Message from the Director

Welcome to the 2013-2014 issue of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy annual report.

Since the first accounting course taught in 1931, through the creation of the School of Accountancy in 1978, to the naming of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy in 2008, the history of excellence in accounting education at San Diego State University (SDSU) has been accomplished through the integrated activities of faculty, students, and alumni. This report will update you on important developments over the past year and exciting happenings on the horizon.

After receiving my Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine in 1995 and working in academia for over 10 years, I arrived at SDSU in fall 2006 as the Vern Odmark Professor of Accountancy. In fall 2013, I was honored to become the William E. Cole Director of the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. The vision and leadership of Dr. Charles W. Lamden and my other predecessors laid the foundation for our school to become a leader in undergraduate and graduate accounting education.

Your continued support remains a key ingredient in accomplishing our mission of providing rigorous and engaging academic programs that prepare accounting professionals to shape the global business environment. To keep up-to-date with the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy, please visit sdsu.edu/accounting.

Sincerely,

C. Janie Chang, Ph.D.
William E. Cole Director
Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy
San Diego State University

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Accounting Alumni Gifts Spur College of Business Building Renovations

On May 16, 2014, the College of Business Administration officially broke ground on the Page Pavilion, which will be located on the third floor of the Student Services East building.

Monty Awards are bestowed by the SDSU Alumni Association to alumni who have made significant contributions to the university, the San Diego community, or on a state, national or international level.

2014 Monty Award

William E. Cole


The recipient of the 2014 Monty Award from the College of Business Administration is William E. Cole, who earned his B.S. degree in accountancy with honors in 1956 and his M.B.A. in 1960. In 1959, he founded San Diego-based Leaf & Cole CPAs and served as managing partner until 1995. He was a founder and director of Peninsula Bank for 25 years and was a founder of San Diego Trust Bank, where he was a director for 10 years. Additionally, Cole served in the U.S. Army for 21 years – three of which were active duty – before retiring as a major in the Army Financial Corps.

Cole has given back to the college by volunteering as a lecturer and student mentor. He has also contributed nearly $3 million dollars to the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy, including the endowment of the William E. Cole Director position and the endowment of a graduate assistant position with the school. Furthermore, Cole and his business partner, William R. Leaf, are among the founding members of SDSU’s award-winning Beta Alpha Psi chapter, which is an international accounting and honors organization.

Monty Award Board Room, which is named for SDSU Alumni Association Monty Award winners Cathy Stiefel (’92, accounting) and Keith Behner (’71, political science). The Page Pavilion is named for college advisory board member, Tom Page.

The construction is expected to be completed in December, 2014.

Most of the college’s faculty and administrative offices and meeting facilities reside in the Student Services East building.

Two elements of the new Page Pavilion will be the Mack Lobby, which came about through a gift from the Cary Mack (’82, accounting) family and the Stiefel-Behner Board Room.
Advice from Alumni

How did your education at SDSU impact your career?
“SDSU, the professors and administrators in the graduate programs and specifically the tax and accounting curriculum are the reasons I am where I am today – enjoying what I do and combining three subjects, accounting, tax and systems, to form the basis of my 18-year career.”

Who is your favorite professor at SDSU?
“My favorite professors were Dr. Alan Bailey and Dr. Kevin Lightner. Both were very instrumental in creating a great foundation academically, as well as the nature of the accounting profession and how to best prepare for a career in public accounting. Both were able to go beyond the academic qualifications and spend time personally with me discussing the need for good communication skills, leadership skills, and client service skills. Today, I still reflect on the values they conveyed and the example they set as core to my success, second only to my father.”

Who were some of the accounting faculty who helped you succeed?
“I feel a deep appreciation for many of the SDSU School of Accounting professors. My college years were not easy with trying to balance full-time work, participation on the track and cross-country teams, and keeping school work and grades at top of mind. Professors Gene Whittenburg and Sharon Lightner were particularly kind in providing me some additional guidance with my studies and ideas for a successful career path. While many of my peers were thinking “Big 8 or bust” at the start, they made me realize there a number of paths open to accounting majors. They showed me how the different paths can work out to a fruitful career. I eventually pursued public accounting but not until I spread my wings a bit in the Peace Corps.”

What is your advice to today’s SDSU students?
“I tell students to be very open and try a variety of different things. They will likely end up in a very different spot than where they think.”

