

HR — ROI

They're finally here and working for you now

Six years ago, the Indiana CPA Society started the INCPAS Scholars program for high potential minority high school students who have high potential as future CPAs.

Not only does this program aid students, it is mutually beneficial to the organizations providing mentors, speakers, tours, sponsorships and other support that is building company recognition and trust.

"Since we started the Scholars program,

firms and companies in Indiana have embraced the program more and more each year," said INCPAS Director of Diversity & Outreach Ali Paul. "Organizations are actively coming to the table, eager to participate."

Now 2016-17 marks a monumental milestone for the INCPAS Scholars program as several students from the inaugural Scholars class are graduating from college or nearing graduation. See what some of them are up to, and how the program and our sponsoring organizations helped them get there!

The only one of its kind nationwide, this award-winning, free year-long program encourages students to consider becoming a CPA by meeting practicing CPAs, touring CPA firms and businesses that employ CPAs, and participating in events throughout the year to get immersed in the profession.

Since 2011, 105 students have participated with 79 percent going on to major in accounting and/or business. To date, all but three program graduates have stayed in Indiana for college.



WILL CLINKSCALES – TAX ASSOCIATE, PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS LLC

Will Clinkscates started the program as a senior at North Central High School in Indianapolis in 2009. He graduated from the IUPUI Kelley School of Business with a degree in accounting and finance. He interned at PwC twice — once in the general program, the second time in tax — and worked as an accounting clerk for the Jewish Community Center.

He has met the 150-hour requirement and already sat for two sections of the CPA Exam.

Will Clinkscates met Bill Sharkey, CPA, JD, a partner PwC at the first-ever Scholars

Welcome dinner. His mentor worked for PwC, so Sharkey asked Clinkscates to keep in touch and update him on his progress.

Clinkscates followed through and interned with PwC twice, then was offered a full-time position in its tax group after he graduated. Now, five years after meeting Sharkey at the Scholars Welcome Dinner, he is working for him.

"In the end, the partner that invested so much time in the Scholars program building

great relationships and rapport helped influence my decision about where to work," said Clinkscates. "It shows that all the time that was put into the Scholars program, and everybody that's donated time and money toward it, is worth it and is paying off."

Clinkscates' continued involvement with the program demonstrates how it aims to create a constant cycle of talent by former

Scholars becoming role models and mentors to new Scholars.

Sharkey is proud of the role he has played in contributing to that talent pipeline, both through INCPAS programs and through the student initiatives he champions at his own firm.

"When we gather as CPAs, it is important to look around and observe our lack of diversity. I have done this within and outside of my organization. It is striking how far our makeup differs from the general population. It was clear to me that I needed to take action with the support of PwC to make a difference. My experience has shown that a team of people with differing backgrounds will be more creative and successful than a homogeneous team."



As one of the first scholar sponsors why did you make the initial investment knowing you'd have to wait several years before students made it to the workforce?

PwC has been working for some time to promote diversity in the workplace. The opportunity to invest in the new INCPAS mentoring program fit very well with new efforts that our office Managing Partner and I were implementing in the Indianapolis market. Our mission was not just specific

to PwC, but an interest in more diversity in the accounting profession as a whole. The lack of diversity in accounting had not arisen overnight and it would take time for our investment to bear fruit.

— Bill Sharkey, CPA, JD, Partner at PwC



YAKOV ADELFINSKY – ACCOUNTING SERVICES CONSULTANT, UMBAUGH

Yakov Adelfinsky started as a senior at Westfield High School. He graduated from IUPUI Kelley School of Business with a degree in accounting and finance in December and started working for Umbaugh in January. Before that, he interned with INCPAS twice and was a finance clerk/summer intern at Darlington Foods.

He has completed the 150-credit hour requirement and plans to sit for the first part of the CPA Exam this winter.

Adelfinsky was in the inaugural class of INCPAS Scholars and learned the value of networking and mentorship. He said his mentor was recently out of college and passed along great advice while it was still fresh in mind.

