bachelor of Commerce**

**Kelsey MacLeod** keeps busy. Like, really busy. Currently, she's finishing her co-op program, where she worked full-time for 16 months at three different organizations. She was an inaugural member of the Champions of Change Club at the U of A in 2019 and is currently the 2021-22 President of the club. She is also the Vice-President of Finance for the U of A Financial Literacy Club, is an Operational Team Leader for Frontier College, volunteers as a graphic designer for an on-campus podcast, and more.

"I'm lucky in the respect that I have a lot of resources and support that not necessarily everyone else has access to, so I want to do what I can to give back to and support my community," she says. "I've also been exposed to volunteering from a young age, which I think has helped foster that desire to give back."

Kelsey has been volunteering since she was just six years old, when she and her mom started volunteering at the CIBC Run for the Cure. She's proud of the personal growth she has found through volunteering: "It's helped me build and develop skills like leadership, communication, getting more comfortable speaking to larger groups of people, and has even allowed me to apply some accounting skills in my finance roles."



**One of Kelsey's biggest inspirations:** People who take risks. "Whether it's women blazing new trails in their industries or innovators changing the way we think about the world...it's important to take risks," says Kelsey. "You can't always stay in the background."

**Kelsey's tip for students wanting to volunteer:** Find something you're passionate about. There are so many ways to get involved, and if you care about where you're volunteering, it will be so much more than a "resume builder"—you'll have fun and look forward to it.

## Angelica Okeynan

**SAIT, Bachelor of Business Administration**

For **Angelica Okeynan**, teamwork makes the dream work. She was involved in team sports in junior high and high school, she was a volunteer firefighter for a while, and she's participated in two case competitions (so far)—so it may be a bit cliché, but Angelica truly does value teamwork, and she applies it to her volunteerism as well.

"I have pretty much always volunteered," says Angelica. "I think it stems from when I was younger. Sports have always been a large part of my life, and

therefore, I have been on many teams. You really get to meet and become good friends with people that you were on a team with. Going forward, that's how I met new people."

True to thriving on a team, Angelica has participated in two case competitions since starting at SAIT, and her team placed second in both!

"I really enjoy case competitions because they are super challenging," says Angelica. "I'm a really competitive person, so that helps, but it also helps me take that schoolwork aspect and really apply it to the real world because a lot of business cases are based on real companies and the problems they face."



### **One of Angelica's biggest inspirations:**

Her mom. "She taught us that we, as women, need to speak up for what we want and not be afraid," says Angelica. "If you're not on your side, who else is looking out for you?"

### **Angelica's tip for students looking to build community:**

Create a study group. Reach out to five or six people in your class and ask if they want to study together. A great place to start building your network is with your fellow classmates; don't be afraid to try something new!



**Brennan O'Yeung**  
**University of Calgary,**  
**Mechanical Engineering**

**Brennan O'Yeung** stumbled upon his passion almost by accident. In 2015, he was in B.C. for a wedding when he saw an ad for escape rooms. Thinking it sounded fun, he and his dad gave it a try, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Fast-forward to his first day of university, and Brennan noticed there weren't very many Indigenous students in his classes. He realized there were some initiatives geared toward other underrepresented groups—like women—but not any for encouraging Indigenous children to pursue STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).

"I noticed there was a specific discrepancy in this one group," says Brennan. "And I thought, 'Hm, maybe this is something I could contribute to change on.'"

He decided to combine STEM with his love of escape rooms, and Escape with STEM, his not-for-profit, was born. "We create escape room puzzles and experiences for students to learn more about STEM-related concepts," explains Brennan. "This hopefully gets them excited and sparks their interest through hands-on activities."

It's been a huge hit, and Brennan has worked with the Piitoayis Family School, the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary, the Indspire Soaring Indigenous Youth Empowerment Gathering, and other organizations (even virtually during the pandemic!) to spread his love of STEM—and escape rooms. 📺

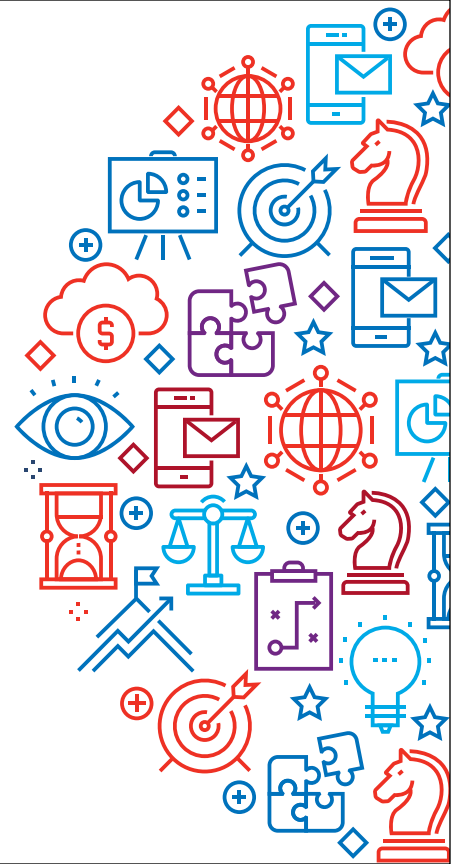
**One of Brennan's biggest inspirations:** His parents. "Everything they've done has really shaped me into who I am now," says Brennan. "They've really inspired me to give back as much as I can." His dad, in fact, is a CPA and has inspired Brennan to eventually pursue the designation after graduation as well!

**Brennan's tip for students trying to juggle many things at once:** Prioritize. Juggling multiple commitments might require some sacrifice in other areas, but prioritize what you're passionate about.

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**Skip waiting for the magazine's physical copy each semester—visit the website!** *Capitalize* is the go-to source for students to learn more about the accounting profession, and now you can take it with you on the go. The website's fresh blog-like format feels more like talking to your best friend than attending a lecture, but you'll learn about accounting, the business world, being a professional, and more.

Check it out at [capitalize.cpaalberta.ca](http://capitalize.cpaalberta.ca)



1

# WHAT DOES YOUR EMAIL SAY ABOUT YOU?

Use digital communication with finesse

By Sherrell Steele

**DID YOU KNOW** that your email serves as a marker of your professionalism? It's true! How you craft an email sends a message about your attention to detail, your credibility, and your preparedness.

When composing an email, begin with: what is the purpose? Are you requesting information? Confirming details? Requesting an extension?

Make sure that the purpose of your email appears in the first or second line you write. Better yet, use the subject line to announce your purpose (e.g. My late term paper).

Next, consider your email recipient. How well do you know them? What tone and style work best? What is the nature of your relationship? If this is a new contact, a more formal style might work best. If your relationship is long-term and cordial, a more conversational tone is fine.

Generally speaking, email communication is more polished than conversation, so use complete sentences and proper punctuation. There is a time and place for emojis and text speak, but those are best reserved for social media or texting with your friends. Use professional communication in your emails to signal your maturity.

## Here are some tips for the body of your email:

- Cover all your bases. Include the who, what, why, where, and how. Strive for clarity and accuracy.
- Simplify: One email; one request. If there are considerable details to add, consider attaching a file with further information.
- Never send an emotionally charged email. It is okay to be frustrated and angry, but don't put that emotion in an email. Keep emails business-like and neutral.
- Mind your grammar and spelling. And be aware of typos and do a spell check yourself (because spell check programs don't always identify everything).

Finally, include your full signature, especially with a new contact. Include your full name and alternate forms of contact, such as your cellphone number or LinkedIn, Instagram, or Twitter details.

With attention to the above tips and guidelines, your email communication will represent you as the true professional you are. **c**



Sherrell Steele is an instructor at MacEwan University, NAIT, and the University of Victoria in B.C. She teaches business communications and public relations.

# EXAMPLE

## Unprofessional email

New message

From studentX@nait.ca

To steeles2@nait.ca

Subject

Hi Sherrell, I am really sorry for my absence! For some personal reasons, I stayed in Calgary until yesterday. I knew I couldn't complete some assignments on time, so I chose to withdraw this course last week, but obviously I didn't succeed with my phone. 😊 But now I have completed and solved my personal problems, so I will complete every assignment on time. Hope you can understand. Thank you!

A 📎 😊 ∞ 🖼️ 🗑️ ☰

Send

The subject line is missing.

The student greets me with my first name (although we have never met, and they have no idea of my preferred title). Most students on first greeting use "Dear Professor" or something similarly formal.

The main issue with this message is the confusion about its purpose. Has this student withdrawn? What was completed? The assignment or the personal problems? What was not working on the phone: the assignment details or withdrawing from the course by notifying the Registrar?

Avoid emojis in professional emails.

## Improved email

New message

From studentX@nait.ca Cc Bcc

To steeles2@nait.ca

Subject My class attendance

Dear Professor Steele:

I am sorry for my absence. I acknowledge that I missed submitting my first assignment. I considered withdrawing from your class, but now I am resolved to complete every assignment on time.

