

Profiles in Student Life

By Michael J. Barber

Name: Nhu Le

University: University of Houston
(Main Campus) – Bauer College of Business

Current Year: Senior

Internship: Doeren Mayhew – Audit Group

Student outreach and engagement are important aspects of the mission of TXCPA and the individual chapters. Benefits to the student include being better positioned for greater individual professional success, networking with professionals from within the very same profession to which they aspire to join and mentorship from those within their field of interest. The organization also receives a great benefit of cultivating our future pipeline. Within the Student Auxiliary you will find future members who will continue the growth and expansion of the field of professionals, future leaders grown from within the organization, and a future network of young professionals who, as their own careers flourish, will provide the next generation with that all important network of contacts, mentors, and guiding lights. We caught up with (virtually – of course!) Nhu Le, a senior at the University of Houston, Bauer College of Business. As a senior, she is not only prepping for the completion of her studies, the beginning of her career, and studying for the CPA exam, she is also serving an internship in the Audit Group of Doeren Mayhew, a member of TXCPA Houston and is serving as the president of the Student Auxiliary.

Nhu has been a member of TXCPA Houston for two years. She became involved in the organization after a LinkedIn connection shared that she was acting as a panelist at a TXCPA event on cybersecurity. Nhu said that attending this first chapter event was different from other accounting events she had attended on campus. She saw that TXCPA was an opportunity to learn directly from professionals about the diverse



“I saw TXCPA as a great opportunity for students to network and gain information about the accounting profession...” - Nhu Le

fields of accounting and their experiences. From this experience, she realized she would be able to learn about both the opportunities and challenges faced by others as they attempted to break into their chosen field and how she could be better situated to set herself up for success in her own career.

And so, Nhu began her journey with TXCPA Houston. She has had the opportunity to attend multiple events and meet outstanding professionals from the accounting world. Thus far, Nhu stated that her favorite events were the “Awards Dinner,” where she was honored to have met Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, and the “Scholarship Extravaganza,” where she volunteered to help raise funds for Houston area students. As she became more involved with

TXCPA Houston and the Student Auxiliary, Nhu applied to be an officer for the Student Auxiliary. She hoped to use this platform to get more students to know about TXCPA Houston and get those students engaged in all the opportunities TXCPA Houston has to offer.

Now, Nhu is serving as the president of the Student Auxiliary group of TXCPA Houston. She informs her fellow accounting majors of the Student Auxiliary networking events, volunteer opportunities, and learning experiences, especially those that are not found in the university classroom environment. This is free to accounting students! So why would they not want to take advantage of this great opportunity?

Nhu also believes that as the effect of technology on the accounting profession evolves, so will the role of TXCPA and other similar professional associations. Professional associations will need to change and re-invent their role, events and methods of professional delivery specifically as technology platforms grow and distance learning becomes a norm.

About Nhu Le

Nhu made the difficult and life changing decision to move to the United States for university. Nhu came half-way around the world on her own facing several challenges such as language and cultural barriers and adjusting to an entirely new way of life. Upon her arrival, Nhu had three goals in mind: to work hard, to find her success, and to overcome these challenges. Working to advance her education and preparing for her future career, Nhu had to force herself out her comfort zone through participation in student organizations. This involvement allowed her the ability to improve her abilities in communication both linguistically and culturally, create meaningful and lasting friendships, and create a network

of essential contacts. In her own words Nhu says: "Looking back to that time, I realized how those challenges have helped me grow into a better version of myself and develop a sense of independence and adaptability." Nhu credits her upbringing and the lessons learned from her parents and family as her central influence in making this decision to come to a new country and culture for her education. Her family has always emphasized the importance of a great education and have themselves worked to provide her the opportunity to be a 1st generation collegiate graduate in the family. She states that their "tireless work ethic, determination and compassion" has been a leading motivator for her own success and professional development.



In talking with Nhu about the barriers she's faced, and the solutions that she's found, a few themes emerged: opportunity and the seizure of your opportunities, mentorship and involvement in professional organizations.

