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English 201H

Professor Anstendig

Interview Summary

I am currently majoring in public accounting and I am aspiring to be accepted into a combined BBA/MBA in public accounting. I hope to one day become a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and gain experience for working for one of the big four. Due to these goals, I wanted to research in depth the field of accounting and clear any misconceptions. I turned to Raymond Reisig, a fellow Professor at Pace University who is a CPA and has been teaching now for 34 years. In my interview I was able to explore and learn that accounting encompasses exceptional articulation, managing for diversity, and the importance of ethical standards.

For years there have been many misconceptions claiming that accountants “only deal with numbers”. It may come as a surprise to many that, writing is one of the most important forms of communication in the field of accounting. In fact, Reisig states, “You have to be able to know how to write to be successful in accounting.” As an accountant, you gain writing skills on a technical standpoint by communicating  “basic business” to clients, team members and society. However, because business writing is the only type of writing practiced in the field of accounting, skills in other areas of writing may suffer. Through business communications, such as issuing opinions about a company’s financial statements, accountants are writing their opinions for the world to see; for this reason, Reisig believes that clarity is the most important quality to have when writing in the field of accounting. An accountant must be clear and concise in order to successfully communicate information to various groups of people.

Due to the fact that I am both a woman and a minority, I was interested in learning more about the topic of diversity in my interview with Professor Reisig. I learned that in the past, accounting was known as a profession **for** mostly white males, Reisig stated that when he first started working as a public accountant about 30 years ago, “80 percent of employees weremale and 90 percent were white.” Recently, there have been a huge number of women entering into the field of accounting than ever before. In an article Reisig found, it states that currently there are more woman being hired in the big four accounting firms than men. He also observed that in his current auditing class filled graduate students well on their way to finishing college, that there are more woman than men. Not only is the increase in diversity seen in woman, but also in different race and religions. Big accounting firms have clients from all around the world, which means the more diverse their clients become, the more diverse they must also become.

            One of the most important principals that accounting is rooted upon is ethics. Ethical standards are hugely important in the field of accounting mostly because, as Resig explains, “Our whole profession depends upon people trusting us.” Accountants are expected to hold a strict code of ethics that the rest of the world may not have to follow. For example, Reisig believes that the most important ethical standard in accounting is independence. This means that if you work for a firm you should not have a relationship with your client other than the auditing relationship; this includes things such as restraining from buying stock from your client or loaning money to your client. Although accounting has been known to be the most trusted profession, this perception is changing for many due to an increase in fraud. As an accountant, you are faced with ethical dilemmas, like deciding whether you do the right thing by not lying about financial income on an income statement and lose a client, money and a reputation, or lie to satisfy your client and collect your fees. Due to situations such as these, accountants are expected to hold themselves to a higher degree of ethical standards than the law requires so that people put their faith in what they say.

After my interview, I was able to see accounting as more than just numbers. Learning about the different aspects in accounting has broadened my perspectives and motivated me to keep pushing toward my goals. The misconception that accountants work to please their customers was disproved during my interview with Reisig, the strong and high standards of ethics in the field of accounting are admirable. The rise of successful businesswomen in the field of accounting has become an inspiration; I too wish to be part of that class of accomplished women.