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# Research Links

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**Dr. Daniel Zéghal**

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Director of the CGA Accounting Research Centre*

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## INTO THE FUTURE

**Telfer School's CGA Accounting Research Centre prepares accountants to plan an increasingly vital role in the success of modern businesses.**

Accountants make huge contributions to the success of all business and non-profit organizations. However, in many circles, they still don't get the recognition they deserve. Most people view these professionals as humourless human calculators who simply tally up columns of figures at the end of each business quarter and fiscal year. Daniel Zéghal, however, knows the real story. The executive director of the CGA Accounting Research Centre at the Telfer School appreciates the true role and unbounded promise of these financial experts.

"Businesses are social organizations whose success depends primarily on their ability to satisfy the needs and expectations of real people—their employees and customers," says the Telfer School professor and Welch LLP Teaching Fellow. "As a result, accountants must equip business managers and corporate executives with insights these leaders need to make sound decisions in a range of areas that extend far beyond numbers on balance sheets and financial statements."

Dr. Zéghal's understanding of the value that accountants can bring to today's corporations inspires the groundbreaking work of the CGA Accounting Research Centre. Sponsored by the Certified General Accountants Association of Ontario, the Centre funds and organizes a variety of research projects and programs—the findings of which arm accountants with the knowledge and tools they need to play an increasingly vital role in the success of modern businesses. Dr. Zéghal sums up the Centre's work in one straightforward yet profound word: relevant.

"Just as accountants must approach their work in a comprehensive way, we at the Centre must do the same," he says. "That's why our research deals with broad-based challenges that businesspeople grapple with every day, and why our research teams include national and international experts from a variety of disciplines."



Speakers and participants to the 17th Annual Conference.

This emphasis on research that is relevant to businesses internationally is reflected in the Centre's current work: identifying and managing enterprise-wide risks; measuring, reporting and improving intellectual capital assets; and understanding the connection between compensation for board members and the quality of corporate boards of directors. Fast approaching its nineteenth anniversary, the Centre has also embarked on a landmark study to gauge the exact value added by employees (see "Putting People on the Balance Sheet" in this issue of Research Links).

"This particular program is designed to measure the value that a company's employees add, and then determine whether there is any relationship between that added value and a firm's performance and market value," he says. "The end result will be an indicator that can be validated and that managers and executives can use to improve their companies' performance."

That ambitious, far-sighted approach isn't just reflected in the Centre's work. It's a spirit that animates all its researchers, including the 15 Telfer School professors who are prominent contributors to the Centre's programs and projects, the six students who serve as research assistants and the large cadre of international researchers who regularly contribute to the Centre's work.

"Our unique team of experts is continually looking into the future to identify and then shed light on the most pressing challenges of modern business," he says. "We're tremendously excited about the contribution we make to shed that light and help accountants around the world take on a more prominent and vital role in modern business life. At the same time, we're deeply grateful to CGA Ontario for providing us with the steadfast support we need to pursue our valuable research, and for understanding how important our work is to its members and to our shared profession."