What is your destiny as an academic accountant?

To be presented by Professor James Guthrie, Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance

Macquarie University

with

Professor Roger Burritt, Centre for Accounting Governance and Sustainability (CAGS)

University of South Australia

Abstract

This paper examines present challenges and future possibilities for accounting education and accounting academics from an Australian perspective. The aim of the paper is to address the serious concerns in the Australian context about the sustainability of quality accounting education and research in academia. The paper uses a storytelling technique, in which the experiences of our main character, Associate Professor Mary, a hypothetical Australian accounting academic, are used to explore the transformation of the Australian higher education sector in the period 2003-2013, focusing on three themes. First, the financial position faced by university accounting schools in times of commercially focused management and globalization. Second, the extent to which the university accounting community is in control of its own destiny. Third, what the profession and practice can do to support its academic accounting members. Mary’s story is the combination of our own experience, research and messages from an Academic Leadership series which we co-authored and was published by the Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia (ICAA) and the Centre for Accounting, Governance and Sustainability (CAGS) at the University of South Australia.

Apart from understanding the impact of institutional change on accounting academic identity, the paper’s main contribution is that it presents the research findings in a story that allows its interpretation to connect reader and subject on a personal level. Also the paper establishes several contemporary problems and challenges that hopefully will set the scene for determining future directions and prospects. The paper concludes on an optimistic note for the future.

Key words: accounting education; accounting academics; accounting research; Australian higher education system; globalization of higher education