



**ACFE**<sup>®</sup>

Association of Certified Fraud Examiners

**ASSOCIATION OF CERTIFIED FRAUD EXAMINERS**

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## **Chapter of the Year Southwest Ohio Chapter**

### **How many trainings did the nominee hold in 2022?**

We planned and hosted 8 training sessions that consisted of a mix of virtual and in-person meetings. - 7 of these trainings were either one or two hours, with the length determined based upon the nature of the content and the preference of the speaker. One of the 8 training sessions hosted by our chapter was our 4th annual Fraud, Cyber & Ethics Conference that was conducted virtually in November 2022 over two half-day sessions. The conference provided 8 hours of CPE (2 of which were ethics CPE). Other chapters shared certain of the above with their membership. In addition to the above events hosted by us, we also shared certain events of other chapters with our membership and mailing list (e.g. Central Ohio's annual conference; Maryland's annual conference; South Florida May event).

### **Please provide the topic/title of each training opportunity provided in 2022. Please indicate if any events were hosted by another ACFE chapter or organization and also the number of CPE credits offered for each.**

- Protecting Yourself While Conducting Internet-Based Investigations - Ryan Duquette, Partner - Security and Privacy Risk Consulting - RSM Canada - 1 CPE
- Fraud and White-Collar Crime Research Digest - Pierre M. Rivolta, Ph.D., CFE; Associate Professor Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Mount St. Joseph University - 1 CPE
- Ethics - Why Good People Do Bad Things - Paul Fiorelli Director, Cintas Institute for Business Ethics - 2 CPE (ethics)
- How to Lose \$300m in One Click (Ransomware) - Robin Sundaram - Head of Information Assurance & Data Protection at RELX (parent of LexisNexis) - 1 CPE
- Money Laundering Through Digital Currency - Shaun Thurston - Special Agent with IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS CI) - 1 CPE
- Fundamentals of Cellular Record Analysis and Geolocation - Kevin Horan, Co-Founder, Precision Cellular Analysis and retired FBI - 2 CPE
- Dayton Fraud, Cyber & Ethics Conference - Day 1 offered 4 hours of CPE led by Traci Brown, a body language expert. - Day 2 had three sessions, with Mason Wilder of ACFE National speaking on deepfakes, Floyd Advisory speaking on SEC Accounting and Auditing Enforcement Releases, and Joseph Grmovsek, a former insider trader and convicted fraudster, spoke for two hours for ethics credit. - 8 CPE
- Cryptocurrency Crime for Non-Techies - Greg Dunlavey, Supervising Investigator New York County District Attorney's Office - 2 CPE

**Please provide an example of the website, newsletter or any other avenues that the nominee uses to communicate with members or the public.**

Our chapter's website is [www.swohacfe.org](http://www.swohacfe.org). The website utilizes Wild Apricot, which we implemented in 2021. Leadership and our members/attendees have been pleased with the website's functionalities related to membership and event registration. While we have a news feature on the website and a job board for members to utilize to post/search for roles, our main and most successful method of communication is to send emails to our mailing list. We push individual event notifications and reminders, but also send periodic update emails to the mailing list. We also hired, for the first time, someone to create a flier to promote our 2022 conference, and found it to be a professional but impressive tool. Examples of some of our 2022 communications have been separately provided as part of this application.

