

Program Fact Sheet for Accounting Majors

Name of program:

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration--Accounting, requires 60 hours, with 36 hours of liberal studies and 24 hours to use for electives, second major or a minor.

Q1: What makes this program special? We have excellent accounting faculty, internship opportunities, and a strong curriculum. The BSBA degree gives our accounting majors a broad exposure to business areas. A degree in accounting is an excellent entry point into many businesses, either public or private. Many people at higher management levels in companies have some experience in accounting. The accounting function is an excellent place to begin and see the entire business operations. Employment opportunities for people with accounting degrees are quite varied ranging from public accounting firms to private businesses, large or small, and a wide variety of not-for-profit entities.

Q2: Are there any additional admission requirements? Yes, to declare Accounting as a major, students must have a GPA of 2.2 for their first thirty hours of college credit. Students are strongly encouraged to declare Accounting as their major early in their college studies and begin taking courses in the program since there are some courses which require prerequisites and to ensure that graduation requirements are met.

Q3: What scholarship monies are available? The accounting program has a number of scholarships that are specific to Accounting majors including the Beegle Scholarship, Swanger Scholarship, WCU Board of Advisors Scholarship and competitive scholarships offered by the Western North Carolina and North Carolina Associations of Certified Public Accountants, the American Institute of CPA's and by the Institute of Management Accountants. Scholarships range from \$250 to \$5,000.

Q4: What will I be able to do with this degree when I graduate? The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants predicts an increase of roughly 18% in the hiring of new accounting graduates between 2004 and 2009, while the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that jobs in business and financial operations will increase nearly 20% between the years 2004 and 2015. Average starting salaries for new accounting graduates are approaching \$45,000. Those with a graduate degree can expect starting salaries near \$50,000. Some new hires receive signing bonuses, education packages and up to six weeks paid vacation in their first year. Jobs are available in private industry, public accounting, tax services, non-profit organizations, law enforcement and forensics, government, financial institutions, systems and consulting services.

Q5: What are the professors in this program like? Seven of the eight full-time accounting faculty hold doctorate degrees and seven of the eight are CPAs. Most have many years of experience in accounting and business and are able to bring these real-life experiences into the classroom. Faculty members know and interact with area accounting firms and businesses and participate in academic and/or professional organizations.

Q6: What are the students in the program doing?

- Tara Carrington, a WCU junior, won a \$3,000 scholarship last spring from the North Carolina Association of CPAs for her essay on minorities in accounting.

- WCU Alumni Ken Hughes and Mitch Crisp founded Crisp Hughes, now merged into Dixon-Hughes, the largest accounting firm headquartered in the southeast with over 750 employees. Hughes was recently named one of the 100 most influential people in accounting by *CPA Magazine*. Two Dixon-Hughes partners and one of their regional Directors of Recruiting serve on the Accountancy Board of Advisors.
- The accounting program places several students in professional accounting internships each semester with pay ranging from \$10 to \$25 per hour. Spring schedules are adjusted to accommodate students who must leave campus for internships.

Q7: Will I be able to participate in clubs and other extracurricular opportunities? The Accounting Club, WCU's student organization, invites guest speakers and takes field trips throughout the year. Additionally we have excellent speakers brought in by the University and College. For example, in Spring 2008, our visitors include Barry Melancon, the President and CEO of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) and Cynthia Cooper, WorldCom whistleblower. Students have the opportunity to attend their talks and meet the speakers. We also have "Meet the Firms" night, where accounting students and people from area businesses meet and socialize. Another opportunity for our students is the "Interview Day" where firms and businesses come to campus and interview students for internships, part-time jobs, and full-time jobs.

Q8: Things you should know about this program:

- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Degree
- 24-hour major, 36-hour common business core, 36 hours of liberal studies, 24 hours of electives
- Paid and non-paid experiential learning through internships
- Average starting salaries near \$45,000 nationally
- Master of Accountancy program offered in Asheville
- Accounting club participation available
- "Meet the Firms" evening program and interviewing workshops
- Active advisory board of area CPAs and businesses
- Local scholarship money available

Q9: Careers associated with this degree:

- Public accounting
- Tax services
- Consulting
- Banks/other financial institutions/personal financial services

- Government/Non-profit entities
- Small business accounting
- Internal Auditing
- Law enforcement and forensic accounting

Q10: Whom do I contact for more information about?

Name: Dr. Leroy Kauffman

E-mail: kauffman@email.wcu.edu

Ph: [828] 227-3480

Program and/or departmental Web site address: www.wcu.edu/cob/afe/

Additional links:

Accounting salary information: www.wageweb.com/fin1.

General information and jobs: www.accounting.com

Dixon-Hughes, LLC: www.dixon-hughes.com