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- Use BECKER!!!
- For Audit, I studied for two weeks, for FAR and Regulation I studied for four weeks (i.e. a month) each, and for BEC I studied for two weeks.
- I decided to take Audit first since I had just finished taking the class at SLU. Then, I took FAR and Reg to get them out of the way and finished up with BEC since it is considered the “easiest” and I was pretty burnt out from studying by that point. I did not really take breaks in between the exams (besides a day or so) and pretty much studied for three months straight from when I graduated in May until the middle of August. As June is a black out month, I wanted to get Audit in before that and took it on pretty much the last day in May that was available. And then I took FAR on the first day in July, Reg at the very end of July and BEC in the middle of August. If there is a certain schedule of days that you want to take the exams, I HIGHLY recommend applying and scheduling as early as possible (i.e. as soon as it is available) because the days and times that are most popular fill up fast and then there is nothing you can do about it; you just have to take it when it is available. This is really a time that it pays to plan ahead so that you are not pushed back a month or more due to the black out months.
- Also, with the firm I started with (RubinBrown), we did not start working until the beginning of October. So although I studied for about 3 months straight, then I had a month and a half off with no work or CPA to worry about before starting full time! Plan accordingly!
- I recommend starting as soon as possible, either during school if possible, or right after graduation. Just like you have all heard, it becomes a lot harder to study the farther you are removed from the school environment.
- My study schedule was as follows (I used the Becker self-study so that I could make my own schedule): watch the video (highlighting/underlining what the instructors suggest), then I would read the chapter relating to the video, focusing on the topics that were emphasized in the video (highlighted/underlined portions), and then I would do ALL of the homework problems and supplemental questions for the chapter. If I missed a question, I would carefully look at the correct answer and understand why I answered it wrong and why the correct answer made sense, but I did not go back through and redo all of the questions I missed. I did this for the entire book for each of the four sections. While this seems like a lot, I did not review much or take the practice exams or quizzes. Instead, the day or two before the exam I would go over the flashcards (that you can buy from Becker, or borrow from a friend if you don't have them) for that section. That way I just focused on getting what was important into my head instead of taking practice exams and then maybe getting bad scores and freaking myself out. Also, it took the full two or four weeks, depending on the section, just to finished watching videos, reading, and doing the homework for me.
- As far as the simulations, I did not do anything in particular to prepare for these. Becker provides example simulations in the software so that you can see what they are going to be like and how the format is, etc. I would recommend looking over a couple of these at first just so you get to know how the software is going to work on exam day. Besides that, I would not focus your time on doing all of the simulations that Becker provides. Since there is a 0% chance that

one of the Becker simulations will be on your exam (a similar one could be though I suppose), I found it much more helpful to just focus on the important topics that Becker emphasized since these were most likely what my simulations would be over. Also, there is always at least one research simulation, so get familiar with how to search in the codification and then that simulation should be more or less a freebie.

- I also recommend doing everything that you are capable of to pass the exam before you start working full time. In my situation, we began working at the beginning of October. By the time that you are settled in to your job and getting used to working 40 hours a week, it is busy season and you are working 55+ hours from January to the middle of April, so there is no time to study (unless you are a machine). Once the end of busy season rolls around, the last thing you want to do outside of work is study, but rather enjoy the summer. I know plenty of people who have passed the exam while working full time, but it takes a lot of work and dedication and they do not recommend it. I also know quite a few people who had not passed the exam before they started working, and they have now failed multiple times or have no intention of ever taking it (which means that they cannot advance in the company). I understand that there are situations where it is just not possible to take any or all parts before you start working, but if you have the chance take advantage of it! Also, keep in mind that it is expensive to retake the exams, so you should try to pass on the first try if only for that reason alone.
- All in all, I am glad that I focused on studying for those 3 months and got the exam out of the way. It is definitely an exam that you just have to study hard for, and so in my opinion it is better to just do as much as you possibly can and pass so that you can move on to other things!