Yours truly, Student X

A 📎 😊 ∞ 🖼️ 🗑️ ☰

Send

# The CPA Certification Program: what students need to know

The CPA Certification Program—which consists of education, practical experience, and a final examination—is designed to provide future Chartered Professional Accountants (CPAs) with the knowledge and skills to succeed in business.

## Degree and prerequisites

An undergraduate degree (in any discipline) from a recognized post-secondary institution is required for admission to the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP). In addition to an undergraduate degree, prerequisite courses must be successfully completed.

A transfer credit guide for Alberta post-secondary institutions is available online at [www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide](http://www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide).

## CPA Professional Education Program

The CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) is a graduate-level program delivered part-time over two years. The program includes six modules designed to develop six technical competencies and five enabling competencies. In Alberta, the national CPA PEP is delivered by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). CPAWSB delivers CPA PEP to all candidates in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut who are pursuing their CPA.

Candidates will take CPA PEP while working in a relevant position. For candidates, their CPA PEP education, coupled with practical experience, will complement the development of CPA competencies.

CPA PEP uses a variety of learning methods to help students develop their skills. The program combines online learning, self-study, classroom learning, and teamwork to help CPA candidates develop the competencies expected of Canada's pre-eminent professional accountants.



Ifeoma Ngwudike CPA, CMA

### CPA Alberta's new video series

No two (or three or four) CPAs are alike! In fact, CPA Alberta discovered over a friendly game of Never Have I Ever that every CPA has their unique experience and some pretty cool stories. Check out the video series at [cpaalberta.ca/neverhaveiever](http://cpaalberta.ca/neverhaveiever) to hear a few of them!

## Modules

Six modules comprise CPA PEP. The program begins with two core modules that are common to all CPA candidates, followed by two elective modules (of which there are four options). Upon completion of these four modules, all candidates are required to complete the two “capstone” modules.

The modules are:

- Two common core modules, which all CPA candidates must take, focusing on the development of competencies in management and financial accounting, and the integration of the six core technical competency areas.
- Two elective modules, which allow CPA candidates to develop deeper skills in their areas of career interest. Four electives are offered: assurance, performance management, tax, and finance. All candidates must choose two of the electives; candidates pursuing careers in public accounting must choose assurance and tax.
- A capstone integrative module that focuses on the development of the enabling competencies, such as leadership and professional skills, and the integration of core competencies.
- A capstone examination preparation module, which prepares CPA candidates for the Common Final Examination (CFE).



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## Registration into the CPA Professional Education Program

Students are encouraged to apply for conditional acceptance into the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP) prior to the completion of their required courses and degree. Registration as a CPA candidate is required prior to registering for specific modules; however, candidates are encouraged to register for modules once they've submitted their application.

Once a student has applied for CPA PEP, there is a registration validation period in which transcript assessment, verification of degree, and verification of prerequisites will occur. After verification, the student may then participate in Core One.

Module registration deadlines are typically six to eight weeks in advance of the module start date. Please refer to the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) website for key module registration deadlines: [www.cpawsb.ca/current-learners/cpa-pep/schedules](http://www.cpawsb.ca/current-learners/cpa-pep/schedules).

For more information about becoming a CPA, please visit [www.cpaalberta.ca](http://www.cpaalberta.ca); call CPA Alberta at 1-844-454-1245 (toll-free); or email [gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca).

To inquire about your eligibility for CPA PEP and admission support, please visit [www.cpawsb.ca](http://www.cpawsb.ca); call CPAWSB at 1-855-306-9390 (toll-free); or email [cpaapplication@cpawsb.ca](mailto:cpaapplication@cpawsb.ca).

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## Entrance requirements for the CPA Professional Education Program

### Bridging into the CPA Professional Education Program

For students who have completed their degrees but have not obtained the necessary prerequisite courses for the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP), or for students who do not have a degree,\* there are two options:

#### 1. CPA preparatory courses

CPA preparatory courses are a suite of 14 courses that provide all knowledge requirements for admission to CPA PEP. These courses are available in an accelerated format and are delivered part-time, with options for self-study, online, and classroom learning. Students complete only the courses they require.

Students are eligible for enrolment if they have successfully completed one year (30 credit hours) of post-secondary studies or three years of relevant work experience.

*\*Students are still required to complete a degree before admission to CPA PEP.*

Please contact CPA Alberta at 1.844.454.1245 or email [gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:gettingstarted@cpaalberta.ca) to learn more about preparatory courses.

#### 2. Prerequisites through a post-secondary institution

Students can register for the business and accounting courses they are missing through a post-secondary institution approved by the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB). A transfer credit guide is available online at [www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide](http://www.cpaalberta.ca/Become-a-CPA/Transfer-Credit-Guide). Students will only take the courses they need for entrance into CPA PEP.

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## Practical experience

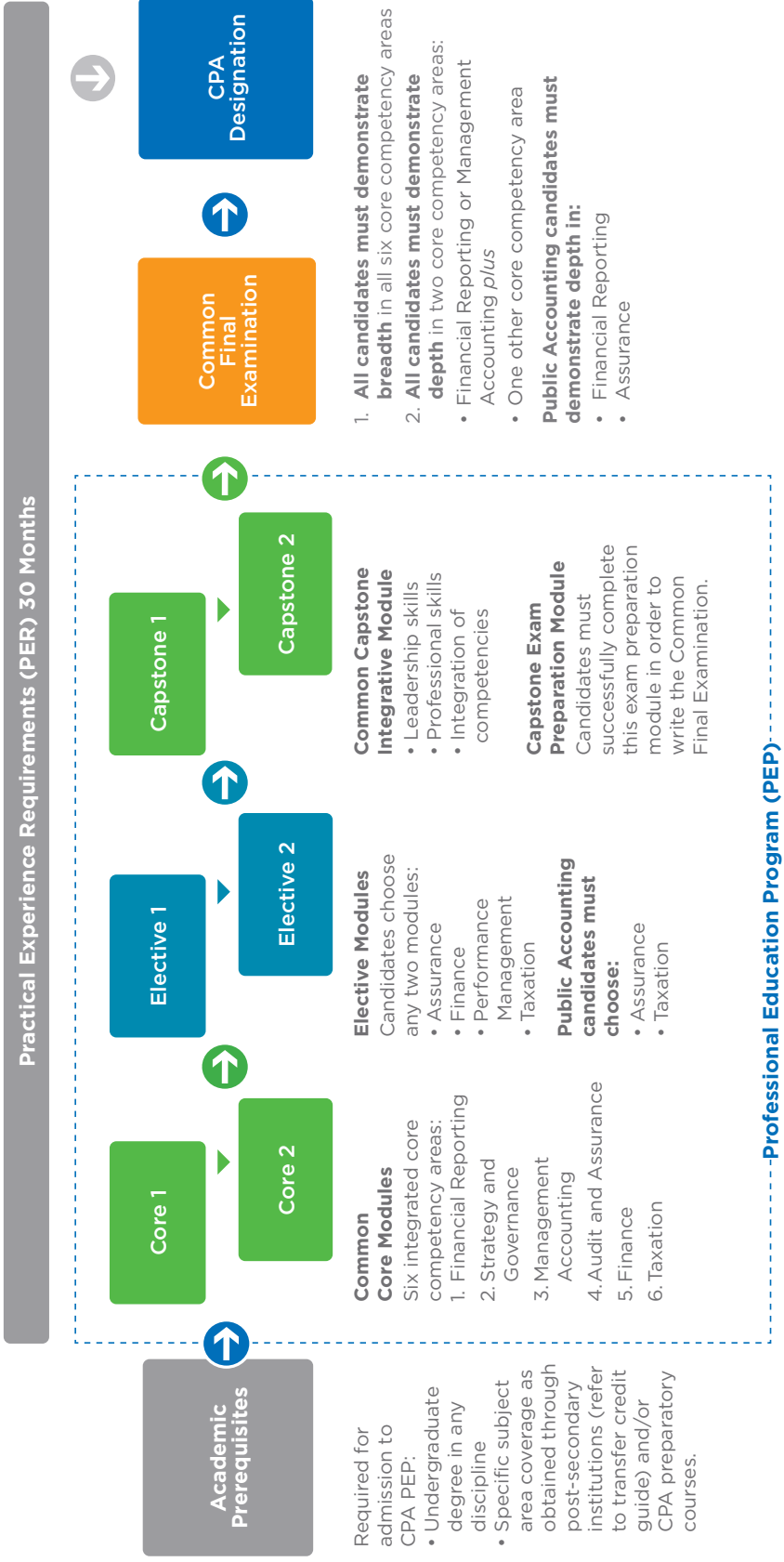
In addition to formal education, candidates are required to complete a term of relevant practical experience. The knowledge and competencies gained through practical experience complement those developed through CPA PEP. To develop as a professional accountant, CPA candidates must gain relevant, paid employment that is progressively challenging. For the period of practical experience to begin, individuals need to be registered with the CPA Western School of Business (CPAWSB) as a CPA candidate, be employed in a qualifying position, and have a mentor.

