

Miss and Mister Universe of the accountancy profession

• **Opinion**

by [Joel L. Tan-Torres](#) - Business Mirror December 28, 2015



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JUST as Miss Universe Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach was able to accomplish an outstanding milestone when she bested the rest of the universe in winning her crown in December, there are a lot of Miss/es Universe or Mister/s Universe winners in the accountancy sector who have made extraordinary achievements in 2015.

This year, as chairman of the Board of Accountancy (BOA), I have personally witnessed and worked with several individuals in our accountancy sector in the BOA's efforts to uplift the level of the profession. These individuals have generously contributed their time, effort and resources in the activities of the BOA under its "Expanding Horizons" initiative. Because of their exemplary work, they have attained success and the accolade of the various stakeholders and parties that they interact with. Truly, they deserve the honor of being recognized as the Miss and Mister Universe of the accountancy profession. I wisely will not name them at this time for the reason that I may miss acknowledging some individuals in the process. Moreover, I know that they will be more comfortable doing their great efforts behind the scene with as little publicity as possible.

These unnamed individuals have contributed immensely in the formulation and the implementation of the six-point Expanding Horizons strategic plan for the accountancy profession. This strategic plan has been finalized last month and will serve as the road map and vision for all accountants in uplifting the standards and level of the accountancy profession.

The strategic plan consists of the following thrusts: 1) institute quality and governance measures; 2) effectively regulate the profession; 3) enhance image and reputation of the accounting professional; 4) enhance stakeholders' involvement and cooperation; 5) institute structural change; and, 6) provide communication and assistance mechanisms.

In 2015 the major accomplishments in putting in place governance measures include the continued journey toward the Performance Governance System institutionalization, the forming of the partnership with Integrity Initiative Inc., the issuance of the updated Code of Ethics, and the governance reform and oversight over the accredited professional organization and sectoral accountancy organizations.

The quality-enhancement measures put into place are the preparation for the implementation of Asean Mutual Recognition Arrangement for Accountancy Services; the search for Most Outstanding Expanding Horizon Organization Award; the forging of the partnership with the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; the renewed quality inspection of accounting schools; the launch of the BOA Internship Program; and the utilization of the ACPA Assessment Tool. In all of these activities, a number of able and supportive accountants were involved in achieving the major (and minor) successes in the various activities.

The BOA, in coordination with various government offices and the different accountancy sectoral organizations, implemented several regulatory initiatives. The implementation of the quality assurance review (QAR) on the practicing Certified Public Accountants (CPA) was the focus in 2015. There were several dialogues conducted with the various stakeholders on the QAR; and the new rules and

regulations for this program have been finalized by the BOA for the approval of the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC). The Philippines Institute of CPAs (Picpa) also organized its own voluntary QAR program to prepare for the full-blown implementation of the QAR of the BOA.

The BOA effected several measures on the streamlining of administrative investigation process, the posting of the list in the BOA web site of CPAs allowed to engage in public practice, and promoting the adoption of cybersecurity measures to secure the vulnerable accountancy platforms of enterprises.

Several regulatory measures were recommended by the BOA that will improve the regulatory environment. These include the rules on prescribing a quality accreditation checklist; the conduct of verification of the principal place of office of practicing accountants; the requirement for the submission of a certificate of validation services on the financial statements; the submission of engagement reports of accredited accountants in public practice; accreditation of CPAs in commerce and industry; accreditation of CPA partners and staff; and the delegation of the signing of accreditation papers. These should have been implemented in 2015, but due to the bureaucratic logjam, if not inefficiencies in the PRC, these measures are still pending up to this time. However, it is expected that these will all be put in place in early 2016.

A notable activity of the BOA was its pursuit of a proactive campaign against erring CPAs. It is clear that the BOA is serious in safeguarding the interest of the general public and the professional CPAs, most of whom comply with their obligations and responsibilities and practice the elements of quality work and good governance. The BOA is particularly resolute in detecting and penalizing the erring CPAs whose ill practices not only give them an unfair advantage over the rest of the CPAs, but besmirch the reputation of the entire accountancy profession.

The year 2015 witnessed the launch of several publications on the accountancy sector. The BOA released the first issue of the *News Ledger* magazine, containing the many activities of the BOA; the *Highest Standards Technical Journal*,

containing articles on relevant accounting issues written by accountants; and the Debit Credit column in the BusinessMirror, where accountants take turns in contributing articles of business and accounting issues. These publications give the opportunity to accountants to publish their literary creations and to showcase their talents and insights.

Project ACCT (accountant) was launched during the Annual National Convention of accountants in Puerto Princesa in November. I released the audio-visual presentation (AVP) clip, entitled “I am Accountant,” which aims to enhance the image and reputation of the accountant. The AVP also clearly promoted the pride and self-esteem in being accountants.

The accountancy profession was able to get together the various stakeholders and to involve them in various cooperative undertakings. These included the holding of two accountancy leaders and stakeholders forum; the conduct of dialogues with affiliated accountancy certification bodies; the tie up with various developmental partners, such as the World Bank, ADB and others; the formation of the Council of Accreditation Regulators, the Academic Industry linkages; the Citizens Participatory Audit for CPAs involving the collaboration of the Commission on Audit, Bureau of Customs, Picpa and BOA; discussions on accountancy matters with the Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Cooperative Development Authority, Department of Finance, Securities and Exchange Commission, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Bureau of Internal Revenue and Insurance Commission; and the meetings with the accountancy regulators and professional organizations of other countries. There was close coordination and teamwork of the different organizations in the various sectors, such as the Picpa, Association of CPAs in Public Practice, Association of CPAs in Commerce and Industry, Government Association of CPAs, National Association of CPAs in Education and the National Federation of Junior Philippine Institute of Accountants.

To be continued

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