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**Innovative Program to Ease Attainment of CPA Education Requirement Gets Off to Quick Start**

 *The Experience, Learn and Earn Program, Developed by AICPA and NASBA, Looks to Recruit More Students for Upcoming Semesters*

**NASHVILLE, TN and NEW YORK, NY (April 2, 2024)** – A pilot program to help accounting graduates earn the required academic credits for CPA licensure is off to a quick start and has earned positive reviews in limited feedback so far from students and the accounting firms that employ them.

Thirty-eight students are currently enrolled in the [Experience, Learn & Earn (ELE) program](https://experiencelearnearn.org/), developed by the American Institute of CPAs and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as a flexible and affordable way for accounting graduates to complete the CPA licensure requirement of an extra 30 academic credits beyond a typical bachelor’s program. Online classes, offered through [Tulane University’s School of Professional Advancement](https://sopa.tulane.edu/) (SoPA), began in January.

“No single initiative will solve the profession’s talent shortage,” said Susan Coffey, CPA, CGMA, AICPA & CIMA’s CEO of public accounting. “But the ELE program demonstrates the kind of creativity, collaboration and follow-through we need to remove barriers to a successful and rewarding career in accounting. This is a true partnership of accounting firm innovators, academic leaders and motivated advocates for the profession.”

Accounting graduates are recruited into the program by accounting firms (businesses and government entities can also sponsor candidates), which agree to employ them. ELE combines asynchronous online study with early work experience, so accounting graduates can work toward their CPA license while earning a paycheck.

Tulane SoPA currently offers more than a dozen classes through the program, including titles such as “Business Ethics,” “Principles of Management,” and “Writing in the Workplace.” The cost is $150 per credit hour, with some firms picking up the tab for their employees. More courses are expected to be added in subsequent semesters, particularly as the program expands.

“This partnership holds great promise for both the students and our institution,” said Ilianna Kwaske, interim dean of Tulane SoPA.

“This is a great example of how Tulane SoPA is responsive to industry needs through innovative and engaging online courses we developed that offer content directly applicable to working professionals. We look forward to growing our relationship with AICPA, NASBA and future ELE students.”

More than 250 firms of all sizes have expressed interest in the program, which is now open for enrollments for the summer and fall sessions. One of the advantages of the online courses is firms can recruit accounting graduates anywhere. Wipfli, a Top 20 accounting firm, has five candidates – all from different locations nationwide -- in the inaugural ELE cohort.

Maureen Pistone, who heads human resources for Wipfli, said the experiment has been a success so far and the firm is looking to expand its number of enrolled recruits. The firm picks up the entire cost of the program for its participants.

“The feedback from the five has been that they appreciate the flexibility and affordability,” Pistone said.

The program is soliciting input from students, firms and educators on potential improvements going forward.

“We plan to continue to fine tune and strengthen the ELE,” said NASBA President and CEO Ken Bishop. “The ELE program addresses two important pipeline issues. The cost of the fifth year of college can be a barrier for some potential CPA candidates and the ability for firms to attract, hire and retain new CPA professionals has been challenging, particularly for smaller firms. The early results are promising, and we want to build on that success.”

To learn more about ELE, please visit [experiencelearnearn.org.](https://experiencelearnearn.org/) The site includes information for students, educators, firms and other organizations that want to sponsor candidates.

**About the American Institute of CPAs**

The American Institute of CPAs® (AICPA) is the world’s largest member association representing the CPA profession, with more than 415,000 members in the United States and worldwide, and a history of serving the public interest since 1887. AICPA members represent many areas of practice, including business and industry, public practice, government, education and consulting. AICPA sets ethical standards for its members and U.S. auditing standards for private companies, not-for-profit organizations, and federal, state and local governments. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination, offers specialized credentials, builds the pipeline of future talent and drives continuing education to advance the vitality, relevance and quality of the profession.

**About NASBA**

Since 1908, the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) has served as a forum for the nation’s Boards of Accountancy, which administer the Uniform CPA Examination, license more than 672,000 certified public accountants and regulate the practice of public accountancy in the United States.

NASBA’s mission is to enhance the effectiveness and advance the common interests of the Boards of Accountancy in meeting their regulatory responsibilities. The Association promotes the exchange of information among accountancy boards, serving the needs of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions.

NASBA is headquartered in Nashville, TN, with an International Computer Testing and Call Center in Guam and operations in San Juan, PR. To learn more about NASBA, visit [www.nasba.org](https://outlook.office.com/local/path/file%3A/C%3A/Users/cgray/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/Content.Outlook/VVTSH0J6/www.nasba.org).

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