

## **UIS produces another top CPA exam scorer**

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By Natalie Morris

Brian Stocker hadn't done a lot of research when he signed up for accounting courses at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Fact is, Stocker--an attorney for the Illinois Department of Revenue--chose the school simply because it was close to work. Classes were already under way when he learned that UIS has one of the nation's highest pass rates for the certified public accountant exam.

"My goal was just to do the best I could on the exam and learn the material," said Stocker, who received one of the country's highest scores on the May exam. "I got the most out of my money."

Stocker scored 379 on the 400-point test, placing him among the top 120 scores out of the 65,000 entrants taking the spring exam. His performance earned him and EXCEL award from the CPA Society.

He isn't alone.

Stocker is lucky number 13 for the UIS business department, which prepared a dozen other previous students to achieve top CPA test scores.

Considering the school produces EXCEL winners at six times the national rate, the department's associate professor David Olson summed it up modestly.

"We continue to have pretty good success with the test," he said.

Thomas Snell was the first UIS graduate to earn the equivalent of an EXCEL in 1978. It didn't happen again until the spring of 1986 with Susan Hrabak and then Pamela McClland in the Spring 1991 exam and Lois Frazee in the fall of the same year.

Since then, the department has produced top-score achievers in rapid succession: Robert Scot in 1993, Ann Gordon and Micah Bartlertt in 1995, Paul Boyer, Timothy Hull and Zhifan "Jane" Wang in 1997, Laura Subick Scott in 1998 and Nancy French last year.

Throughout the later 1990s, the school's accounting department has had the highest pass rate in the nation for people taking the CPA exam for the first time--running ahead of many larger and better-known institutions, such as UIS's sister campus in Champaign-Urbana and the University of Notre Dame.

Wang summed up her experience with what is generally considered to be a white-knuckle exam by endorsing her alma mater.

"It wasn't as difficult as I expected," she said after earning the fourth-highest CPA score in the nation on the November 1998 test. "It was just using what I'd learned and applying it."

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