

FRAUD MAGAZINE
MARCH/APRIL 2008
COLUMN: FRAUD EDGE
DRAFT 2: DC, 1/6/08
DRAFT 3: WK 1/14/08
DRAFT 4: DC 1/15/08

FRAUD EXAMINATION ACADEMIC CONFERENCES BLOOM IN THE SPRING

By William J. Kresse, J.D., M.S., CFE, CPA

It has been said that research is the lifeblood of academia. Well, if that's true, then academic conferences must be the air that academia breathes. For what does it profit an academician to devote oneself to research if the findings, theories, and cases developed can't be presented, discussed, and debated with colleagues?

In the past, with a few exceptions, academic research in fraud examination had to be presented at either academic conferences that were primarily dedicated to other disciplines or at professional conferences. This places the fraud examination academic in a difficult spot. Professional conferences, sadly, aren't viewed favorably by many in the academy as "appropriate" venues for presenting academic research. And educators who have wanted to present research in fraud examination at academic conferences in other disciplines must first get over the hurdle of having their proposals accepted by conference organizers who might not be familiar with, or interested in, fraud examination.

Happily, this situation is changing.

Fraud examination is quickly becoming recognized as a discipline in its own right. Academic conferences dedicated to fraud examination are beginning to pop up like tulips in the spring. However, these new academic conferences all tend to have a unique feature: they aren't

open only to educators. While many academic conferences in other disciplines seem to be exclusively for academicians in a specific discipline, the organizers of fraud examination academic conferences apparently recognize that much can be learned from, and much can be shared with, fraud examination professionals outside of the academy. As such, most of these new fraud examination academic conferences welcome, and encourage, participation from fraud examination professionals.

Here are two important upcoming conferences for fraud examination educators.

2008 International Fraud and Forensic Accounting Education Conference, May 8 - 10, Las Vegas, Nev.

In 2003, West Virginia University (WVU), with an award from the U.S. Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice, embarked on a mission to develop a model curriculum covering the requisite foundational skills in the emerging discipline of fraud examination and forensic accounting. WVU assembled a network of 46 subject-matter experts from across the United States, representing corporate and industry stakeholders, professional services providers, law enforcement, the legal community, government and regulatory stakeholders, professional organizations, and academics. (For more on the network's early work, see the FraudEDge column in the January/February 2006 issue.) Working with this network, WVU produced its model curriculum report "Education and Training in Fraud and Forensic Accounting: A Guide for Educational Institutions, Stakeholder Organizations, Faculty and Students" (available at www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/217589.pdf).

In September of 2006, WVU rolled out the model curriculum report at an academic conference of more than 130 educators and other anti-fraud professionals in Pittsburgh, Penn. Through a combination of presentations, panel discussions, and informal interactions, this

conference accomplished its multiple purposes of publicizing the model curriculum report, starting a dialogue among fraud examination and forensic accounting educators, and giving academics and practicing professionals an opportunity to interact. (Again, see the January/February 2006 column.)

In May of last year, WVU co-hosted the 2007 Fraud and Forensic Accounting Education Conference in Savannah, Ga. More than 200 attended – twice as many as the Pittsburgh conference, which was only eight months earlier!

An even more ambitious conference is being planned for May 8 - 10. WVU and the organizing committee of academics and professionals from a number of different universities and organizations have designed a 2 ½-day conference with more than 20 different 90-minute sessions and several plenary sessions covering a variety of topics. The organizers said that 20 hours of continuing professional education credits can be earned.

The conference organizers have arranged an impressive collection of featured speakers from around the globe for plenary and luncheon sessions. And the 90-minute seminar sessions cover a comprehensive spectrum of fraud topics from basic to advanced skill levels. Topics include:

- Basic Concepts of Fraud
- Conducting a Fraud Examination: the Basics
- Cash Disbursement Schemes
- Financial Statement Fraud: Revenue Recognition Schemes
- The Role of the Internal Auditor: Preventing, Detecting and Deterring Fraud
- Fraud Risk Assessment and Fraud Brainstorming: a Demonstration
- Fraud and Forensic Accounting: Education Panel Discussion

- Data Mining: a Demonstration
- Why Good People Go Bad: the Psychology and Sociology of Fraud
- Communication and Testifying for Consulting Experts
- Interviewing Techniques for Forensic Accountants, Fraud Examiners and Auditors: Fact Finding vs. Target Interviewing
- Management Override of Internal Control – Fraud Risk Assessment
- Fraud Examination and Forensic Accounting in a Digital World
- PCAOB Update: PCAOB Statement No. 5
- International Money Laundering, Banking Systems, Moving Money Around the World
- The Law as It Applies to Financial Statement Fraud: A Legal Perspective
- Complex Frauds and Financial Crimes: Detection and Deterrence of Collusive Frauds

Like the prior conferences, this conference is open to both academics and working professionals. The conference’s purpose is incorporated in its description: “Designed to Help Practicing Professionals and Academics Develop Foundational Skills: Centered Around Best Practices, Tools and Techniques.” Organizers stress that they welcome academics in fraud examination, forensic accounting, and any related discipline, including, but not limited to, accounting, law, sociology, psychology, criminal justice, intelligence, computer forensics, and forensic sciences. In fact, any university, college, or academic organization that sends three or more representatives will be recognized as an “Academic Partner” regardless of rank or affiliation of the representatives (such as dean, professor, lecturer, adjunct, or part-time). Moreover, any professional organization that sends three or more participants will be recognized as “Professional Partners in Fraud and Forensic Accounting Education.”

But many might contend that the best feature of the 2008 conference is its venue: Bally's Hotel and Casino in fabulous Las Vegas!

For general information and questions, contact Karen Smith of WVU at KarenR.Smith@mail.wvu.edu. For information about conference content, activities, sponsorship or participation, contact Prof. Dick Riley of WVU at Richard.Riley@mail.wvu.edu.

19th Annual ACFE Fraud Conference and Exhibition, July 13 - 18, Boston, Mass.

No listing of significant conferences for academics involved in fraud examination would be complete without including the 19th Annual ACFE Fraud Conference and Exhibition July 13 - 18 at the Hynes Convention Center in historical and exciting Boston. This conference is always a valuable convocation where academics and practitioners can meet, interact, and exchange ideas. The numerous workshops and plenary sessions will keep fraud examination educators on the cutting edge of fraud examination theory and practice.

The 7th Annual Educators Meeting, which convenes during the conference, draws dozens of fraud examination professors to hear presentations on the latest developments and learn about the ways the ACFE can assist them in educating the next generation of professional fraud examiners. Past Educators Meetings covered topics such as improvements in the ACFE Higher Education initiative, support for ACFE Student Chapters at participating colleges and universities, ideas for research in the area of fraud, and academic journal publishing opportunities for fraud examination articles.

*William J. Kresse, M.S., J.D., CFE, CPA, is an assistant professor in the Graham School of Management at Saint Xavier University in Chicago, Ill. He's also the chair of the ACFE Higher Education Committee, and is the recipient of the 2007 ACFE Educator of the Year Award. His e-mail address is: **kresse@sxu.edu**.*