



# ISCPA

## Young CPA spotlight Andrew Oswalt Cedar Rapids

**Hometown:** Davenport

**April 2017**

**Alma Mater/Degree:** University of Iowa, accounting and finance, class of 2011

**Where do you work and what's your role?** I am a tax analyst at TaxAct in Cedar Rapids. I am responsible for maintaining our federal tax software for our do it yourself and professional customers. I write the math code and interview scripts to ensure that they are up-to-date with the latest IRS rules, regulations and instructions. I serve as our subject matter expert for our business tax return products and fixed asset accounting. I also contribute to our tax blog posts that can be viewed on our social media platforms.

**How do you unwind?** Exercise and just getting out and about in general. Running, biking, weight lifting, sand volleyball, ultimate frisbee, playing bags (cornhole), you name it. My wife and I also love to eat good food, whether it be spending a couple of hours in the kitchen whipping up a stellar homemade dish or checking out the wide variety of restaurants we have in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. And a good craft beer (or two) tops it all off.

**What are your summer plans?** I plan on attending a few weddings in various states – Arkansas, Illinois and Colorado to name a few. I'll definitely be doing a few days of RAGBRAI this year, and I'll probably run a few half-marathons and 10ks. My wife and I are most excited about our early fall plans – our delayed honeymoon to Northern Europe. We'll be traveling to the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark!

**What's one thing you can't make it through the day without?** I'm not one to get all mushy, but it would definitely be my wife Elyse. I'm sure she would love the fact that I phrased it like this. But really, she makes every day better just being by my side.

**Where do you see yourself in 10 years?** I honestly do not know, and I am completely okay with that. I do absolutely believe that I will be in some sort of leadership role, but where that is, be it here in Cedar Rapids at TaxAct or in a different state at a different firm, I could not tell you. If I've learned anything in my short career so far, it's that flexibility matters and that things will not always shake out how you originally envision them.

**What (or who) motivates you the most?** I take great pride in my work, so my main motivation is to give our customers an awesome user experience and for them to speak highly of their TaxAct experience to others. We have hundreds of thousands of customers over the course of the tax season, and when I meet someone in real life who has used our product and enjoyed their experience, I gives me a great deal of satisfaction.

**What ways have you been involved in ISCPA and how have they benefited you?** I've attended a few Lunch with Leaders sessions, as well as some other CPE classes. Now that I work in industry, finding CPE is more important than ever because we do not have much in the way of in-house CPE like public accounting firms do. ISCPA has provided some of the best CPE that I have attended while working at TaxAct. I'm a member of the LEAP Committee and the Month of Service Committee. Being involved with ISCPA has allowed me to stay connected to former colleagues and classmates.

**What made you want to become a CPA?** My accounting teacher in high school got me interested in accounting as a career. I then realized it was something that I was pretty good at and she kept the classes entertaining (which you can't say about every accounting class). I knew that the job market was good in the profession, and that the pay was pretty solid. I actually was not sold on taking the CPA exam until I got a job offer from McGladrey, and because of that, I decided to go for it.

**What's your best piece of advice for a college student thinking about becoming a CPA?** Take the exam as soon as you can, while you still have some of the student left in you. The further you get away from school, the harder it may be to take the exam from a study perspective. Plus, other life events may make it harder, such as marriage, children, etc. Also, this sentiment has been expressed on here before, but definitely apply for as many internships as you can. This is actually one of my biggest regrets from college – that I didn't try hard enough to land a good internship. It would have definitely prepared me more for the "real world." If current me could go back in time and give some advice to college me, it would be to get out there and apply for more internships.