**Briefly describe the outreach/community service projects in which the nominee has been involved.**

Our current initiatives focus on

- Welcoming non-members to our meetings. We do this in a variety of ways. First, we keep our price low (\$15 per meeting for non-members). Secondly, we explicitly welcome members of the general business community and Ohio CPAs to attend our meetings. Our meetings offer CPE valid for both CFEs and Ohio CPAs Thirdly, we promote our events to both members and non-members. Namely, our mailing list is a build-up of emails that we have accumulated over many years and is not limited to only our membership.
- We also promote our events by sharing them on LinkedIn. We also heavily promoted our annual conference to a wide audience of non-members, which included sharing the event and its flier with a variety of groups such as the International Association of Financial Investigators, the Tactical Crime Suppression Unit, the Dayton Financial Executives International Group, the Southwest Ohio Financial Investigators Association, and several local accounting firms. We also posted the event on LinkedIn publicly and in the ACFE group ("ACFE Official Group - Association of Certified Fraud Examiners"). As a result of these endeavors, the 2022 conference had its highest attendance to date, and attendees of a variety of careers attended from all over the country, even internationally. Our survey results for this conference had an average satisfaction score (on a scale of 1 to 5) of 4.4. Positive comments included "You all did a fantastic job with this conference, and it is very much appreciated" and "You all did a wonderful job of making the sessions interactive and hold [sic] our attention. Great speakers and applicable in many ways to more than just criminal situations."
- In 2022, the board established our chapter's core values of Professionalism, Integrity, Collaboration, and Knowledge. We engaged in a good deal of thought to determine values that fit the role of the CFE while being aligned with our chapter and its activities. We then created a challenge coin for our chapter which includes the ACFE logo, a skyline logo for our chapter, and these four core values. We have given the coins out to members as certain incentives (e.g. for attending a fall 2022 in-person meeting), we give the coins out to speakers, and some coins have been purchased to be given away. We hope that this simple item will gain more traction and sales and continue to spread awareness of the ACFE and our chapter.
- We welcome students to our meetings and engage in outreach to them.
- As our chapter began turning a profit on activities a few years ago and we now have reserves built up, in 2022 the leadership team voted to engage in charitable spending activities. This included making a donation of \$1,000 to the ACFE Foundation, and also making a donation

of \$769.50 to a charity run by a speaker at our 2022 conference, which was in excess of the amount he had requested as a donation when he agreed to speak. We also have reinvested funds in our chapter, such as by implementing Wild Apricot in 2021, paying for certain speakers (e.g. the keynote speaker for the 2022 conference, with a hope that she would draw attendees), purchasing the challenge coins in 2022, and we will be sponsoring an in-person networking event in April 2023 (as noted below).

**What has the nominee done to promote the CFE credential to ACFE members in the chapter's geographic area?**

At least yearly, we download from ACFE National the listing offered that provides the contact information for members in our geographic area and update our mailing list to include these individuals. . With that being said, since we offer all meetings over Zoom (with many being offered hybrid in-person), and since we promote our events in various ways, we have begun to attract attendees from around the country. At our annual conference we even attracted attendees from around the world. As a story of our chapter's reach, in a seemingly small-world coincidence, a colleague of one member of the chapter leadership team noted that he had a business lunch in Chicago with two women. In casually chatting about how they obtain CPEs, one of the women noted that she had found excellent, low-priced CPE offered by some chapter in Southwest Ohio. It turned out, of course, that she was talking about our chapter. It was a neat example of the reach we have gained through offering sessions over Zoom.

**What has the nominee done to promote the CFE credential to the next generation of fraud fighters?**

We have taken a variety of steps in this area in recent years. In the fall of 2021, the board approved making meetings free for students of criminal justice, law, or business and we are pleased to now have more students attending meetings. We also added a board member in 2022 who is a professor at a local university, and he has taken steps to share our meeting information with students and other professors at local universities. The chapter president conducts guest lectures at the University of Dayton and Miami University, during which the role of the CFE is discussed and students are encouraged to attend meetings for free. For four years, the chapter president has also judged the annual "Douglas Millett Forensic Accounting" competition at Miami University. The other judges are Jim Krause (former chapter president) and Robert Vaccari (former chapter treasurer). In 2022, we made a donation to the ACFE Foundation and are presently researching and have consulted with other chapters on how to best seek and select an applicant from our chapter as the recipient of the ACFE Prep Course we received as part of our donation.