There are two routes to obtain practical experience requirements:

- **The Pre-approved Program Route (PPR)** in which future CPAs gain relevant experience by choosing a position from a wide range of employers pre-approved by the profession.
- **The Experience Verification Route (EVR)** in which future CPAs demonstrate competence and gain relevant experience at a chosen employer.

Future CPAs can gain experience through either route or a combination of both. The profession may accept up to one year of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. The minimum practical experience requirement for both routes is 30 months; this includes an allowance of up to 20 weeks of time away from work (including vacation time).

# CPA Professional Education Program Overview



**Professional Education Program (PEP)**

There are five common elements that support both routes:

1. Candidates gain relevant experience and develop as a professional accountant in a minimum of 30 months.\*
2. Candidates' experience must be appropriately supervised.
3. Candidates must record detailed reports at regular intervals.
4. Candidates must meet and discuss their progress at least semi-annually with a CPA mentor.
5. Candidates' experience is assessed by the CPA profession.

*\*Practical experience requirements for public accounting practice and professional accounting practice are recognized separately from practical experience requirements for certification.*

### CPA Practical Experience Self-Assessment Tool

This tool is intended for individuals who have not yet had their experience assessed by a provincial/regional body but want to understand how their

current or prospective position might align with the CPA technical competency requirements for purposes of the experience verification route. To access this self-assessment tool, visit <https://pert.cpa-services.org/student/TrialAssessment>.

### CPA mentorship

Mentorship is a mandatory component of the CPA Practical Experience Requirements (PER). The focus of the CPA mentorship program is to help future CPAs achieve their enabling competencies. CPA candidates who work in the Pre-approved Program Route (PPR) will be matched with a CPA mentor by the organization that offers the program. CPA candidates who choose the Experience Verification Route (EVR) are required to seek out their own CPA mentor in order to find a successful fit. Recognition may be given for a total of up to 12 months of experience earned prior to registering with the profession. After that time, the qualifying period of practical experience cannot begin until CPA candidates have a CPA mentor. CPA Canada has developed a number of valuable resources to assist CPA candidates in finding a mentor.

Please visit [www.cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience](http://www.cpacanada.ca/practicalexperience) for more information.

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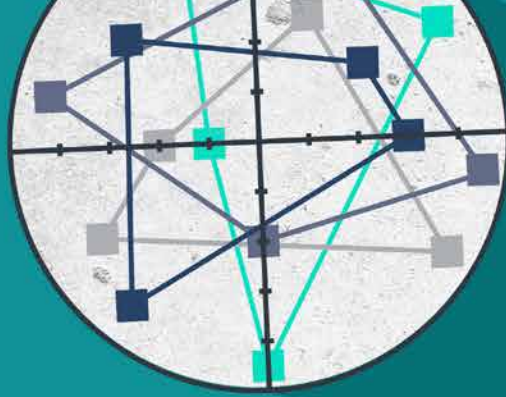
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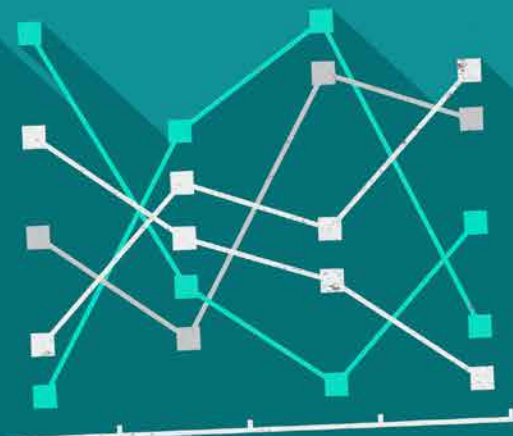


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# THE BIG IDEAS

# OF CPAs



*Three CPAs discuss how the profession is moving the needle in innovation and technology*

*By Sharon Ruyter | Photography by HarderLee Photography*

**IN 1494**, Luca Pacioli described the system of double-entry bookkeeping and became known as “the father of accounting.” Since then, the accounting profession has evolved through the ages to become a driving force in multitudes of industries, leading them forward in a rapidly developing business environment.

The World Economic Forum describes this current period and pace of super-speed business development as the fourth industrial revolution. According to the forum, this revolution represents a “fundamental change in the way we live, work, and relate to one another” and is enabled by extraordinary advancements driven by technology and people-power unlike we’ve ever seen.

The CPA profession is well-equipped to thrive in the revolution because CPAs are at the helm, driving innovation and technology in Alberta and elsewhere. From firms to industry, CPAs are leading the way and helping businesses use new technologies, process and visualize data, and stay competitive as business environments change.

A self-described “technology accountant,” **Twyla Verhelst CPA, CGA** knows firsthand what possibilities are out there when technology and accounting are combined. “I’m a CPA that loves the collision of technology and accounting and what that means and does for industries,” she says. “I’m an accounting industry expert inside of a global tech company; who would have thought 20 years ago that’s where you could have a career as an accountant?”

Twyla’s role as the Head of Accountant Channel at FreshBooks means she spends half her time asking the big questions. “I’m looking at where we are, where technology is heading, what’s next on the horizon—that’s the technology crystal ball we’re all trying to look into. I’m comfortable spending my time looking at that,” she says.

The other half of her time is spent mentoring, coaching, and collaborating with accounting professionals, who “might not be as comfortable with this [technology] evolution and not sure how to best use tech,” says Twyla.

Twyla sees how many accounting professionals want to evolve and adapt but sometimes feel stuck.



*I’m looking at where we are, where technology is heading, what’s next on the horizon—that’s the technology crystal ball we’re all trying to look into.*



Twyla Verhelst CPA, CGA





*The unspoken slogan in the IT world is 'every day a better way,' so whatever we did yesterday, you're looking for a better way today.*



Ayo Olarinde CPA

**Ayo Olarinde CPA** is all too familiar with the feeling of being stuck. He learned the importance of being an adaptable CPA, willing to evolve with the changing times, as a new immigrant to Canada two years ago.

When Ayo arrived, he had a difficult time finding a job as an internationally trained professional. Everything changed when one candid interviewer told him the truth: his experience as an accountant was exceptional, but he was missing data analysis experience. Ayo decided to pursue a post-graduate certificate in Business Intelligence: Data Analysis and Reporting at SAIT. Now, with his combined experience as a CPA and business analyst, he "occupies a unique space in the business world," he says.

Recently, in his role as a Business Intelligence and Analytics Consultant at BDO, he built a dashboard to help a client manage their financial reports. His business intelligence skills equipped him to build the dashboard, and as a CPA, he had no problems understanding the financial aspects of the project. "I built a dynamic dashboard that allows [the client] to view up-to-date financial information about each and every one of their clients," says Ayo. "I came on that project as somebody with a unique, blended skill set, and I was able to deliver that project in full to the delight of my employer and clients."

The accounting profession is the perfect complement for anyone attracted to a career in innovation and technology, which might be a surprise given that the profession is hundreds of years old. "If you have an interest in entrepreneurship, business, finances, accounting, numbers, data, or technology, then the accounting profession is a good choice," says Twyla.





**Logan Speer** CPA, Manager of Capital Markets Accounting Advisory Services at PwC, agrees. He believes there is a great appetite for innovation and change across the CPA profession.


A recent career highlight for him was the opportunity to be part of PwC Canada's inaugural digital accelerator program. The immersive training program taught him skills in a number of technologies, automations, design thinking, and more. "I will now be able to aid in leading innovations within our profession through connecting with a global network of Digital Accelerators and utilize the skills I have been given the chance to develop to digitally enable the firm and our clients," he says.

"The unspoken slogan in the IT world is 'every day a better way,' so whatever we did yesterday, you're looking for a better way today," says Ayo. The same can be said about accounting.

In a fast-paced technology-driven environment, it's easy to get whiplash from the sheer amount of adaptations and innovations, and Logan cautions that it's easy to get overwhelmed. "You're not going to be able to become an expert on every piece of technology out there," he says. He recommends picking a technology and focusing on it while maintaining a learning mindset about other emerging technologies.

