



Madhuri Bandla: Guiding the Next Generation of CPAs Through Mentorship, Leadership and Dedication

Madhuri Bandla, CPA-Dallas, CFE, is a Senior Lecturer of Accounting at the University of North Texas (UNT) G. Brint Ryan College of Business and recently completed her eight-year work anniversary. She has been a Texas licensed CPA since 2007 and more recently, completed her CFE in 2023. She serves as the Faculty Advisor for UNT's Don and Donna Millican Accounting Scholars Program, the Faculty Ambassador for TXCPA at UNT, a member of the Partners in Education Committee for TXCPA Dallas, and on the AICPA Academic Executive Committee. Madhuri has over a decade of professional experience in the areas of public accounting, financial reporting, internal control and SEC filings prior to making the transition to academia. Prior to switching to academia, she was AVP of Financial Reporting and Controls at a publicly listed mortgage company.

Madhuri was recognized with the TXCPA Outstanding Educator Award in 2018. She strives to make a positive difference to the university, the accounting profession and the local community. She is deeply committed to student success, building and strengthening mentoring relationships, and serving as an active volunteer.

Today's CPA had the privilege of connecting with Madhuri, exploring her career path and her dedication to teaching, learning and facilitating professional development.

What made you choose to major in accounting? Can you discuss your career journey, what led you to become a CPA and your current role as a Senior Lecturer of Accounting at the University of North Texas?

I initially wanted to be a journalist or news reporter, as I enjoyed writing and telling stories. My first accounting class was way back in high school in Chennai, India (where I was born and raised). Debits and credits came very naturally to me and there was no looking back. I was one of the state toppers with a perfect score and went on to major in accounting before moving to the U.S.

I am a proud alumna of UNT's MS Accounting program with concentration in Audit. I graduated in 2006 and landed my first job as an auditor with Deloitte in the Dallas office. Subsequently, I transitioned to industry and held a variety of accounting and financial reporting roles. I came to realize that financial reporting was storytelling with numbers and I loved it even more. I've enjoyed the intellectual challenge in all of my jobs and met the most amazing, intelligent and talented group of accountants throughout my various roles.

Thanks to accounting and my CPA license, I'm grateful to have always had opportunities knocking on my door. At one time, I was consulting with two companies and also taught an evening class as an adjunct faculty. I loved the classroom and realized it was my playground, where ideas, learning and accounting could all come together. I also enjoyed the vibrant energy of working on campus. For a few years, I balanced corporate work life with teaching an evening class until once again, opportunity or destiny knocked on my door. I got a full-time faculty position at my alma mater UNT and have been here for the past eight years. I'm starting a new journey toward my Doctorate in Business with concentration in Accounting at Penn State University's Smeal College of Business.

In your experience, what trends do you foresee in accounting in the near future?

AI has shifted the business landscape, but accounting is a profession that has stood

the test of time even with cyclical ups and downs. Critical thinking, leadership, integrity and trust are the intangibles that will keep the profession strong and alive. In addition to traditional accounting paths that will continue to have a strong demand for top talent, the transferable skills of accountants will make them valuable in the ESG, IT, analytics and start-ups space to name a few.

I also believe we need more CPAs in the classroom and on the frontlines talking to our students. Raising awareness is key, as is being a mentor and/or a connector.

With changes to some of the work-life models, the profession has stepped up its flexibility compared to my time a decade ago and that's another positive step in the

an accounting concept that solidifies their knowledge for the CPA Exam, or facilitating professional development through workshops, giving an extra nudge to a student to get back on track or connecting them to a mentor, there are opportunities to make an impact in the life of another that I most love about this profession.

I'm also thankful to UNT for a nurturing environment that encourages learning, growth and creative thinking.

What advice do you give students who would like to pursue the CPA license?

Success in accounting is an achievable goal and not an elusive one. I tell students you can discover your path to success by

degree and a CPA, that is another attractive career option. I see that many Gen Zs also have an interest in non-profit or becoming entrepreneurs, and accountants will again have a competitive edge in those domains with their skillsets.

You've actively served in a number of leadership roles and committees in your chapter, for TXCPA and for AICPA. Why is volunteering and/or committee service so important to you?

My family in India is very service-oriented. Growing up, I frequently accompanied my mother to community service projects and found it to be very fulfilling. I believe that when it comes to service, you don't need a leadership title, and giving your time and talents for a cause or mission is the best form of service. I've had wonderful experiences visiting and presenting at high schools across the metroplex. I want to continue to serve and give back to a profession that has been fulfilling to me in different stages of my life.

Outside of work, over the years, I've enjoyed volunteering for Junior Achievement, Texas Women's Foundation and National Charity League.

Tell us about your family.

My husband has an engineering background and specializes in the field of aviation strategy and analytics. My son is a junior and my daughter is a freshman in high school. Work-life balance is a juggling act of moving with the flow and ensuring I don't drop the ball! My parents live in India and my sister lives in the UK and summers are when I try to meet either or both if I'm lucky.

What do you like to do when you're not working?

I enjoy reading books, traveling, practicing yoga, meditation and Indian classical dance, which keeps me connected to my roots. I'm a foodie and love the restaurants and diverse cuisines in the DFW metroplex.



right direction. From that perspective, working parents will find accounting to be stable and attractive for the long term.

What do you enjoy most about teaching and building mentoring relationships?

Alluding to one of my favorite quotes of Adam Grant **"The most meaningful way to succeed is to help others succeed,"** teaching is a purpose-driven profession and I'm always grateful for the opportunity to help the next generation realize their potential. Whether it's clarifying

aligning your interests and aptitude with an accounting track of your choice. It may be audit, tax, advisory, cost accounting or financial reporting for example, and once you find your niche, you can become an expert in that area. But you also have the flexibility to transition out when you want a change.

The CPA license puts you a cut above the rest, enhancing your market value as a professional and opening up a world of more possibilities and diverse opportunities. Higher education is also a great space and with a master's