**What kind of networking opportunities does the nominee provide for members?**

Our meetings were always held in-person only until, due to Covid, we pivoted to Zoom. Our pivot was immediate, and our chapter members were able to keep the continuity of meetings and reliability of our CPE offering. Starting in the fall of 2022, we returned to having the majority of our meetings in-person; however, we make these meetings hybrid so that people can choose to attend over Zoom if desired. In-person meetings are more difficult to host for a variety of reasons (e.g. meeting space availability, security protocol at meeting space, ordering of food, the need to find a local speaker to be in-person), and hybrid meetings are even more difficult to host because additional camera and sound equipment need to be secured and operated (see more at 17 below). However, we feel that the in-person element is important and continue to encourage people to come in-person. Our attendees come from a variety of backgrounds and careers, and we want our

attendees to be able to meet each other and have networking and information-sharing opportunities. The leadership team can see the membership listing and get to know attendees through emails, and we see how amazing our roster is. We want to allow our attendees to experience this as well, and get to know each other. This simply cannot be done in a Zoom-only environment.

Our leadership regularly discusses how to encourage people to come in-person; in the fall, we gave challenge coins to people who renewed their membership and came in-person, and at our February 2023 meeting we held a raffle of chapter-related prizes to try to encourage in-person attendance. We also are very excited to be hosting a special in-person only event as our April 2023 meeting. We decided to make the event in-person only, with time dedicated to networking at the event, so that our attendees can get to know each other and hopefully be re-invigorated about the benefits of in-person meetings. The chapter is subsidizing the event by covering food costs, speaker costs, and only non-members will pay a small fee to attend. We also exercised our creativity and specifically designed a program that we think will be of special interest and draw attendees: the speaker will speak on “Pappygate, Fakes, and Whiskey Frauds: The Murky Underworld of the Bourbon Boom” which is designed to capitalize on the interest created by the Netflix show Heist.

### **What unique benefits does the nominee offer to the members?**

We primarily provide to our members regular CPE-eligible meetings and low-cost meetings and membership. In terms of regularity, we maintain a generally consistent calendar of events, meeting on the second Friday of the month at noon, except in January and the summer, and we have held a conference in the fall since 2019. The consistency of our meetings includes their availability; as noted above, we offer most both in-person and over Zoom, and when Covid hit we immediately made the transition to Zoom for meetings to keep that consistency for our members.

In terms of cost, we choose to keep our costs - both for membership and meetings - low as a benefit. Membership is \$20 for CFEs and \$25 for Associates, and meetings offering 1 or 2 CPEs are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members. Our conference pricing is also low in price; in 2022, its prices were \$100 with the early-bird discount (\$125 after) for 8 CPEs. Our members (and non-members) know that they can receive consistent, low-cost, high-quality CPEs on a regular basis.

We ensure that we offer at least 2 hours of ethics CPE in the spring of every year, so that our CFEs can meet that requirement. We have also offered additional ethics CPE in the fall as part of our annual conference which we have held since 2019. We’re often told we have the lowest-cost, yet top-quality, ethics CPE one can find. Our CPE is valid for CFEs and also Ohio CPAs. Ohio CPE standards are somewhat aligned with NASBA’s standards, which are stringent. We take care to adhere to these guidelines, and we seek yearly re-approval from the Ohio Accountancy Board to continue to be a CPE sponsor. We also specifically seek and obtain pre-approval for ethics credit offerings (called “PSR” - Professional Standards and Responsibilities). Our efforts on this front are a bit of an “extra mile” to fulfill the needs of our attendees, attract more people, and maximize the benefits of our meetings to the attendees.

When other chapters partner with us on events and send their members to our meetings, we handle the attendance and poll report review to determine who earned CPE and send the reports to that chapter’s leadership for issuance of CPE in their state as appropriate. As described above, we also feel that the benefits of our chapter are that attendees of events can network with fascinating individuals from a variety of backgrounds. This is not something that can be easily

achieved otherwise in terms of networking with other fraud-fighters, and it is why we feel so strongly about our in-person opportunities.

