

# Wiley CPAexcel Test Prep Course University Case Study:

The University of Texas at Dallas Naveen Jindal School of Management

Looking for a customized test prep course for your class? In 2011, The University of Texas at Dallas put a call out for CPA review course providers. Wiley CPAexcel answered.

There is no greater endorsement for an educational study program than one that comes from a teacher. And not just any teacher, a college professor ... and not just any college professor, but one who has come from a professional position in public life and knows what the deal is on the ground, in the real world. Better still, that endorsement comes from not just one highly esteemed professor but four highly esteemed professors.

## Let's drill down.

The University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) has a rigorous, well-regarded business school, the Naveen Jindal School of Management. Among the school's many programs is accounting—one of its more popular majors—including the prestigious option of earning a master's degree in the subject. The Jindal School's MS in Accounting program features CPA Review courses, which employ Wiley CPAexcel, the best, most comprehensive review/exam prep program on the market.

All who teach the review courses "came from professional backgrounds prior to joining UTD, including Big 4 public accounting, investments, start-ups, banking and a variety of other industries," says Jennifer Johnson, one of the program's senior lecturers and a CPA. Johnson and three of her colleagues—Tiffany Bortz, Chris Linsteadt and Steve Solcher—give the UT Dallas Jindal School the professional boost that distinguishes it from its competitors. "Collectively, we have been teaching for over 40 years."

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As a department, the professors teach the major fundamental courses covered by the CPA exam. They all teach undergraduate- and graduate-level classes both on campus and online. Tiffany Bortz came to the school in 2002. She specializes in Financial Accounting, including Intermediate Accounting; Chris Linsteadt (2005) is an Auditing and Internal Audit specialist. Steve Solcher's (2011) background includes an emphasis on taxation, while Johnson (2005) focuses on accounting systems and cost accounting. They are all involved in heading up the CPA review classes.

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## Challenges Met

For students and professors alike, meeting challenges like these requires the necessary tools. During the course of designing the program, the Jindal School team evaluated a handful of providers. In fact, like all diligent reps, they scanned the marketplace for new or improved products, to make sure they provide hardworking students and professors the proper test prep and study tools. "We were looking for a partner with the right tools that would support professors teaching the CPA review classes at the University," says Johnson, adding that they switched from a competing provider back in 2011 after a thorough review. "We needed a provider that could help us with learning-management tools to allow us to assess and monitor student progress."

Historically, CPA review classes were taught off campus by outside providers. But the academic team at the Jindal School wanted to provide this experience on campus with its own professors in classes with instructors the students trusted. "When we were doing our evaluation, we looked at all the current providers, and Wiley CPAexcel was the one that stood out," says Johnson. "It had the strongest LMS (Learning Management System) focused on helping universities accomplish what we were looking to do here. That was our primary driver for the change."

When the UT Dallas Jindal School made the change, students initially were skeptical. But the instructors were confident in the tool and the content. "Over time," says Johnson, "students have grown to trust our decision, and it is no longer an issue. We were able to communicate the credibility of the team Wiley CPAexcel uses to develop the content and pinpoint the challenges we needed to address to better prepare students for the exam."

In addition to the content of the review classes, Wiley CPAexcel provides a variety of webinars that have helped Jindal School students develop a unique understanding of certain concepts. Johnson adds, "Wiley CPAexcel help us support students from start to successful completion of the exam and allows us to keep the students focused on studying and passing the exam."

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## Changing with the Times

In addition to the best tools, the Jindal School faculty appreciated how Wiley CPAexcel was focused on quick-hit, modular learning. “For the amount of content that the CPA exam covers,” says Johnson, “the bite-sized lessons helped students feel successful and focus on smaller bits of information at one time.”

The Jindal School team is happy to report that since they switched to Wiley CPAexcel, the program’s tools and resources have expanded and stayed fresh. That nimble growth reflects a product adept and intent at keeping up with the times, and is one reason why Wiley CPAexcel remains the provider best able to deliver this technology, even in a competitive marketplace. Because the product remains vital, Johnson and the CPA cohort can focus on getting their students across the finish line.

“Our time and energy is not just focused on getting the students to pass the CPA exam, but helping the students gain skills that will help them in their careers,” says Johnson. In fact, each of the professors provides career advising in addition to classroom duties. They work with student organizations to provide networking opportunities that help nurture the soft skills necessary to be a genuine contributor in a challenging business culture. “Our students have many responsibilities outside class,” says Johnson, “including working to support themselves through school. It’s our job to supplement their academics with whatever career focus we can provide.”

## Beyond the Exam!

The professors find great value in Wiley CPAexcel even beyond its original aim of supplying exemplary review material for the exam. “Having this kind of deep knowledge and insight into the CPA exam,” says Johnson, “allows us to help develop courses that can be geared toward passing the exam.” This, of course, does not mean teaching to the exam. In fact, with the learning tools provided by this program—including canvassing tools, virtual classroom and mentoring—the right subject matter is covered comprehensively and naturally, without teaching to the test.

“Still,” adds Johnson, “a majority of UTD students do take the exam, and Wiley CPAexcel has helped us ensure that we have strong content and testing strategies in our traditional courses so that students who are interested in the exam are fully prepared.”

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**You can read about The University of Texas at Dallas accounting program  
and Naveen Jindal School of Management here:  
Visit [jindal.utdallas.edu/accounting/cpa-exam/#03-cpa-review-course](http://jindal.utdallas.edu/accounting/cpa-exam/#03-cpa-review-course)**

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