“Different paths can work out to a fruitful career.” – Lee Duran
2013-2014 Accounting Events

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance
The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to low-income taxpayers, persons with disabilities, and the elderly who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. The Charles W. Lamden School also offers a unique VITA program for foreign students enrolled in universities all over San Diego County. Our students become IRS-certified volunteers and provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals. In the 2014 tax filing season, VITA prepared over 350 tax returns with collective income of over $6.5 million.

Berlin School Event
Dr. Victoria Krivogorsky led the "Transatlantic Project Seminar" jointly with the Berlin School of Economics and Law. The class featured SDSU and BSEL students working in teams and culminating in presentations after reciprocal university visits. Carolina Macias, a student in the 2014 course, stated the following: "The trip to Berlin was awesome and such an eye-opening experience. I did not want to come back. The case study was challenging and I learned a great deal. The U.S. and German financial reporting models were so different. I previously felt accounting was the same everywhere. It is just amazing how you can apply a similar principle in a different way. I would do it all over again, and would recommend the same for any student."

Tax Executive Institute
In 2014, the San Diego Chapter of the Tax Executives Institute (TEI) invited four students and two of the TEI scholarship winners from the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy to their monthly meeting – the topic that day was ASC 740 - accounting for income taxes.

Spring Banquet
Dr. C. Janie Chang addresses the attendees of the 2014 Spring Banquet hosted by the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy and the Beta Eta Chapter of the Beta Alpha Psi honors organization. The annual event draws professionals, students and faculty to enjoy networking and recognition of the School’s scholarship and award winners.

Meet The Firms
The Student Accounting Society hosts the Meet The Firms event each year where students and over 100 professionals have an opportunity to network and discuss information about different careers in accounting.
Celebrating Our Outstanding Faculty…

Dr. Damon M. Fleming

Dr. Damon Fleming is the Ernst & Young Faculty Fellow for the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. He, along with Dr. Steven Gill, and SDSU alumna Siobhan Gillan (MSA ’09), received a 2012 Lybrand Certificate of Merit research award from the Institute of Management Accountants for an article published in “Strategic Finance.” He also earned the 2013 Outstanding Faculty Contribution Award from the College of Business for his commitment and excellence in teaching. Additionally, Dr. Fleming was selected by the 2014 Outstanding MSA student as the Most Influential Faculty Member in the MSA Program.

Dr. David DeBoskey

Dr. David DeBoskey was promoted to associate professor in 2013. He was recently honored with the Most Influential Faculty award from the top graduating undergraduate accounting student in both 2013 and 2014. Dr. DeBoskey has been published in top academic accounting and finance journals. In 2013, he and his co-authors led the country in conducting research on the pending new lease accounting standards. Dr. DeBoskey serves as the faculty advisor for SDSU’s award-winning Beta Alpha Psi chapter where he received an outstanding faculty advisor award in 2011. He was recently appointed as the Chapter Advocate of the West/ Northwest Regions and will also serve on the national board of directors of Beta Alpha Psi in 2016. He was recently appointed president of the Western Region of the American Accounting Association’s 2016 annual meeting.

Dr. Victoria Krivogorsky

Dr. Victoria Krivogorsky teaches “International Financial Reporting,” which addresses the disparities between U.S. GAAP and IFRS, the impact of culture and politics on standard setting, and the differences between U.S. and international conceptual frameworks. In 2014, she also designed and taught the “Transatlantic Project Seminar” with Dr. Zaby at the Berlin School of Economics and Law. This class was designed using a never-before-utilized model featuring SDSU and BSEL students working in teams, culminating in presentations to international faculty after they engaged in reciprocal university visits. Dr. Krivogorsky published four academic papers in peer-reviewed journals and presented the results of her research at several international and national meetings. Additionally, she served as editor-in-chief and main contributor to the book “Laws, Corporate Governance and Accounting: European Perspective,” which is used as a source of information in international accounting courses.

Dr. Gary Grudnitski

In 2013, Dr. Grudnitski became the director of undergraduate programs for the College of Business Administration. Dr. Grudnitski published: “A Case Analysis on Productivity Improvement: Reducing Operating Costs by Increasing Efficiency at a Flora Company,” with Feraidoon Raafat (Journal of Supply Chain and Operations Management, 2012); and “The Impact of SOX on Opportunistic Management Behavior,” (International Review of Financial Analysis, 2014) and “The Role of Reconciliation Quality in Limiting Mispricing of Non-GAAP Earnings Announcements by EuroStox Firms,” (Advances in Accounting Incorporating Advances in International Accounting, 2014) both written with François Aubert. He also published ‘Institutional Passivity and ‘Shadow’ Corporate Governance: European Evidence,” with Victoria Krivogorsky and Gun-Ho Joh, (Journal of Contemporary Accounting), which was selected as the best paper for 2013.

