

## **SSU accounting majors rank first in nation on CPA exams**

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Accounting majors at Sangamon State University ranked first in the nation in terms of their pass rate on the national exam to become certified public accountants.

According to data released recently by the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy, SSU students had a pass rate of 47 percent on the November 1993 CPA exam. That was the highest rate for first-time candidates without advanced degrees among approximately 400 schools with 15 or more first-time candidates.

Only 39 of the schools had pass rates of more than 30 percent.

"The CPA pass rate is a widely used indicator of the quality of education being provided," said SSU President Naomi Lynn. "Having the highest pass rate in the nation indicates that SSU can compete successfully with major business schools across the country."

Other universities that made the "top 20" list released by the NASBA include the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the University of Michigan, UCLA, Georgetown University, the University of Missouri at Columbia and Northern Illinois University.

Leonard Branson, chairman of SSU's accounting department, said the high rating also reflects well on the faculty and programs at the junior colleges -- including Lincoln Land, Illinois Central and Richland -- that give SSU students their initial training.

Branson noted that the average age of students in the accounting program is 31, that 60 percent are women, and that most are employed full time and have families.

"We are extremely pleased that our students are balancing the demands of otherwise full lives while performing at the very highest level by placing top in the nation on a very rigorous standardized examination," Branson said.

He noted that SSU accounting students have earned three Elijah Watt Sells awards in the last three years. The awards are given to approximately the top 100 scores out of the 70,000 CPA exams taken twice a year.

The NASBA report also indicated that the pass rate on the CPA exam for SSU graduates was 33 percent, more than double the national average, for the period from May 1992 to November 1993.

That rating put SSU in the top 5 percent of the approximately 700 colleges and universities included in the association's report.

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