Support provided from the Ed and Betty Robinson Faculty Fellow continues to allow Michigan Tech’s Accounting program to thrive. This past year, resources were utilized in three main areas: student support, curriculum development, and faculty professional development.

**Student Support**

Scholarships continue to be a hallmark of the Ed and Betty Robinson Faculty Fellow award. Student entering the Master of Science in Accounting program receive support to not only offset the cost of graduate education, but to also embark upon preparation for the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) exam. During 2019, over $11,000 was awarded to students. An extremely gratifying aspect of my being named the Ed and Betty Robinson Faculty Fellow is to witness the achievements of our graduate students. The scholarship support has created the opportunity for recipients to earn graduate degrees and realize their full potential.

**Curriculum Development**

The impact of technology advances, data creation and availability, and analytics is rapidly transforming the role of an accountant. In recent years, a major focus of the American Accounting Association has centered on one slogan – “Accounting is Big Data”. To position our Accounting program to meet these transformational challenges, enhancements were made to the curriculum based on the following rationale:

a. A strategic initiative to prepare students in accordance with Tech Forward “How Will Michigan Tech Influence and Adapt to Five Disruptive Forces”, most notably as it relates to Data Sources and Big Data
b. A strategic initiative to prepare students in accordance with the vision of Michigan Tech’s School of Business and Economics to produce “tech-savvy business graduates”

c. Michigan Tech’s School of Business and Economics’ accreditation body, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, now requires accounting programs to demonstrate “development of skills and knowledge related to data creation, data sharing, data analytics, data mining, data reporting, and storage within and across organizations.” (AACSB Standard 9 – Curriculum Content)

d. In an April 2017 survey by Forbes Insight and KPMG, 26% of financial executives said advanced technologies would become essential to accounting in the next two years, and 55% viewed advanced technology skills as becoming a “must have” in three to five years.

As such, during the past year the following additions were made to the Accounting Program:

**Bachelor of Science in Accounting with Data Analytics Concentration**

The undergraduate concentration in data analytics leverages Michigan Tech’s strengths in accounting, management information systems, and mathematics to create a contemporary and robust 18-credit curriculum that will provide accounting majors with a competitive edge when entering the professional work environment or in preparation for advanced studies at the graduate level.

The undergraduate curriculum was also enhanced overall through creation of a new course – ACC 4000 Accounting Data Analytics, focusing on the following:

Develop knowledge and competencies in data analytic techniques to generate accounting information used for business intelligence. Applied exercises with software tools are used to cover topics including data preparation, analysis, visualization, and scenario analysis.

**Graduate Certificate in Accounting Analytics**
Coursework in the Accounting Analytics Certificate is designed to allow students to develop knowledge and skills expected in a contemporary accounting environment that utilizes analytics to drive informed business decision making.

Learning objectives and examples of software utilized in the 9-credit certificate program include:

- Understanding Structured and Unstructured Databases (SQL, Hadoop)
- Obtaining and Cleaning Accounting Data (Alteryx)
- Data Visualization (Tableau, PowerBI)
- Descriptive, Predictive, Prescriptive Analytics (Oracle, SAS)
- Programming Languages (Python, R Open)

Graduate Certificate in Forensic Accounting

Coursework in the Forensic Accounting Certificate is designed to allow students to develop knowledge and skills in investigative accounting and fraud prevention. Our contemporary program combines traditional auditing principles with information security and data analysis techniques to provide students with advanced forensics training.

Three of the learning objectives in the certificate program are adopted from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) Model Curriculum for Forensic Accounting. Namely, students completing this certificate will be able to:

1. Navigate the ethical and legal environment and fulfill the responsibilities of a forensic accountant;

2. Demonstrate core forensic knowledge;

3. Demonstrate competency in forensic accounting in specific engagement settings including fraud, bankruptcy, digital forensics, matrimonial disputes, financial statement misrepresentation, damages and valuation; and
Faculty Professional Development

A major component of the College of Business’s Mission Statement involves experiential learning. To support our mission, the Ed and Betty Robinson Faculty Fellow award allowed my participation in the following faculty development conferences:

PwC Tax Analytics Academy – Advanced Tax Analytics & Innovation
Orange County, CA
Invited Guest Faculty

AACSB Data Analytics Summit
Atlanta, GA

Each conference allowed me to engage with industry professionals and continue my efforts to create a classroom experience for our accounting students that to the extent possible replicates a professional work environment.