And Welcoming Our New Faculty

Brett Kawada

Brett Kawada is an assistant professor at the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy where he teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in auditing. He earned his Ph.D. in accountancy from the University of Missouri, Columbia, and his Master’s of accounting and B.B.A. in accounting from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Prior to returning to academia, he spent eight years in the audit practice of the Honolulu office of KPMG LLP. Brett began teaching at SDSU in the fall of 2013.

Yan Luo

Yan Luo received her Bachelor’s degree in accounting from Concordia University, and her M.S. and Ph.D. in accounting from Queen’s University. Prior to joining SDSU in the fall of 2014, she was an assistant professor in department of accountancy, City University of Hong Kong and she served as a project finance manager at General Electric (Hydro). Yan currently teaches auditing courses at the graduate and undergraduate level.

Nancy J. Jones

Before accepting a position in the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy as a lecturer in the fall of 2013, Nancy Jones taught in the department of accounting and information systems at California State University, Chico. She earned her B.S. in accounting and M.B.A. with an emphasis in Information Systems from California State University, Chico. Nancy currently teaches several graduate level courses in accounting information system and she is co-authoring a textbook, Practical Analytics, which is due to be published in spring 2015.
Charles W. Lamden

was a founder of SDSU’s College of Business Administration and the namesake for the School of Accountancy. Throughout his long association with the college and the university, he had the opportunity to influence and inspire many students. Here are a few of their stories:

**Martha Altus-Buller** ('84, accounting): When I worked at Arthur Young in 1984 everyone there talked about the fact that he and his wife owned the Centre City Building, which was close to the building AY occupied. Who owns downtown skyscrapers and teaches for fun? Dr. Lamden did! The most important thing I remember about him was that he was kind, which easily trumps brilliance or wealth as the nicest quality a person can possess.

**Scott Farber** ('81, accounting): Professor Lamden always brought real life situations to the classroom. I remember one of his first stories about the importance of allowing plenty of time to reach your destination in the event of unforeseen problems. He prided himself for always being 15-20 minutes early for his class and one day his car broke down on the way to campus coming up the hill on Montezuma. He had enough time to walk to campus and make it to his class on time. It’s an important lesson that has stuck with me my whole life.

**Mark Fisher** ('82, accounting; '92, MBA): In discussing the maintenance of auditor independence, he once told us a story about when he was the partner in charge of KPMG’s Paris office. He said he sometimes received cases of wine as gifts during the holidays. He would send it back as to not interfere with the firm’s independence, but, if the members of the office attended a party where each guest received one bottle of wine as a party favor they would keep those bottles. Good lesson that has stuck with me for over 30 years.

**Walter Tendler** ('79, accounting): In 1977, Professor Lamden was my auditing instructor. He always smiled and really cared about each student. It’s not easy to make auditing interesting, but Charles was terrific. One day in class, he said something that has stuck with me for over 30 years: “When you work for a firm or company for ten years, you may come out with either ten years of experience or one year of experience ten times. Strive for the former and you will have a great career.” I always thought of Charles when deciding whether to stay put or change jobs.

**Paul Sager** ('78, accounting): Dr. Lamden brought a wealth of experience and shared real world examples for every topic we studied. I was his grading assistant for an audit class and spent many hours in his office talking about the accounting profession. I came from a blue collar family and didn’t know anyone who worked in an office, much less a profession like public accounting. Dr. Lamden explained the meaning of being a professional and the structure of the Big 8 firms. He helped me during the recruiting process and prepared me for a career as a CPA and financial executive.

**Charles W. Lamden** was a founder of SDSU’s College of Business Administration and the namesake for the School of Accountancy. Throughout his long association with the college and the university, he had the opportunity to influence and inspire many students. Here are a few of their stories:
The New Master of Science in Accountancy (MSA) Capstone Experience

One of the more recent changes to the MSA program at the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy is the implementation of a newly designed capstone course, Accounting 790. This course is required for all MSA students and is typically taken in the final semester.

Dr. Damon Fleming started teaching the course in Spring 2011 with a new perspective. “The goal of the course is to synthesize theory and application—to prepare students for the dynamics of real-world professional accounting practice” said Fleming.

