## **Speaking Remarks for Cindy Choi**

**Event:** 2012 Convocation

**Date**: Saturday, November 10, 2012

**Location:** Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre West

Distinguished guests, members of the graduating class, ladies and gentlemen:

Welcome to the Certified General Accountants of British Columbia 2012 convocation!

As Chair of CGA-BC, it is my privilege to welcome the members of this year's graduating class into the CGA family—a family of more than 10,000 members in B.C. and members and students around the world.

We have 457 new Certified General Accountants, which means we have 457 new ambassadors who will proudly display their designation and show the key role CGAs play in helping businesses and other organizations succeed.

Having just had the honour of meeting you as you crossed the stage, I want to offer my congratulations on your tremendous achievement. You should be proud of what you have achieved. And we are so very proud of you.

In preparing for today's celebration, I reflected on my own CGA experience, why I chose to become a CGA, what it meant to me to achieve one of Canada's most respected professional business designations, and what it continues to represent today in my professional life.

When I completed my program, I recall feeling a sense of accomplishment—and even some relief, that I was finally finished.

Of course, life has taught me that we are never truly finished. We need to continually improve, to learn, to expand our knowledge and horizons.

And while the Convocation marked the end of one chapter in my life, it also sparked the beginning of another.

You are now all turning the page on a new chapter of your own life story—one that is bound to open doors to new, untold opportunities.

And let there be no doubt that this is a great time to be a Certified General Accountant.

This may seem counterintuitive given that the global economy continues to be plagued by a fair measure of economic uncertainty, but think about the broader forces at play.

What we are seeing is that the job market is experiencing a long-term demographic shift, and this is especially true in B.C.

In the next decade, we will experience a talent gap with too few people to fill an increasing wave of accounting jobs.

Global economic pressures cannot stop that shift from occurring.

This is a time rich with opportunity and I am excited that you and your colleagues are poised to succeed in this new world and become our next generation of leaders—our leaders of tomorrow.

And let there be no doubt in your minds that you will do so armed with a powerful designation, backed by a strong, progressive association that is not resting on its laurels.

In fact, I believe our future success will be rooted in four key competitive advantages:

First, as each of you knows full well, the CGA education program sets us apart in the market.

CGA represents the very best in accounting education and training.

Furthermore, CGAs are working hard to ensure our program retains its leading status and continues to meet the future needs of the marketplace.

Second, CGAs everywhere are reaping the benefits of our successful "We see more than numbers" branding campaign.

This national program communicates that while Certified General Accountants are grounded in the numbers required of today's professional accountants, they see the impact and opportunity beyond the balance sheet.

Third, our Association has always been a leader in protecting the public interest and in maintaining an unparalleled commitment to ethics.

We should all rightly take great pride that CGA-BC was the first accounting body in B.C. to introduce mandatory professional development and an ethics course for all members.

This year we also published our first ever 'Report to the Public'.

This report details the Association's proactive approach to protecting the public interest and presents an overview of the initiatives and resources we have established to ensure that we continue to set the standard for the profession.

Finally, the fourth advantage that will serve as a key pillar in the foundation of our success is perhaps the most important. And it all starts with you, me and our fellow CGAs.

In our mission to be the accounting designation of choice, the values that define us as CGAs are paramount.

I have condensed these into a simple acronym: PRIDE.

First, it all starts with 'P' — 'Professionalism'.

The true mark of a Certified General Accountant's professionalism is that they strive to perform at a consistently higher level than others.

The 'R' in Pride is for 'Respect'.

This relates to our respect for our designation, for the accounting profession and for those that depend on us for advice.

As CGAs, we understand that respect cannot be learned, nor acquired. It can only be *earned*.

The next quality is our 'Integrity'.

A CGA's integrity carries with it an important bond between us and those to whom we are providing service and counsel.

It is the assurance that we will act in their best interests at all times and never waver from our promise.

The 'D' symbolizes our 'Dedication'.

As every graduate here knows too well, the CGA program is a test of each student's dedication.

And, as every CGA member will attest, it doesn't end there.

Our commitment to continuous professional development is a testament to the dedication we have for improving ourselves and advancing our profession.

Finally, the acronym is complete with 'Excellence', that standard of performance which is unusually good and so surpasses ordinary standards.

It is what we all strive for, both individually and collectively.

I chose 'PRIDE' as more than a simple mnemonic device.

I believe it captures the overarching quality that encompasses who we are and the values that define us.

A market-leading program of studies,

A strong brand,

A commitment to high ethical standards, and

An overarching sense of pride.

I have briefly touched on what I believe will be the key pillars of our future success but I think these also show that CGA is stronger than ever and this will serve you well in our fast-changing world.

Today each of you begins a new chapter in your professional lives.

Tomorrow each of you may find yourself at the crossroads of change and opportunity.

Fortunately, your designation will serve as the foundation on which you manage the change and capitalize on the opportunity.

With a CGA designation your opportunities—both professional and personal—are limitless.

I am extremely proud and excited for all of you.

For each of you, the sense of pride will stem from having completed a difficult program of studies that constitutes the best preparation for a career in financial management.

The excitement comes from the knowledge that, as a Certified General Accountant, you have the potential—and the designation—to take full advantage of every opportunity that may arise.

Congratulations! I wish you all the best in your careers.

Thank you.