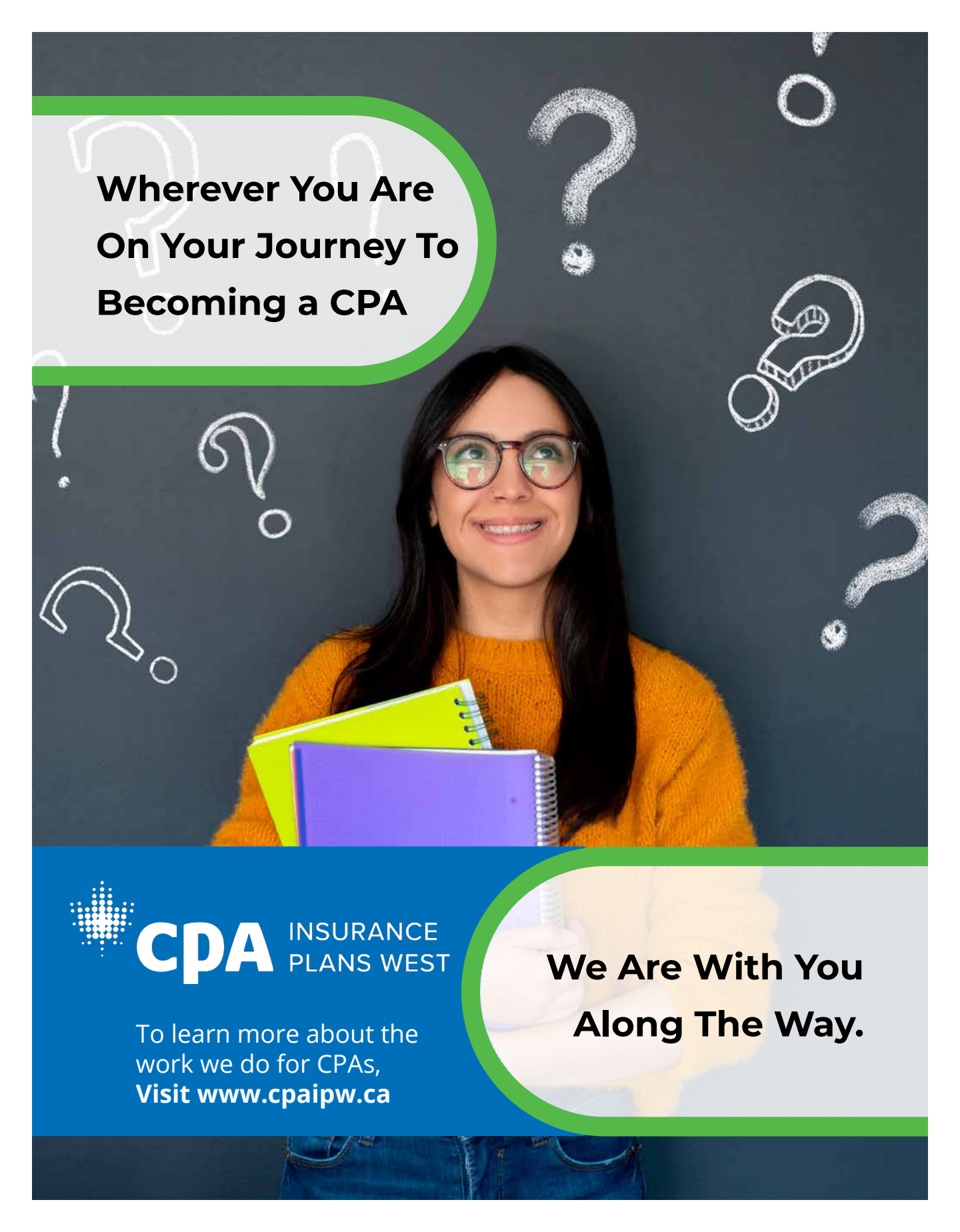
No matter the tech, Logan thinks being a CPA gives him a leg up. "Our whole careers [as CPAs] have been training us to develop the ability to understand, learn, and adapt to rapid changes quickly," he says. "Technology is not always going to be the same, but the underlying techniques, theories, and processes we use to understand them will remain consistent."

The possibility of what CPAs can achieve in the current industrial revolution—and industrial revolutions to come—is what excites Twyla the most. "I think that CPAs will be able to be more creative than they ever have been in my 20 years in accounting," she says. "I love that because it's not always a part of our brain or skill set that we've gotten to tap into."

She thinks the biggest beneficiaries to the untapped creative potential of CPAs will be the clients they serve, who will receive unique service offerings and advice. She believes CPAs and future CPAs will benefit too. "I'm excited that CPAs get to really carve out a career for themselves that's more unique than ever before," she says. 

*Technology is not always going to be the same, but the underlying techniques, theories, and processes we use to understand them will remain consistent.*

Logan Speer CPA



**Wherever You Are  
On Your Journey To  
Becoming a CPA**

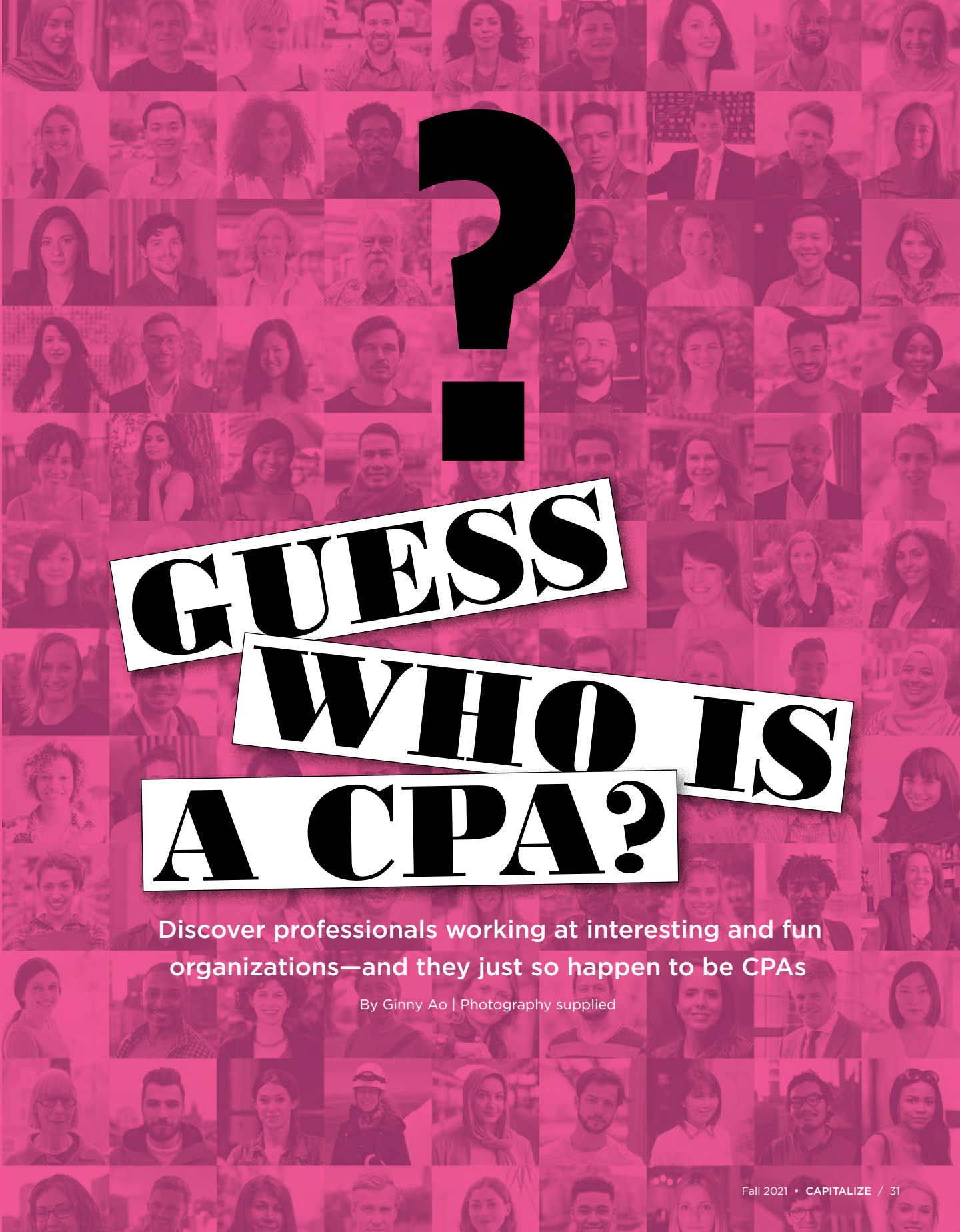


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Along The Way.**





# GUESS WHO IS A CPA?

Discover professionals working at interesting and fun organizations—and they just so happen to be CPAs

By Ginny Ao | Photography supplied

# CPAs ARE EVERYWHERE.

It's said that once you achieve your CPA designation, exciting opportunities await—and this could not be more true for these five CPAs working at some pretty cool organizations.

These CPAs, working in a variety of sectors, show the endless possibilities the designation can provide. So if you're ever playing a game of "guess who is a CPA," the answer is always "anyone"!