Using textbook lessons and a heavy dose of case studies provides students an opportunity to hone their decision-making skills. “I try to select a set of materials and content that reflect some of the current issues facing accounting professionals,” Fleming continued. “The topics include negotiation, the 2008 financial crisis, transfer pricing, accounting and auditing standards in China, and tax shelters, just to name a few.”

It is not unusual to hear students describe their introductory upper division accounting courses as “boot camp” due to their rigor and the effort required to academically survive the classes.

In order to help the students overcome some of these challenges, Professor Kevin Hee overhauled accounting orientation and brought it to an entirely different level. First, the orientation was moved from the evening to an in-class event. “With students’ busy schedules, we wanted to eliminate conflicts with work and other courses – the event is important enough that we wanted to ensure that every student could attend,” said Hee.

Hee has also brought in students who have recently completed some of the courses to provide advice and student-to-student guidance. Additionally, a panel of young alumni has proven especially popular with current students.

“As we tell the students,” noted Hee, “how many other courses on campus give up an entire week of class time for nothing but advice on how to succeed in these courses, this program and this career?”
Young Alumni

Luke Mournian
(‘13, Accountancy) 
Associate, Assurance, PwC

The faculty members who took teaching beyond the textbook had the biggest impact. In one class it was as simple as the instructor insisting on all email communications being properly composed in a business format. In another it was teaching us to approach our studying and our exams in ways that would aid us in preparing for the CPA exam after graduation. All of these small yet valuable lessons helped with my professional development in ways that memorizing facts and formulas never could.

The student organizations also had a significant impact, particularly Beta Alpha Psi, which prepared me for life as a Big 4 accountant. My participation provided me with plenty of opportunities for public speaking and networking with potential employers, as well as the chance to be part of a team of people who were never willing to settle for anything less than their best effort.

Amy Barry
(‘08, MSA) 
Director of Accounting for Welk Hospitality Group Inc. & Subsidiaries

I use the tools that I learned in the research courses every day as I have to continuously find solutions to new accounting challenges in the workplace. The courses that focused on teamwork and communication developed my ability to cultivate productive project teams within my current accounting department at Welk.

The management skills that I honed from teaching undergraduate courses have been most beneficial, as I am now able to lead a team of 25 accountants with much more confidence and success due to that experience I first gained as a leader in the classroom.

The amount of support I received from the SDSU School ofAccountancy faculty was irreplaceable. With the faculty’s assistance, I landed my first accounting job with a Big Four accounting firm, made important connections in the community, and passed my CPA exam while completing the program.

Jessen Torres
(‘09, Accountancy) 
Senior Associate, International Tax Services, PwC

My SDSU education gave me an early understanding and set up an expectation of what the workplace environment would be. It also helped me understand the importance of prioritizing certain activities/projects – an important trait that all employers require.

Barry Kelly
(‘13, MSA) 
Senior Manager, Financial Reporting & Controls 
Walmart eCommerce

Going back to school is a big decision for everyone, but it is especially tough when doing so means leaving a comfortable job in a tumultuous economic climate and relocating from San Francisco to San Diego. That was the scenario I faced in Spring 2011, when I received my acceptance to SDSU’s MSA program. However, putting my trust in the reputation of the program and the faculty proved to be one of the best moves of my career.

The MSA program improved not only my technical knowledge and skills, but also my confidence in my abilities. The emphasis on group work equipped me well for my return to the corporate world upon graduation, and the focus on preparation for the CPA exam has helped me in my ongoing work toward earning my license.

In particular, the Accounting Information Systems specialization has been a huge help in my new job as an accounting manager at a Silicon Valley company. The extensive training Dr. C. Janie Chang provided on databases and ERP systems was highly relevant and had immediate practical applications, and her passion for the subject matter was inspiring.

My ROI from the MSA program has been significant. The friends I made are now my colleagues in the accounting industry, and the professors continue to stay in touch and offer mentorship. I look forward to seeing how far my degree can take me in the future.
Star Students
More than just outstanding students, these Aztecs shine in their communities as well.

