

# February 2026 Newsletter



The Association of  
Accountants and  
Financial Professionals  
in Business

## Muscle Shoals Chapter

Welcome to the latest news from the Muscle Shoals Chapter of the IMA! This newsletter brings you the latest updates and upcoming activities from both our chapter and the Athens State University Student Chapter. Whether you're a longtime member or newly connected, we're glad you're part of a community that values learning, leadership, and professional growth. Visit us on the web at <https://muscleshoals.imanet.org/home>.

### Watch For Free Upcoming CPE Webinars

The IMA Muscle Shoals Chapter has an upcoming webinar, and you're invited! Our webinars are free to attend, eligible for CPE, and held online on Monday evenings at 6:00pm CT. Upcoming events include:



#### Tax Update

March 2, 2026, presented by Sarah Roberts, CPA. Stay up to date on the latest federal tax developments with this timely session, which will review key changes and updates affecting individuals and businesses. The link to register and attend can be found at <https://event.on24.com/wcc/r/5209998/F4890A2D454F11751BBFA77313D51F58>.

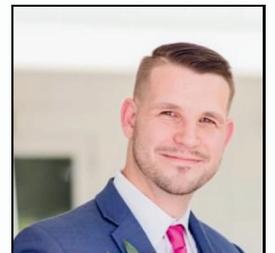
Additional meetings and details, including information to register and attend the sessions, will be posted on our website as they are scheduled: <https://muscleshoals.imanet.org/home>.

### Thank You to Our Recent Webinar Presenters

The IMA Muscle Shoals Chapter routinely provides professional webinars offering CPE credit and covering topics that all professionals will find useful.

#### Doing Better with Less

On February 9th, Professor Michael Phillips and Dr. Stacie Hughes, both of Athens State University, presented "Doing Better with Less" to an audience of 233 participants from across the U.S. and abroad. They guided participants through a clear framework defining productivity, evaluating key influencing factors, and understanding modern measurement approaches. The session also examined how automation and AI are reshaping performance expectations and offered actionable strategies to enhance both personal and team effectiveness. The conversation reinforced a central theme: productivity is no longer just about output; it's about working smarter, leveraging technology wisely, and aligning effort with impact.



Thank you to the presenters for doing an amazing job and supporting our continuing professional education!

## Athens State University IMA Student Chapter News



We are proud to serve as the parent chapter of the Athens State University IMA Student Chapter (IMASC). The organization is led by an outstanding group of student volunteers and supported by faculty advisors Professor Emily Corzine and Professor Michael Phillips. IMASC members participate in plant and industry tours, engage in community service, attend conferences and educational events, and so much more.

In addition, the IMASC also holds regular professional meetings to give students insight into different fields and professions in the area of accounting. The events don't qualify for CPE, but they are open to everyone. Students from all institutions are especially encouraged to attend. The IMASC has the following upcoming events:

- **March 12, 2026, 12pm – 1pm CT** (Zoom Link: <https://athens.zoom.us/j/89941858207>)
  - Topic: Accounting in the Insurance Industry, Presenter: Ryan Schwoebel, CFE, CFI, Investigator with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama
- **March 19, 2026, 12pm – 1pm CT** (Zoom Link: <https://athens.zoom.us/j/86269572711>)
  - Topic: Certified Management Accountant (CMA); Presenters: Professor Michael Phillis & Dr. Stacie Hughes
- **March 26, 2026, 12pm – 1pm CT** (Zoom Link: <https://athens.zoom.us/j/85724417966>)
  - Topic: Accounting in Steel Manufacturing; Presenter: Will Nafe, Controller, Nucor Corp

You can read more about the great things the IMASC is up to in the latest edition of their newsletter: [Fall 2025 IMASC Newsletter](#).

## Congratulations to Our First Distinguished Accounting Scholarship Recipient!

Congratulations to Alexis Brown, recipient of the inaugural IMA Muscle Shoals Chapter Distinguished Accounting Scholarship at Athens State University for use in the 2025-26 academic year. This scholarship recognizes excellence, leadership, and active involvement in the IMA Student Chapter.



Applications are now open for the 2026-27 academic year. Learn more and apply here: <https://www.athens.edu/admissions/scholarships/foundation-alumni/>.



We are also proud to offer endowed scholarships at the University of North Alabama: <https://www.una.edu/admissions/new-freshmen/scholarships.html>



## Congratulations to CMA Scholarship Recipients!

As part of the IMA Higher Education Endorsement program, Athens State University students are awarded up to 10 CMA or FMAA scholarships annually to recognize goal-oriented, qualifying students. We're proud to announce that six Athens State students have already been awarded the CMA scholarship. We congratulate these outstanding students on taking this important step toward earning the Certified Management Accountant (CMA) credential and advancing their professional careers. We're so proud to have them as members of the IMA and our chapter.



The remaining four scholarships will be awarded to eligible Athens State students at the March 19 IMASC meeting. Thank you to Dr. Stacie Hughes and Professor Michael Phillips for facilitating the IMA Higher Education Endorsement Program and the annual CMA Scholarship awards.

## Are You Interested in Serving as an Officer or Director with Our Chapter?

Our chapter is always looking for members interested in serving as chapter officers and directors. Volunteering in this capacity is a meaningful way to give back to the profession, expand your leadership skills, and strengthen your professional network.

Prior board experience isn't required; you just need a willingness to serve and collaborate. Officer and director roles are designed to be manageable for working professionals, with flexible time commitments that can fit your schedule. If you would like to learn more, we would be glad to talk with you about available opportunities. Just reach out to our chapter president, Dr. Diann Hammon, at [diann.hammon@athens.edu](mailto:diann.hammon@athens.edu). We'd love to have you involved.

## 2025-2026 Officers and Directors

The following officers and directors are honored to serve and support our members:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>President</b>                        | Dr. Diann Hammon, CPA  |
| <b>President-Elect</b>                  | Dr. John Berzett, CMA, CPA, CGMA   |
| <b>VP - Administration</b>              | Dr. Diann Hammon, CPA  |
| <b>VP - Professional Education</b>      | Amanda Tillman, CMA  |
| <b>Secretary</b>                        | Camilla Strickland, CPA  |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                        | Dr. Mark Lawrence, CMA, CFM, CPA   |
| <b>Director of CMA Programs</b>         | Dr. Stacie Hughes, CMA, CFM, CPA, CFE, CGMA, FCPA                          |
| <b>VP - Engagement</b>                  | Dr. John Berzett, CMA, CPA, CGMA   |
| <b>Directors of Newsletter</b>          | Cory Butler, CPA, CMA<br>Dr. Stacie Hughes, CMA, CFM, CPA, CFE, CGMA, FCPA |
| <b>Director of Program &amp; Roster</b> | Cory Butler, CPA, CMA  |
| <b>Webmaster</b>                        | Michael Phillips, CFE  |

## Have Something You Would Like Included in the Newsletter?

The success of our chapter is driven by our members. If you have professional achievements, certifications, promotions, upcoming events, or other updates to share, we would love to include them in a future issue. Please email your submissions or suggestions to [stacie.hughes@athens.edu](mailto:stacie.hughes@athens.edu).

This newsletter was prepared by Dr. Stacie Hughes and Mr. Cory Butler, Newsletter Directors for the IMA Muscle Shoals Chapter. We appreciate their time and effort in gathering content and producing this issue.