Nimbus may be located in Vancouver, but by working remotely, Andrea Mitchell gets to enjoy Edmonton's lush greenery.

## Andrea Mitchell CPA, CA

A music lover with a passion for process improvement, **Andrea Mitchell CPA, CA** has found a role that checks those two boxes.

As the Director of Finance at the Nimbus School of Recording and Media—a private post-secondary school located in Vancouver, B.C., that helps individuals break into the music industry—Andrea is working to improve the school's processes through cloud-based applications.

With experience at several technology organizations, Andrea has developed a solid toolkit to pull from.

For Andrea, what makes Nimbus an enjoyable place to work is how nimble and responsive her team members are. "You can call someone and say, 'Hey, how should I work through this?'" says Andrea. "We don't have to set up a meeting two weeks in advance to connect."

Andrea's role also allows her to further her passion for music. From concerts to music festivals, Andrea enjoys the opportunity to discover new musicians and bands.

"I love going to festivals. You are exposed to everything. This is how you can find new bands you've never listened to before," explains Andrea.

## Dominique Lagloire-Galipeau CPA, CMA

Working in the hospitality industry can be hard—think long hours and unpredictable days—but if you find an organization that’s right for you, it can be the best decision you ever make.

Just ask **Dominique Lagloire-Galipeau CPA, CMA**, Chief Financial Officer at Grizzly Paw Pub & Brewing Company. With almost seven years at the organization, Dominique has seen how a small business can develop and how exciting each milestone is.

“From releasing new products to introducing a new menu or event, the constant evolution and growth of the company have been the most interesting parts of my job,” says Dominique. “The things we get to work on change every year.”

Another perk of working at Grizzly Paw is the location: Canmore. When not in the office, Dominique gets to enjoy the close proximity to nature.

“My husband is a hiking guide, and the outdoors is 100% a big part of our life,” says Dominique. “Living and working in Canmore, it’s so easy to end our day and get outside.”

Sounds like great work-life balance!

Working in hospitality means you are always ready to lend a hand—and Dominique Lagloire-Galipeau is a pro!



The beautiful exterior of Grizzly Paw Pub & Brewing Company in Canmore.



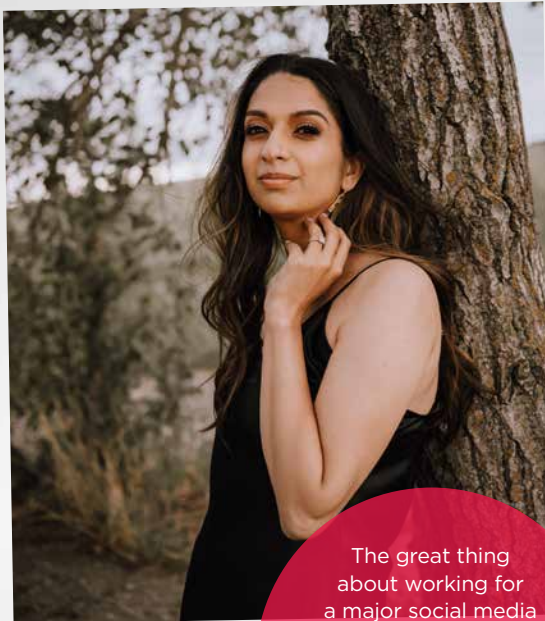
## Salina Dharamsi CPA

Helping others find their dream roles isn’t a CPA’s typical responsibility, but **Salina Dharamsi CPA**, Technical Recruiting Manager at Facebook, is using her designation a little differently.

Salina’s passion for business was a driving force from an early age. “I always wanted to be in business, but I wasn’t sure what type of business major I wanted to pursue,” says Salina. “I was inspired at business school when I met CPAs who used their designations in unique ways.”

From entrepreneurs to those working in NGOs, these CPAs showed Salina the depth of the CPA profession. These days when someone learns that Salina has her CPA designation and works in human resources, they often say: “Why do you need your CPA designation? You’re in recruiting.”

Salina’s answer: “It’s still very useful in any industry. Through the CPA designation, I’ve developed the skill to unpack things. I can take a big problem and break it down. This is key when working in audit or tax, but it’s just as important when I think about what I do now and how I can make an impact in the recruiting industry.”



Photography by Marwa Hurley

The great thing about working for a major social media company is the flexible schedule and remote work, freeing up Salina Dharamsi to participate in stunning outdoor photo shoots like this one!

## Scott Boucher CPA, CA

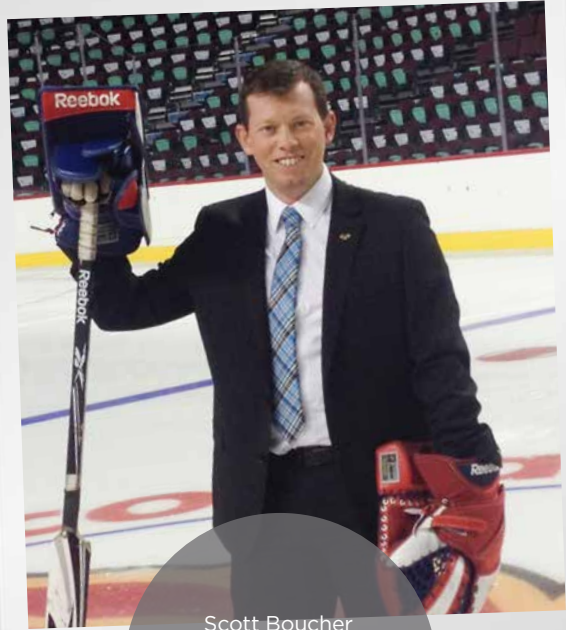
Moving across the country for a job is not a new concept for **Scott Boucher CPA, CA**, Manager of Financial Reporting Tax and Treasury at the Calgary Sports and Entertainment Corporation—the organization that is responsible for some of Calgary’s favourite sport teams, including the Flames, Hitmen, Roughnecks, and Stampeders.

Originally from Truro, Nova Scotia, Scott was excited to accept the role in Calgary, which married his two passions. “Playing and watching hockey was a big part of my life growing up,” says Scott. “So when I saw that the Flames organization was looking for accountants, I jumped at the chance to combine two of my interests: hockey and accounting.”

Although working at Calgary Sports and Entertainment can sound glamorous, Scott will be the first to tell you that, behind the scenes, it takes hard work from all departments and staff to ensure the organization and events run smoothly.

With more than eight years with the organization, Scott knows it has taken time to develop into the professional he is today. He credits the talented team around him and the knowledge they share.

“I’m pretty lucky. The CPAs that I work with have substantial accounting and tax experience,” says Scott. “[Working with them] is how I’ve been able to continue to learn and grow.”



Scott Boucher on centre ice at the Scotiabank Saddledome.

## Sheri Wise CPA, CMA

Well before sustainability and renewable energy were trendy, **Sheri Wise CPA, CMA** believed in the importance of these concepts, but it took time for the world and energy industry to catch up.

As the Chief Financial Officer of BluEarth Renewables—a renewable energy company that develops, builds, and operates wind, hydro, and solar facilities across North America—Sheri has seen firsthand how the industry has changed.

“Ten years ago, when I joined BluEarth, renewables were still considered a niche part of the energy industry,” says Sheri. “Today, renewables are mainstream, and people no longer see it as something unusual or different.”

Another aspect Sheri has seen evolve is the organization’s exponential growth. Initially a startup in Calgary, BluEarth now has more than 120 employees across Canada and the United States.

Although each team member has different talents, a common thread found among them is a commitment to the environment. “That’s the great thing about BluEarth: many of us have a similar interest in sustainability. We often challenge each other to go that extra mile and find new ways to make an impact,” says Sheri.

A self-proclaimed sustainability geek, Sheri is an example of how figuring out your passion can translate into a professional career. **C**



Taking renewable energy to new heights, Sheri Wise stands on top of a 80-metre-tall wind turbine near Cosmos, Minnesota.

# it's time.

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## *Where do you want to take your career? Priya Kapur is leveraging her CPA designation to map out her path at a Big Four*

By Quinta Iticka | Photography by Laughing Dog Photography

**WHEN A PERSON LOVES** their job, a decade at an organization can feel like 10 days. For **Purva (Priya) Kapur CPA, CA**, nine years at KPMG have flown by for three reasons: the global environment, the people, and the opportunities.

In 2018, Priya accepted a role as Senior Manager of Global Learning and Development with KPMG International, and in 2019, she travelled 27 times to seven countries and three continents. "I was always on a flight, always switching time zones. You almost don't feel the jet lag because of the adrenaline and the anticipation of meeting and connecting with colleagues from other parts of the world," says Priya.

Travelling the world in fashionable business outfits and being part of something on a global scale are exactly how Priya envisioned her career during her early post-secondary years. In fact, it is this vision that spurred her decision to attend business school, where she discovered the CPA career path.