Katie Williams
Katie Williams was born in Houston, Texas, and grew up in the Houston and Dallas metropolitan areas. She graduated from Plano Senior High School in 2000 and attended college at The University of Texas at Austin, where she graduated with honors in 2003. She began law school at the University of Texas School of Law, completing her law degree in 2006. Katie passed both the Texas bar and the California bar, prompting her promotion from a paralegal to an attorney at Los Angeles-based Thomas, Donahue, Thomas & Hurevitz, where she worked on employment law, medical malpractice and civil rights defense cases. Williams joined the firm of Waters, Kraus & Paul in 2009, an asbestos litigation firm in Los Angeles, where she worked on personal injury and wrongful death cases. While she found the work rewarding, Williams felt ill-suited for a career in litigation due to the adversarial nature of the profession. This prompted her to pursue a career in accounting. “I was drawn to accounting because I enjoy working with numbers, and I felt that accounting would complement my legal background,” she said. In 2012, she left her job and moved to San Diego in order to take accounting courses through San Diego State’s Open University Program. The following year, she was accepted into San Diego State’s MSA program. She plans to graduate in December 2014 and join a public accounting firm as a tax professional.

Why I chose San Diego State University?

“I choose to pursue my accounting degree here because I knew that the college had a great business program. Once I started to get more involved on campus, I also realized how great an opportunity there was to grow as a professional and leader.”

Warren Fraser
Warren Fraser is a San Diego native and proclaims “I am proud to be a student at SDSU.” He has been involved with the award-winning Student Accounting Society since the fall of 2012, where he has held several leadership roles, including president of the organization during his final semester. In addition, he has served as a student mentor for various events, helping new students to get their bearings as they enter SDSU.

Warren says he has enjoyed every opportunity to give back to the Student Accounting Society, SDSU, and the San Diego community. He said “My involvement on campus has not only challenged me to grow as an individual but has also allowed me to develop so many great friendships with my peers and future colleagues.” He graduated from SDSU upon completing his degree in the spring of 2014 and plans to sit for the CPA exam soon.

Why I chose San Diego State University?

“SDSU has a well-respected accounting program whose students are heavily recruited by the top accounting firms. I also found that SDSU’s MSA program is well-suited to those without an accounting background wishing to change careers.”
Greg Littesy is currently a senior and a prospective BMAcc student expecting to graduate in May 2015. Originally from Virginia, he relocated to San Diego County after joining the Marine Corps in 2006. In 2008 he deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and then in 2010 he was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Littesy is still an active duty Marine, but he now has the opportunity to pursue school full time through a work-sponsored program.

Littesy knew he wanted to further his education, so he registered for classes at local community colleges beginning in 2008. He took night school and accelerated eight-week classes which allowed him to accumulate 60 credits to transfer to San Diego State.

Three months after he returned from Afghanistan, Littesy entered into SDSU for the fall 2011 semester. He was interested in his financial and managerial accounting coursework so it made sense to him to declare accounting as his major. Almost three years later, he has completed his undergraduate accounting coursework and is currently working on his 600+ level accounting courses and his minor in finance. Littesy will receive his undergraduate and graduate degrees in May 2015.

Littesy is also an active member of SDSU’s Beta Alpha Psi chapter and is currently the VP of Membership. He recently led Beta Alpha Psi’s Collaboration Committee to a first-place finish at their regional meeting in February and represented the Western Region at the national meeting in August. He credits the Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy for the opportunities it has provided him. Littesy was pleased to have the opportunity to intern with Big Four firms. He interned with PricewaterhouseCoopers’ Assurance Practice in San Diego this summer.

Savana Kalfayan is a senior majoring in accounting and is planning to enter the BMAcc program in Fall 2014. She is a San Diego native and is highly involved as a community volunteer and currently serves the treasurer for the Society of Orphaned Armenian Relief, an organization with numerous global chapters. In addition, she participated in scholarship pageants and was crowned Miss El Cajon in 2011 and Miss Coastal Cities in 2013.

Savana came to SDSU as a management major with the intention of attending law school. She switched to accounting after her dad realized she was doing well in Accounting 201 and asked her to do the financials in his food distribution business. She grew to love accounting, so she switched her major and has focused on becoming a CPA instead of an attorney.

In addition to her volunteer work, a part-time position at the food distribution company and a summer internship at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Savana also serves as president of Beta Alpha Psi. She was part of the team that represented SDSU at the organization’s regional competition in Anaheim, where they won first place in the leadership and collaboration competitions. She and other chapter members competed against other universities at Beta Alpha Psi’s national competition in Atlanta in August 2014.

Upon her planned graduation in December 2015, Savana plans to continue to work closely with SDSU’s Charles W. Lamden School of Accountancy. “I’ve gained so much professional experience and expertise from Beta Alpha Psi and the professors within the School of Accountancy that I look forward to giving back to students as a professional in the near future,” she said.
CHARLES W. LAMDEN SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTANCY

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