Mark Prater (BS Accounting ‘81), a native of Portland, earned an accounting degree from Portland State University and a law degree at Willamette University. He practiced law in Portland before taking a job with the Senate Finance Committee in 1990.

Prater was chosen last year to be the staff director of the congressional “super committee” charged with developing a deficit reduction plan.

Mark is the top Republican tax staffer in the U.S. Senate and staffs the Committee on Finance, where he advises Iowa Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member, who is working to reform the pension system and make changes in our tax laws.

Prater became the committee’s chief tax counsel when Sen. Robert Packwood was chair. Packwood was one of the architects of the 1986 Tax Reform Act, which Prater describes as the last major tax reform effort. From 1995 to 2001, he worked with then chair, the late Sen. William Roth, Jr., co-author of the Roth IRA.

Prater now advises Sen. Chuck Grassley, who is working to reform the pension system, provide tax relief for families with children, and lower marginal tax rates across the board.

Given the shifting personalities and the rigors of the Finance Committee’s work, staff turnover is high. In fact, Prater is the only staff member remaining from the Packwood era.

“There’s a lot of detailed, deliberate compromising as a part of the tax code,” he says. “It’s helpful to have someone who knows the story behind why something turned out the way it did.”

He attributes his longevity in part to the committee’s interest in maintaining continuity. Prater stays because he still finds the job compelling, and it offers a unique position for a tax lawyer.

Tax lawyers typically work to show the implications of the law, but Prater’s job is the only one where a tax lawyer can actually change the law. He enjoys being able to make a difference.

“Tax law affects everyone,” says Prater. “With so many competing issues at stake, you have to find a way to balance between the way a law affects various groups of people.”

He admits that politics can be frustrating at times, especially when they ensnare an act that he believes is good policy. Prater has found, however, that if a proposal has merit and support, it will eventually make its way into law.
Greetings from the Accounting Area at PSU! On behalf of the Accounting Faculty, it is a pleasure to share our activities and challenges of the past year.

CPA Exam News
This last year marked several notable achievements by our students taking the CPA exam. PSU had the 19th highest pass rate in the country for students with graduate degrees taking the exam for the first time in 2010! Overall our students continue to maintain pass rates exceeding the national average. PSU was also delighted to learn that one of our post-baccalaureate students, David Pagliarullo was the top scorer on the CPA exam in Oregon. Congratulations to all our students for their success on this challenging exam!

Students News
PSU continues to have the largest accounting program in Oregon, graduating 177 undergrad/post-bac students and 44 MSFA students during 2010/11. Placing this many students in our still tight economy is our biggest challenge. Despite reduced budgets, we’ve been able to meet class demand and support student professional development outside the classroom. In partnership with Beta Alpha Psi, we continue to help students develop their professional polish through our mentoring program, individual resume reviews, and interviewing and resume writing workshops. So as your organizations need new accounting professionals, please consider posting the positions on our Accounting Listserve by contacting beckye@sba.pdx.edu. Currently we have over 1,000 students who receive the communication.

Faculty News
I continue to be awed by our faculty’s involvement and success in the accounting community. Here’s just a few of their accomplishments. Ray Johnson serves the National State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) as the Western Region Director and Ethics Committee chair. Kristi Yuthas received a two year grant from Rice University to conduct research on measurement of social and environmental performance. Jesse Dillard received the 2011 Accounting Historians Journal best paper award. Kathy Rupley published three articles on corporate governance, and David Layzell is pursuing his Doctorate in Business Administration at the University of Liverpool. Whew!

Supporter News
In these times of tight state budgets, we are more grateful than ever for the financial support of donors to the Accounting Area. These funds ensure support of student professional development activities and faculty continuing education, both of which strengthen our program and the quality of our graduates.

Warm regards,

Elizabeth Almer, Accounting Area Director

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**Faculty Spotlight**

**Darrell Brown Reflects on Serving as Associate Dean of Undergraduate Programs**

**Q: Can you please provide some background on your career path prior to PSU?**

A: I have a Bachelor’s degree in Forestry and spent several years working for the Bureau of Land Management (US Department of Interior) and the State of Montana as a range conservationist. I returned to school at University of Montana where I got my MBA and my accounting education. I spent a couple of years working as a public accountant and got my CPA in Montana. Simultaneously, I began teaching part-time, then full-time, and decided that a PhD was necessary to really achieve my goal of being a college teacher. After receiving my degree from the University of Utah, PSU was hiring so I was lucky enough to get a job here.