Since joining KPMG, Priya has reinvented herself multiple times. "I can live where I want and do the type of work I enjoy," she says. "The senior manager title can be misleading because I do so many different things."


In a nutshell, she collaborates with subject matter experts, instructional designers, and programmers to develop and deploy training materials to 146 member firms. Part of that deployment includes teaching KPMG auditors around the world new courses based on updates in rules and standards. "If you are a

people person, this is the perfect place to be. I am from Edmonton, a tiny dot on the map, and when I find myself sitting in Singapore, facilitating a course for leaders from Taiwan, Japan, China, and other countries in the region, it feels amazing.

"It boils down to having the skills to create your own opportunities within the firm. As soon as someone sees that you have the CPA designation, they know you have the business acumen; they know you can lead a team. The question becomes, 'What do you want to do?'" says Priya.

For Priya, one of the answers to that question is advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at a leadership level. "Being raised by parents who emigrated from India, and then entering the business world, I didn't see a lot of women or people of colour in leadership roles. At KPMG, I looked around the boardroom table and didn't see representation that reflected the broader company."

The desire for inclusivity inspired Priya to create the Women's Interchange Network (WIN), a forum where female professionals can network with each other and build relationships. "With the support of my leaders, we're connecting across borders and showcasing women at different levels."

Priya encourages post-secondary students to get involved in passion projects. "Whether it's improving diversity around the boardroom table or working on charitable endeavours, being a well-rounded professional will help you succeed at a firm." 



## Rapid-fire Q&A

**Q:** *What is your favourite tech gadget?*

**A:** My new AirPods Pro. They're life-changing because I can take calls on the go.

**Q:** *How tall are you?*

**A:** 5'1", which is why I can always get away with 4" heels at work.

**Q:** *What are some top technology trends you're seeing in accounting?*

**A:** Data analytics and technology that allow people to communicate and collaborate.

**Q:** *What is the best part of working remotely?*

**A:** Dress clothes on top and loungewear on the bottom.

**Q:** *What is your least favourite part of working remotely?*

**A:** Not connecting with people in person.

**Q:** *What is one app you can't live without?*

**A:** Spotify because music is how I express myself.

**Q:** *What is one skill a post-secondary student must have to work at a Big Four?*

**A:** The ability to adapt and learn.



# SIX

WAYS TO  
SUCCEED AS AN  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDENT

*Diversity is our strength, but it can be  
challenging to navigate Canada's universities  
as an international student*

By Andrew Moore

Photography by HarderLee Photography and Laughing Dog Photography



**STARTING UNIVERSITY** is both an exciting and nerve-racking experience. You're embarking on a new journey, meeting new people, learning new things. That alone is stressful enough. But when you throw in the potential for language barriers, cultural differences, and discrimination, those only amplify the stress. This is the reality for many international students—it's a route that takes strength and courage to traverse, but once you find your footing, you'll have the power to turn obstacles into opportunities.

To help you down this path, three Alberta CPAs with international backgrounds share their experience and provide advice on some of the challenges you might encounter as an international student.

## one On overcoming language barriers

Language is often cited as the top issue facing international students. If English isn't your first language, you might have to put in extra work, and it can take longer to learn and understand what is being taught in your classes, according to **Bona Kim CPA, CMA**, Senior Financial Analyst at Alberta Health Services.

"You not only have to learn the materials, but the language at the same time," says Bona, who moved to Edmonton from Korea in 2005 and studied at NAIT before receiving her designation in 2013. "It's going to take you longer. Something that may take an English speaker one day to understand may have taken me two or three or four days."

One method that helped Bona overcome the language barrier is joining Toastmasters. Toastmasters is an organization that promotes communication, public speaking, and leadership. This not only helped with Bona's English but helped her become a better public speaker, ultimately improving her communication with clients and stakeholders.



“*Something that may take an English speaker one day to understand may have taken me two or three or four days.*”

Bona Kim CPA, CMA



*When I came to Canada, I realized that the credits from my economics degree could not be fully transferred.*



Dinara Yanbaeva CPA, CMA

## two

### On building your network and your resume

Building a network from scratch in a new country can be challenging. **Dinara Yanbaeva CPA, CMA**, Manager of Indirect Tax at KPMG Canada, suggests getting involved with student clubs, attending career fairs, and volunteering as much as you can. Volunteering and community involvement build your resume and help you stand out from thousands of students looking for employment.

While attending SAIT, Dinara was extremely active at career fairs and campus events, which put her face-to-face with local professionals. She was a CPA Campus Ambassador and spent much of her time helping others learn about the CPA designation.

"I volunteered with the student employment centre at SAIT a lot," says Dinara, who studied in Russia before moving to Calgary. "They have so many good resources. It really helped to be in touch with them all of the time. They provided help with writing resumes and cover letters, as well as interview preparation."

By volunteering and connecting with employers at career fairs, Dinara was able to land a summer job while studying. Many schools have international student centres that host networking events and provide career resources, and are a great way to connect with other students and professionals.

## three

### On reporting discrimination and racism

Thankfully, not all international students will have to deal with this, but it would be naive to say it doesn't exist. **Caroline Pan CPA**, Partner at Accel Professional Corporation, had trouble finding a training office before joining her current employer. She encourages international students to speak up and seek help if they're being treated unfairly. This could include talking to your school's ombudsperson or diversity office, or reaching out to your school's international student office for support.

"It's important to find a sense of belonging in your community and your workplace," says Caroline, who studied at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics before moving to Calgary. "Canadians are friendly! Make sure your new friends and coworkers are open-minded and want to understand and accept your cultural differences."

## four

### On finding a mentor

Adapting to life in a new country can be a shock, especially if you've left your friends and family behind. It's so important to try to meet new people who can help you grow. When Bona moved to Canada, she befriended Harry Paynter CPA, CGA, whom she met while he was teaching English at the library.

"I wasn't studying accounting at the time, so we didn't talk much about my studies, but

he helped me with my English and became a great life coach,” recalls Bona. “Having a mentor around really helped me get through tough times and know what information was available for people new to the country.”

Today, Bona credits mentoring for making her a better CPA and is now a mentor herself, helping candidates obtain their CPA designation. As an international student, you may feel alone at times, but by stepping out of your comfort zone, you open yourself up to new opportunities and meet new people.

## five

### On understanding educational differences

Educational systems vary from country to country. While one might focus on precision, another might focus on self-assuredness. This is important because even if you have previous education, it may not satisfy Canadian requirements. For example, Dinara holds a bachelor’s degree in finance and a master’s degree in economics from Russia, but when she arrived in Canada, she discovered she would need additional education to fulfil the prerequisites for the CPA program.

“When I came to Canada, I realized that the credits from my economics degree could not be fully transferred,” says Dinara. “I decided to go to SAIT to get the credits needed for the CPA program. The instructors at SAIT were so good. Studying and being a student again was fun and exciting.”

Going back to school worked in Dinara’s favour as it provided a great opportunity to meet new people and get her foot in the door with local professionals and organizations. If you have previous international education or experience, it’s good to be aware that it may not meet the requirements for certain programs.

“It’s important to find a sense of belonging in your community and your workplace.”

Caroline Pan CPA

## six

### On becoming a business leader

It doesn’t matter where you’re from. To succeed in school and the workforce, you must be self-motivated and show initiative, says Caroline. As someone who has gone through the CPA program, Caroline can confirm that, while it’s hard work, the time invested is well worth it.

“CPA is a valuable designation recognized across Canada,” says Caroline. “There are a lot of career paths you can follow once you have your designation. For example, you can be a director, strategic planner, controller, commercial banker, auditor, or wealth manager, to name a few. No matter what you choose, you will find that you have the traits to become a business leader after graduating from the program.”

If you’re an international student interested in pursuing the CPA designation, be sure to check out the resources available to you at [cpaalberta.ca/become-a-cpa](https://cpaalberta.ca/become-a-cpa).



It’s important to note that, while people have been immigrating to Canada for hundreds of years, CPA Alberta and *Capitalize* acknowledge and honour the rich and extensive history of Indigenous Peoples in Canada; their footsteps have marked these lands for thousands of years and continue to do so today. The land we call Alberta is the traditional and ancestral home of many Indigenous peoples, and we are grateful for the opportunity to live, work, and play on the land they have been stewards of for generations.



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Gagandeep Kaur, recipient of  
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## CPA Education Foundation student awards

The CPA Education Foundation is passionate about helping students reach their CPA designation goals. We understand education is a significant financial investment, and that's why we have a variety of awards to help ease the financial barriers of higher education. Whether you're in post-secondary, high school, or the CPA Professional Education Program (CPA PEP), visit [cpaalberta.ca/scholarships](https://cpaalberta.ca/scholarships) to check out the available awards!

