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THE NYSSCPA'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

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ACCOUNTING FOR GOOD

By S.J. Steinhardt

A numbers whiz with a relentless drive for improvement—his own and his organization's



Name: Sherrard J. Zamore
Job title: Controller, United Hospital Fund
Mission: To build an effective and equitable health care system for every New Yorker

When Sherrard J. Zamore was 12, he wanted to be a medical doctor. His mother was a medical assistant, and when he was growing up, her work fascinated him so much that he avidly watched TV shows such as “House” and “CSI,” which got him interested in a career in forensics.

That interest was bolstered by a high school internship with preventive health care provider EHE International, now EHE Health, that extended into the summer and thereafter.

“I took a job there as an intern and then shifted my way into the accounting department, and that’s where my love for accounting began,” Zamore said.

Those early interests served him well in his career. As controller at the United Hospital Fund (UHF), a nonprofit organization that supports voluntary, nonprofit hospitals in New York City and provides policy analysis and solutions, he has his hands in every aspect of the fund’s financial operations.

His love of accounting is enhanced by his passion for numbers. He acknowledged that passion decades ago, when he went to pick up a computer that he ordered from now-defunct retailer CompUSA. When the day came to pick up his new machine, he arrived at the store, only to discover that he had forgotten the receipt. No matter: He recited the entire 20-digit number to the clerk, and that allowed him to take his new computer home with him that day.

“It was around then that I [knew] that I really like numbers,” he said. “‘House’ and other [medical] shows such as ‘CSI’ were a double-edged sword. While [they inspired] a fascination for medicine and collaboration and the generation of ideas, [they] also left a void. What I saw or perceived from these shows didn’t provide me with a sense of career direction. While being a member of the health care or medical community is a tremendous achievement and requires

great dedication, it didn’t satisfy me.” He added that he became surer about a career in accounting after his internship and his CompUSA moment.

After taking Advanced Placement classes in math at the High School for Health Professions & Human Services, he went on to earn his bachelor’s degree in accounting from York College/CUNY in 2013, and his MBA in economic crime and fraud management from Utica College (now Utica University) in 2015.

Zamore didn’t stop working; he began his master’s degree at Utica during his last semester at York, commenced a full-time job as a staff accountant at EHE Health, then moved on to the Office of the New York City Comptroller as a staff auditor. While there, he obtained his certified fraud examiner (CFE) certification. He also applied to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, going so far as to submit to rigorous physical and psychological

testing, before deciding that the career path that he preferred to take was serving people in an accounting and controller capacity.

After a stint at RSM US LLP’s assurance division, he became the assistant vice president in the controller’s office of Nassau Community College—a few months before the world was upended by the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The experience definitely garnered me a bunch of knowledge and leadership skills to manage such a large group with a larger budget,” he said. “It afforded me the ability to be a pandemic leader and manage things a lot more remotely, especially for a group of people that were very paper heavy. I gained a lot of skills but ultimately found that I wanted to work for an organization more [like a] nonprofit that was actually giving back—not that the college was not!”

Being motivated, a self-starter and a quick study are just three of the Zamore’s qualities

that stood out to UHF Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Quincy McLain, who hired Zamore in early 2021. The organization had just implemented new enterprise resource planning software, and Zamore dove right in.

"He just did a lot of research on the various functionalities of this [software] when he first started, because we had recently gone live with this new system," said McLain. "He picked it up so well. He just took the initiative to research various functionalities, so I just

and other financial information for our program folks, [that] is what I have been trying to do recently."

"I'm focused on the finance implementations that are possible with our [human resources management]/ payroll system," he said. "It's currently integrated, but understanding and working with our various teams to make that integration more efficient and more useful has been my approach, because there are still many manual processes that could be automated to

a doctoral student in organizational leadership at the University of Dayton, attending remotely. He is in the process of writing his proposal for a dissertation on the lack of minority representation in the accounting field, focusing primarily on Black and Latino students who choose accounting as a major.