**Q: Within PSU, what lead you to the position of Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs?**

A: It seemed like a good opportunity to try some new skills and meet a new set of challenges. I started the position in July of 2007. Luckily, Maureen O’Connor was just down the hall. She was my predecessor and she was always generous with her time for me.

**Q: In the beginning of your tenure as associate dean, what were your initial goals? Do you feel like you accomplished what you set out to do?**

A: My first goal was to make the SBA a smoother functioning place. I never felt that my position was to “transform” the SBA, but rather to make the operation of the place more effective, closer aligned to the mission, more responsive to faculty and student needs, and more efficient. I also wanted to make environmental and social issues a larger part of the undergraduate experience. I do feel like the SBA functions well and I think that my tenure as AD helped. Regarding the second goal, I don’t think I went very far with that. We did get some traction, particularly in the Business core, but I am disappointed that I did not get more accomplished there.
Q: What were some of your milestones during your time as dean?
A: On the negative side, we eliminated the Information Systems Management option during my tenure. That was very difficult, both from a faculty and from a student perspective. We spent a lot of time and effort trying to figure out how to save the option, to no avail. It turned out that we simply did not have the resources to keep it going in any meaningful way. It was a tough decision and resulted in a lot of wakeful nights.

On the positive side, we brought the University Studies (UNST) Capstones into the SBA, in our BA 495, Business Strategy class. This was a great collaborative effort to recast our BA 495 class to incorporate UNST goals and to provide an outstanding experience to SBA seniors as they finish their academic careers. Every business undergraduate will have a community based learning experience with organizations in our community prior to graduation. This change, the result of many people across the University, gives a pragmatic and exciting opportunity to work with a community partner in a meaningful way for all of our graduates.

Q: Where do you see yourself going from here?
A: I have a number of years left at PSU, I hope. My goal is to accomplish some of the things I did not get done as an Associate Dean. In particular I want to focus on providing an authentic “sustainability” experience for undergraduates in the SBA and at PSU. I hope to help students see how to use their skills, knowledge, and values throughout their careers to create an environmentally and socially sustainable world while providing a better quality of life to communities and individuals.
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CPA Accolades!

Preparing for the CPA exams is often a precarious balancing act of juggling school and work, along with the arduous process of studying. Despite the challenge, PSU students continue to exceed the national average pass rates, and have even achieved top 20 ranking! PSU had the 19th highest pass rate in the country for students with graduate degrees taking the exam for the first time in 2010! Congratulations to all our students passing the exam! Below are profiles of two successful PSU exam candidates.

With a nursing degree from OHSU, Kristin Osorio (MSFA, ’10) was in midst of a PhD program in chemistry before realizing accounting as her true passion. She took the exam while juggling a rigorous load of classes and working as a graduate assistant. Kristin’s CPA scores helped lead PSU to rank 19th in the nation among students taking the CPAs for the first time with graduate degrees. Kristin currently works for Novogradac, a mid-sized CPA firm specializing in the affordable housing industry with a new office in Portland. Novogradac is ranked by Accounting Today and Inside Public Accounting as one of the top 50 accounting firms in the nation. Aside from auditing, she has had the opportunity to work on numerous forward thinking projects, most recently in southern Oregon to build a food bank and head start center, performing financial modeling, compliance reporting, and consulting. When the transaction closed, she was very happy to see the fruition of her hard work with a new food bank and head start center for the community.

David Pagliarulo (Post-Bac ’10) was honored at the 2011 OSCPA Circle of Excellence award as the top scorer in the state of Oregon. David, a former head-hunter for accounting talent, decided to make the switch to public accounting himself by completing the Post-Baccalaureate Accounting Certificate in 2010. He studied diligently and was able to ace all four exams within the same testing period before starting as an audit staff at Deloitte in September of 2010. Aside from his hard work, David attributes his success to PSU’s professors and their excellent knowledge of academic and real-world experience. His acumen in accounting, along with strong networks built during his time with Beta Alpha Psi, helped land him a position with a Big Four firm. With clients like Standard Insurance and Precision Castparts Corp on his roster, David feels fortunate to have such rare exposure to successful companies in very different industries.