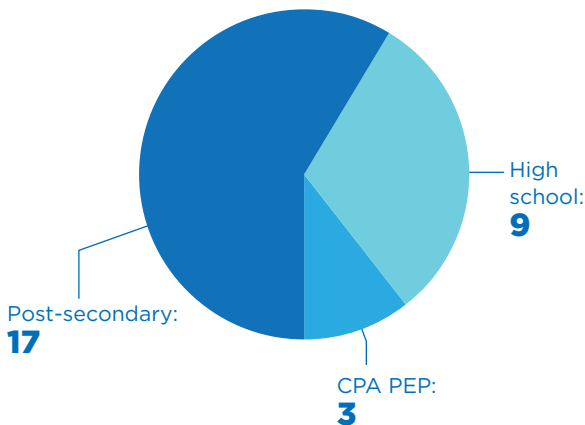
Post-secondary and CPA PEP awards deadline: January 31, 2022

High school awards deadline: May 1, 2022

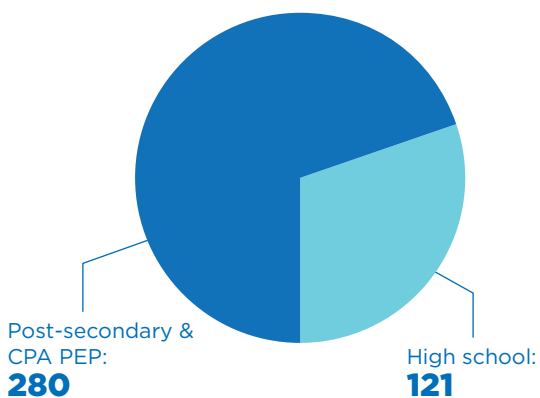
For more information on any of the CPA Education Foundation scholarships, please visit [cpaalberta.ca/scholarships](https://cpaalberta.ca/scholarships).

Did you know the CPA Education Foundation provided more than \$145,000 in funding for student awards, scholarships, and bursaries in the 2020/21 year?

## Number of awards available in 2022



## Applications received in 2021



## Have questions?

Connect with us at [cpaef@cpaalberta.ca](mailto:cpaef@cpaalberta.ca)

## Recipient profiles

The CPA Education Foundation's awards are for every kind of student. Whether you're a community-builder, philanthropist, academic, or future entrepreneur, we'd love to hear your story! Here are some of the 2021 recipients who received an award.



"Receiving this award proves to me that my diligence and perseverance have paid off, and I am motivated to continue working hard as I come to the end of my bachelor's degree. I am excited to be a part of a profession that gives back to its community and am so grateful."

—Alayna Deemter, recipient of the Robert (Bob) Young FCPA, FCA Memorial Award



"Being chosen as this year's recipient is a great honour. Entrepreneurs are vital to the business community and are the backbone of our economy. As an aspiring entrepreneur, I hope to apply the skills and knowledge I learn while pursuing my CPA to grow my business and expand my network."

—Kieran Jones, recipient of the Stepping Up Entrepreneurial Spirit Award



"Thank you for allowing me a chance to pursue my future career and future education. It means a lot to be able to get some extra support in order to achieve my future ambitions."

—Abbie Seto, recipient of the Empowered Young Woman Award

# SMALL TOWNS, BIG DREAMS.

## The CPA Education Foundation recognizes unique attributes of rural high schools and their students

By Kevin Spila | Photography supplied

Rural Alberta: rolling foothills, rugged terrain, fields of gold as far as the eye can see. However, as beautiful as it is, for the roughly 22 per cent of Albertans who live in rural communities, Alberta can also have its disadvantages, like fewer educational opportunities or limited resources to support enhanced learning in rural schools.

As the charitable arm of the CPA profession in Alberta, the CPA Education Foundation's mandate is to strengthen the future of the accounting profession by raising awareness of and creating access to careers in accounting. One of the Foundation's latest initiatives is Stepping Up, which was created to help promising young Albertans—especially those in rural areas—overcome barriers and pursue their dream careers.

The Stepping Up Rural High School Grant was created to support activities that will enhance student access to technology, such as purchasing new laptops, software licenses, or equipment to address connectivity issues. The Foundation was thrilled to select Roland Michener Secondary School in Slave Lake and Sturgeon Composite High School in Sturgeon County as the recipients of this inaugural grant.


For students who are choosing to go to college or university, the Foundation also offers nearly \$20,000 in scholarships specifically for high school students, including several new awards created this past year as part of the Stepping Up initiative.

For Ethen Knopp, receiving the 2021 Rural Learners Award aligns with his goal of becoming a CPA to give back to his hometown of Thorsby. With a CPA designation, "I feel I can assist and advise because I understand the rural community and their concerns," he says.

Ethen credits being active in the community, working in his family's automotive tire and grain farming businesses, and watching his parents and grandparents work hard as key drivers for why he is considering becoming a CPA. "Watching how my grandma does the books and watching the business grow under my dad's leadership and hard work truly inspired me," he says. He's also thankful for his relationship with the people in his community.

That strong sense of community is echoed by Kashy Antonio, who also received the Rural Learners Award. Originally from Ireland—with family hailing from Nigeria—Kashy moved to the rural Albertan community of Lloydminster at a very young age. It's an experience she wouldn't change for the world. "Along with making friends, the support from the community is something I'll cherish as I go to university," says Kashy.

Not only did the community rally behind Kashy when she started a non-profit organization to collect gloves and raise money for vulnerable children, they were also very welcoming and appreciative as she embraced her heritage during Canada Day multicultural celebrations. At these festivities, Kashy showcased the food, clothing, and music she grew up with. "It was such a fun experience," she says. "How others in my community appreciated it too was very heartwarming and further confirmed my love for my community."

So yes, rural Alberta can be defined by its idyllic yet rugged terrain. But it's also defined by hard work and a strong sense of community. It's those characteristics and the belief that educational opportunities should be made available to all students, no matter where they live, that drove the Foundation to take notice and step up. 



Ethen Knopp, recipient of the 2021 CPA Education Foundation Rural Learners Award



Kashy Antonio, recipient of the 2021 CPA Education Foundation Rural Learners Award

# VOICES FROM THE MARGINS

## The Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre podcast discusses equity, inclusion, and racism in Canada

By Kevin Spila

In June 2021, the CPA Education Foundation and the Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre had prepared to mark National Indigenous History Month with a special three-part *Straight From the CPA's Mouth* podcast series exploring racism in Canada. However, shortly after these episodes were recorded, a mass gravesite containing the remains of Indigenous children was found at a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. Since then, many more sites have been, and will likely continue to be, discovered.

Not only are these discoveries a tragic reminder of some of the most horrifying parts of Canadian history, they are also a reminder that conversations about equity, diversity, and inclusion belong at the forefront of reconciliation and healing. As the CPA profession continues to grow, the Foundation will continue to engage in meaningful conversations about uncomfortable or complicated subjects.

This three part special—"Talking about racism, diversity, and inclusion"—features **Robert Andrews CPA, CMA**, an Indigenous Albertan and passionate mentor, educator, and leader who has worked hard to build stronger ties between the CPA profession and Indigenous students in Alberta. In the podcast episodes, Robert dives into a variety of pertinent topics, including intergenerational trauma, restorative justice, moving towards healing and reconciliation, and the path towards equity in our country. You can listen to this important conversation by visiting [cpaalberta.ca/podcast](https://cpaalberta.ca/podcast) or wherever you normally get your podcasts. 📻

*The CPA Education Foundation's Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre was established thanks to a generous gift from Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA, an accomplished Alberta business leader and community builder. The Centre, which was established in March 2019, is a virtual hub of resources and materials featuring Alberta CPAs sharing their unique perspectives and vast expertise on a wide range of topics and issues. If you're interested in learning more about the Knowledge Centre, please visit [cpaalberta.ca/Foundation/Hesje-CPA-Knowledge-Centre](https://cpaalberta.ca/Foundation/Hesje-CPA-Knowledge-Centre).*

### Did you know?

The CPA Education Foundation offers more than \$12,000 in awards for Indigenous high school and post-secondary students.

The Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre funded a unique Trail Blazers program with 4-H Alberta. The pilot was successfully completed in spring 2021 and is expected to launch in fall 2021.

The Hesje CPA Knowledge Centre namesake, Brian Hesje FCPA, FCA, continues to share his love of learning. His generosity helped create the new Hesje Observatory at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta.

Robert Andrews CPA, CMA





# THE MASTER JUGGLER



# How Quan Ly balanced starting his own firm with founding a brewery

By Sharon Ruyter | Photography by Ramsey Kunkel Photography

QUAN LY CPA, CA is the owner of not one, but two businesses—McRally Accountants & Advisors and Evil Corporation Brewing—and even he can hardly believe it. “The fact that I’m part of a firm that I started is surprising to me because I didn’t expect it,” he says. “The beer business was also completely unexpected. I didn’t even enjoy beer in my early 20s!”