His research will focus on comparing minority and nonminority students, how academic and career interests develop, how educational

Department of Educational Administration, to become his dissertation adviser.

"Our program ... has a social justice focus, and so we get a lot of students who are interested in topics like that," she said. "For him and for other students in the program, it's just a matter of people wanting to make the world a better place."

"It's easy to give him feedback because he just accepts it," she continued. "He doesn't say, 'No, I think you're

"I would encourage young CPAs to ensure [that] they diversify their skill sets, network strategically, understand the mission of the nonprofit, understand how they fit culturally into the organization, and make sure they are advocating for things that they value," Zamore said.

knew, early on, that he just naturally took initiative."

One of Zamore's strongest attributes is that he always looks for a way to do something smarter, faster or more inexpensively, said McLain.

"He'll review things and, ... given the nature of his role, capacity or control, he'll see transactions come through and ... find a cheaper vendor," he said. "He's always ... trying to find ways for us to just be a better organization and a better team, better department, better function."

That drive for continuous improvement gets Zamore up every morning.

"Obviously, as a nonprofit organization, we're always seeking grants. ... So where we can create those efficiencies in the accounting department and create better reporting accuracy and timeliness in providing reports, dashboards

bring back thinking power instead of time doing repetitive processes."

That initiative has already made an impact on the organization, McLain said.

Zamore is "taking the initiative to improve our labor cost reporting," he explained. "One of the things he helped improve in the organization is disseminating information to the stakeholders in the organization. And one of the big components of that is grant reporting. He developed a very cogent and concise labor distribution report that we disseminated on a monthly basis to the various grant program directors, so they can see how much time their staff is charging to a grant, to make sure that we optimize the grant dollars."

That striving for continuous improvement is not just limited to his professional life. Zamore is currently

and career choices are made, and how academic and career success can be obtained. The research will also include contextual factors such as role models and systemic barriers to determine how the pipeline of minority accounting students can be improved.

The topic sufficiently interested Elizabeth Essex, a lecturer in the university's

wrong.' ... He's just very willing to listen and learn. And he's a decent writer, which helps a lot, and I just enjoy [working with] him. He's just a nice person, too."

Zamore also mentors his two direct reports at UHF, where he serves on the Consistent and Equitable Standards DEI [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion] Workgroup, whose



Two doctors at SBH Health System reviewing an enhanced electronic health record as part of a United Hospital Fund project to reduce preventable hospital readmissions. Photo: Victor Chu

stated goal is “helping ensure equitable and consistent standards across the organization for staff, so that everyone gets what they need.” He also teaches accounting as a remote adjunct instructor at Southern New Hampshire University and at Berkeley College.

He is active in the NYSSCPA, serving as a member of the Exempt Organizations, Not-for-Profit Organizations, Health Care and Chief Financial Officers committees.

“I joined these committees to stay abreast in my field,” he said. “My organization is

an exempt not-for-profit, so those were natural committees to join, as I assisted in the Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax) preparation, and in the ASC [Accounting Standards Codification] Topic 842 (Lessors—Certain Leases with Variable Lease Payments) implementation at UHF. While UHF doesn’t provide health care services, I felt it would be helpful to stay informed of any potential changes in health care that could help me better understand the landscape in which our partners operate.”

Committee membership also serves his career aspirations. The CFO Committee provides him with the insights needed to think more like a CFO than as a controller, and to enhance his strategic planning skills.

“Having your finger on the pulse tends to be harder if you’re not actively engaged or actively enrolled in some of these things that come through,” he said. “Just to be a part of a community and to have that resource for additional information [is useful] because there’s a lot of information that goes on, being an accountant.”

When asked about his advice to current or aspiring CPAs considering a career in nonprofits, he said, “I would encourage young CPAs to ensure [that] they diversify their skill sets, network strategically, understand the mission of the nonprofit, understand how they fit culturally into the organization, and make sure they are advocating for things that they value.”



The United Hospital Fund is working to build a strengthened primary care system for children that recognizes the impact of social and economic factors on children's health.



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