During her first semester at Bauer (University of Houston – C.T. Bauer College of Business), Nhu went to a career fair and

quickly realized that she was not ready for the competitiveness of the professional recruiting process. Working to improve and differentiate herself from the pack, Nhu applied for and was accepted into the "Program for Excellence in Selling" at Bauer, one of the nation's leading sales programs, which academically prepares its students for careers in sales, facilitating internships, and provides advisement for career placement. Through this program, Nhu received 18 credit hours (approximately 270 "real world" hours) of live sales training, building a per brand, customer relationship management, overcoming objections, and how to "sell oneself." Being among the top 20 students in her class selected to manage corporate partnerships, her goal for the program was to land an internship. A goal where her diligence and dedicated work ethic paid off: "I am very happy to say that

these experiences helped me achieve my goal of obtaining an internship." (Nhu Le)

Nhu is clearly a motivated individual, both personally and professionally, from her family upbringing to her desire to inspire and motivate others. She counts herself lucky to have had the opportunity to work as an academic assistant at Bauer and as a volunteer to teach elementary students. Her goal is to constantly develop and advance her professional career while allowing time to donate her talents. Nhu gives back to others through coaching, teaching, and mentoring, as others have done for her. In her own words: "Throughout my life, I have had the privilege to meet and learn from many wonderful people. I am thankful to be able to call these three individuals my mentors." (Nhu Le)

She counts among those mentors:

Amy Vandaveer, professor at University of Houston, who was her first professor at Bauer, and for whom she was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to work for as an academic assistant. From Ms. Vandaveer, Nhu learned to follow her personal values and to be assertive about following her passions.

Chris Masters, managing shareholder at Doeren Mayhew who Nhu met throughout her recruiting process. She learned about both his career and a new perspective of the accounting field. Nhu credits his advice and guidance for earning her internship at Doeren Mayhew.

Megan Iselin, senior associate at PricewaterhouseCoopers whom Nhu met through TXCPA Houston when Megan was a member of the Steering Committee and now Megan chairs. Nhu credits Megan with giving "me continuous support regarding leadership and how to transition from college to the corporate world." This is something Nhu hopes to mentor others through as they transition to the professional world.

A Message to Other Students:

As president of the Student Auxiliary of TXCPA Houston, Nhu notes that her role has given her the chance to practice and improve her public speaking skills. In this leadership role, she can

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STUDENT AUXILIARY



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- Networking with Houston's most prominent CPAs
- Getting involved with your future profession
- TXCPA Houston gives scholarships every year
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For more information: call 713.622.7733
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demonstrate a variety of skills from running meetings with the Steering Committee, communicating effectively with other officers and moderating events. Nhu feels that she has grown to be more confident and comfortable in public speaking which should prove to be very beneficial throughout her professional career.

"Life can be hectic sometimes, so the key is to learn how to manage your time and weigh your priorities." (Nhu Le)

Nhu Le encourages students to attend every event they can make it to, to be professional (and dress like one), to be fully present and to maximize every available networking opportunity. "It's up to you to build yourself up, so don't be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone!" (Nhu Le)

So how does she handle it all? Full-time student, president of the Student Auxiliary, member of TXCPA Houston, and an intern?

Per Nhu, the answer is time management, personal drive and a desire for success - and practice! "I've gained time management skills by being a full-time student, working as an intern, and participating in extracurricular activities for multiple years." (Nhu Le)

It is also helpful that many firms are supportive and flexible enough to allow student-interns to participate in TXCPA Houston meetings and events even during busy season.

In her free time, Nhu loves traveling and painting. She travels to observe the beauty of nature and paints to enjoy the beauty of art.

Michael J. Barber is a former school administrator and classroom educator. After spending over two decades in public and private education, Michael has migrated to the continuing professional education coordinator at TXCPA Houston.



Left: Ed Roth, CFA, CPA, CFP®, CEBS • Charlotte M. Jungen, CPA, CFP® • Wade D. Egmon, CPA, CFP® • Steven R. Goodman, CPA, CFP® • Chris A. Matlock, CPA, CFA

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