Quan’s entrepreneur origin story started with a fork in the road. When he graduated from the University of Alberta, he was unsure whether to pursue finance or accounting and met with a CPA to learn more about the profession. He says, “It really changed my perspective because I realized the language of business is numbers, and accountants can speak that language better than anyone else.”

He chose accounting but soon after rising through the ranks of the U.S. tax group at a Big Four firm, he started to think about a career change: starting his own firm!

From the outside looking in, his timing could not have been worse. Alberta was in a downturn and many warned Quan that his idea to start his own firm was a bad one. “I’ve always been the type to go against the grain,” he says. “So when people doubted me, it was validating and got me really fired up and energized.”

In 2015, McRally opened with a mission to do things differently, and one of Quan’s inspirations was the quality of service small business owners were receiving at the time. Quan wanted to provide big-firm-quality service in an accessible way, and it’s been a profound experience for him. “All the decisions we talk

through and help our clients make have a direct impact on their wealth, their lives, or their lifestyles,” he says. “When you can have that kind of influence or make that much of an impact on someone’s life, you experience fulfillment at the highest level.”

Quan’s decision to start his own business has been a success, and for many people that would be enough, but his curious mindset and interest in working with people led him to think about what else he could do.

One day, while enjoying a beer with a former coworker, he started to think, “Why don’t we try brewing our own beer?”

Quan and a group of friends realized they were on to something when one of them placed well in a few local home-brewing competitions. Fast forward to 2018, and Evil Corporation Brewing incorporated, started contract brewing, and began selling its product in stores, bars, and restaurants.

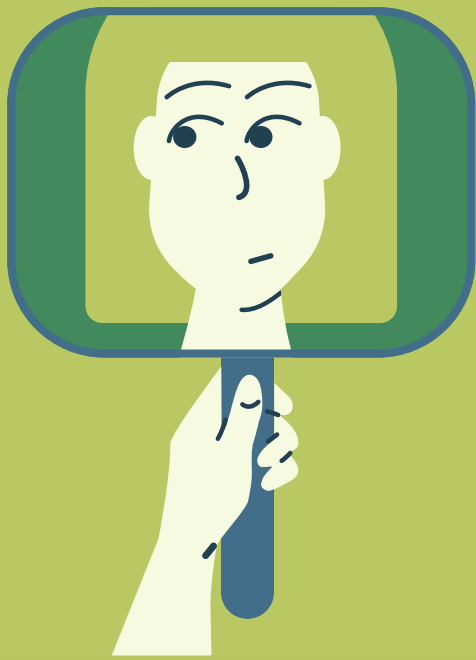
Looking towards the future, Quan has one thing on his mind—growth. The McRally growth strategy is people-focused. “We want to spread more goodness to everyone in the small business community,” says Quan.

The same can be said for Evil Corporation; Quan and his co-owners have plans to create a physical location by the end of 2021, where they’ll be able to enjoy their beer with their community.

Needless to say, Quan has a lot going on and has no shortage of drive or enthusiasm. “I have no trouble getting up in the morning and showing up to work because I know exactly what excites me,” he says. ☑

*I’ve always been the type to go against the grain. So when people doubted me, it was validating and got me really fired up and energized.*

Quan Ly CPA, CA



# RECOGNIZING IMPOSTOR SYNDROME

What to do when you are accomplished, successful, and feel like a fraud

By Becky Ponting

**HAVE YOU EVER** been told that you did a good job but felt like you didn't deserve the praise? Or believed a good grade or an award you achieved was just a fluke? You might be experiencing impostor syndrome!

Impostor syndrome is characterized by thoughts and feelings of inadequacy, incompetence, and fraudulence, even when there is clear evidence of your abilities and accomplishments. You may experience the thought that you have faked your way through your life and fear that you don't deserve your own success.

Suffering from impostor syndrome can negatively affect your well-being and lead to feelings of anxiety, worry, and inadequacy. If you relate to this phenomenon, don't despair! It is possible to change your mindset by taking note of the following tips.

## 10 tips for addressing impostor syndrome

1. Talk with others about your worries that you don't measure up. You are not alone in feeling this way!
2. Avoid minimizing your accomplishments. Remember: our minds hear everything we say to others. After a compliment, avoid the temptation to point out your shortcomings, and just say, "Thanks!"
3. Pass your knowledge on to others; it helps you realize how much you know.
4. List your accomplishments and review the list often. Consider both academic and personal accomplishments. You didn't get where you are by luck. You may also decide to keep a list of the positive feedback you receive from others.
5. Stop comparing yourself to other people. Too often, we only see other people's "highlight reel" while thinking about our own "bloopers reel." But remember: most people have failures and shortcomings—they just don't mention them.
6. Let go of perfectionism and other unhelpful work habits. Perfectionism causes many people to fear taking risks, which are necessary in order to experience true success. Remember that you don't need to be perfect to be considered excellent at what you do!
7. Check your self-perceptions with a trusted source. If you are worried you are falling short or not measuring up to expectations, why not ask directly rather than making assumptions?
8. Ask questions when you get stuck. Don't be afraid to seek out more information if you are unsure of the next step you need to take to achieve success. Some people will be happy to help.
9. Take critical feedback in stride. When you receive negative feedback or criticism from others, take time to reflect on whether this feedback can help you move forward. Is there a useful course of action you can identify? Remember to also focus on any positive feedback you receive. Many of us are prone to dwelling on the negative and ignoring compliments, so make sure to avoid this trap.
10. Be willing to ask for help. Great accomplishments come from people working together. Friends, instructors, colleagues, and mentors can offer valuable help and support as you build your career.

Impostor syndrome is common, and the majority of people will experience it at some point in their lives, but you don't have to let it hinder you. Remember: you didn't choose to experience impostor syndrome, but you can choose to move past it as you pursue meaningful goals throughout your lifetime. **c**



Becky Ponting has practiced as a psychologist in Alberta for the past 15 years. Over the course of her career, she has provided psychological services to diverse groups, such as HIV patients and their families, military members, and university students. Becky's areas of specialized training include the treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder, insomnia, and obsessive compulsive disorder.

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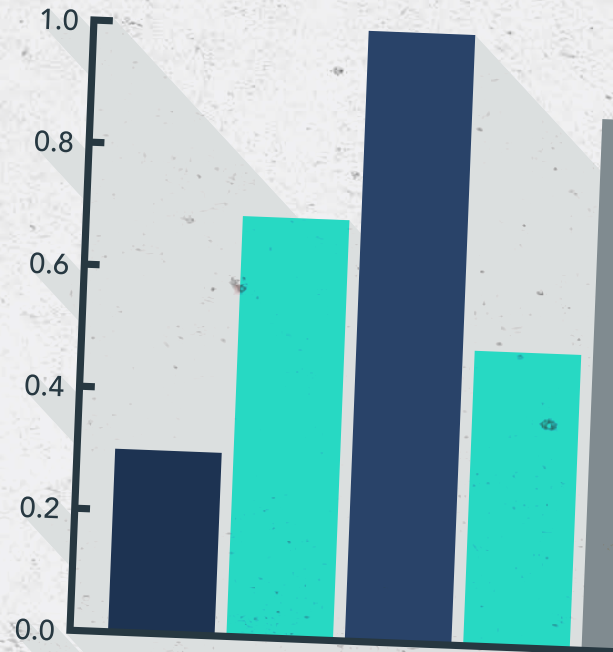
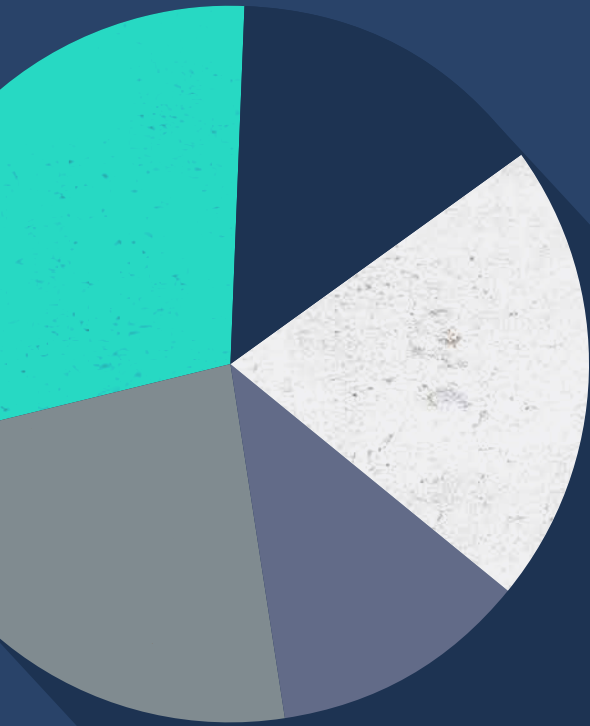
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