"He helped me with everything from recommended classes, experiences and even the type of pants I can wash instead of dry

clean every time," Adelfinsky said. "My mentor's been put through the ringer and knows what to expect. It's good to have someone in your corner who can help advise you on the right path."

Armed with the best professional tips, Adelfinsky attended an accounting and finance recruiting fair at IUPUI where he met the recruiting manager for Umbaugh. He sent her a LinkedIn request and said he'd like to know more about the organization, did a phone interview, then an on-site interview and had an offer before he graduated.

As with Clinkscapes, Adelfinsky used all the program resources to secure a skill set and networked to better position himself in the job market.

The firm he's now working for is involved with the Scholars program as well, with Umbaugh sponsoring for the first time this year. Current INCPAS board member Doug Baldessari, CPA,



is a partner there and helped get them involved.

"This is a very important program to be a part of," said Baldessari. "We struggle with diversity in our firm and needed to move forward in a way that helped not only our firm but the whole profession. Even if students decide they want to go into a different field, we're helping move them through figuring out what they want to be."

Baldessari had met Adelfinsky at an INCPAS Finance Committee meeting but didn't realize he was Umbaugh's new hire until afterwards. "He was a very intelligent young man – we're excited to have him aboard."

Umbaugh's HR team knew he was an INCPAS Scholar and knew the background of the program thanks to having three mentors on staff.

"Yakov had the right education we look for — the accounting degree, the 150 hours, the CPA track," said Director of Human Resources Laura Bentley. "In addition, he had two internships and work experience through college, which we look for in every new hire. He also had an interest in serving the public.

When it came down to the decision, the fact that he was part of the INCPAS Scholars was an added benefit as we're always looking to improve diversity in our workforce."

GREGORY CLARK – PARTICIPANT SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE, ONE AMERICA FINANCIAL PARTNERS INC.

Gregory Clark started as a senior at Brebeuf Jesuit High School. He graduated from Indiana University Bloomington with a major in management through the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He interned at 100 Black Men of America, served as the executive team lead for the National Association of Black Accountants and also as an INCPAS Scholar mentor.

Clark's initial accounting course at IU was a combination of three types of accounting. With the different types of information, processes and materials being more overwhelming than anticipated, he changed direction to focus on management and public affairs.

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Although he isn't pursuing the CPA designation at the moment, Clark still appreciates and applies what he learned through the Scholars program.

"The program allowed me to learn how to establish connections," said Clark. "It teaches you the importance of following up with people and maintaining your relationships because you never know those relationships are going to."

Clark continues to give back to the program and participate in events when he can.


"It's great to see how many new students are involved and what their experiences are since the program keeps growing and changing," said Clark. "It's important to give back to the program that provided so much to me."

After attending the Alumni Ambassador Workshop & Reception this August, Clark reconnected with and was recruited by one of the sponsoring companies in attendance. Clark followed up with OneAmerica's director of talent management and acquisition strategy Damon Martin, MBA, SSGB, and received an offer after his first round of interviews.

"Scholars events are a way to get to know students in more detail, to find out their aspirations and goals, and understand how those align with your organization and culture," said Martin. "For the companies that want to find the best talent and begin a relationship before they graduate — this is a great place to start."

WHAT'S NEXT

As the program continues, more Scholars will graduate from college, enter the profession and diversify the CPA landscape. With 19 former Scholars going to be seniors in college this fall and 21 to be juniors, this program will continue to serve as a pipeline of diversity for the profession. These students also serve a pivotal role in recruiting Scholars to be future CPAs.

"The goal of the INCPAS Scholars program is to increase diversity in the CPA profession," said Paul. "We spend a great deal of time encouraging Scholars to share their experiences with their peers. They are excited about their future and as their excitement grows, their passion for increasing awareness about the CPA profession grows — as well as ultimately the talent pool here in Indiana." 

TAKE ACTION!

Support diversity and inclusion initiatives.

You can support the Society's programs or your organization can help sponsor the Scholars by contacting Director – Diversity & Outreach Ali Paul at (317) 726-5025 or apaul@incpas.org.



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