We also implemented Wild Apricot in 2021. This tool has allowed us to streamline the member experience, but also has allowed us to renew memberships more easily and take meeting payments, and it also greatly assists with our mailing list maintenance and our distribution list accumulates by adding people to the list who attend an event even if they are not a member. We also have a job forum on Wild Apricot for our members which we hope will gain more usage.

### **Has the nominee been of any help to other chapters?**

In 2022, we partnered with Greater Pittsburgh & Central Virginia on events; namely, the chapters shared certain events of ours with their membership, and we hosted the events over Zoom and assisted the chapters in the granting of CPE. We also shared with our mailing list certain events hosted by other chapters, such as Central Ohio, South Florida, and Maryland. We specifically ensure that our conference is in the fall so as not to compete with Central Ohio's May conference; we strongly support the Central Ohio chapter and encourage our members to do so as well. Our chapter president also frequently communicates with certain other chapters to seek advice on specific topics such as events and leadership advice, but also to provide input on topics as requested (past inquiries have related to topics such as WildApricot and Zoom).

### **Based on your responses above, what qualifies the nominee for the Chapter of the Year award?**

Our chapter mission is to serve the community through promotion of improved fraud detection and deterrence, to provide training events that expand the knowledge of members, and to foster opportunities for members to interact and network. As described above, we keep this mission at our focus by providing consistent, high-quality, low-cost, accessible CPEs and seeking to serve our membership and the community. Our leadership team spends a significant amount of its time mapping out our speakers and training sessions, and planning the annual conference. We specifically seek topics that are relevant, current, and interesting. As described earlier, because we seek all these characteristics for our training events, and also offer many of our meetings in-person (starting at our return to in-person in fall 2022), finding topics and speakers can be a significant undertaking. However, as can be seen in the listing of our sessions from 2022, we were able to offer a variety of topics, presented by high-quality expert speakers, that included current investigative hot topics such as bitcoin and cell phone analysis.

One of our sessions is also custom-created by a board member who, since 2021, has performed a “fraud research digest” on a topic specifically of interest to CFEs where he does a deep dive into a fraud-related research topic and presents it on it. Our CPE is of high caliber, but we keep the price very low as noted above. We could justify charging more, but our leadership feels there is no need to do so; we want to keep the CPE affordable and accessible.

Our chapter membership is at its highest and continues to grow; at every meeting we see new attendees. Our membership five years ago was 48 members. Our membership as of March 3, 2023 is 100, a doubling of this number. Even just comparing our 2022 membership per recertification (90 members) to our 2021 membership per recertification (74 members), we grew 21% between the two years. We feel that these figures are representations in data of our chapter’s success. As described throughout this application, in addition to keeping our focus on our membership and attendees and their educational and CPE needs, we also have dedicated time to student outreach which continues to expand.

We also are investing more funds into charitable and outreach activities, and we are re-investing funds into other areas that are helping our chapter improve and grow. Our chapter leadership works hard to fulfill its mission, and keeps the mission and needs of members and attendees at its focus.

**Please provide any additional accomplishments or limitations the nominee experiences that the committee should be made aware of when reviewing your submission.**

We discuss above how our focus has been to provide quality, regular meetings for our members and attendees. We continue to adapt to the effects of Covid on this front. As noted above, when Covid hit, we immediately pivoted to offering our meetings over Zoom which, at the time, was a novel concept. In the fall of 2022, we decided to return to in-person meetings while continuing to offer a hybrid option over Zoom. In-person meetings are more difficult to host for a variety of reasons (e.g. meeting space, security protocol at meeting space, ordering of food, having to find a local speaker) and hybrid meetings are even more difficult to host. To execute hybrid meetings, members of the leadership team sought out semi-professional camera equipment to borrow from a local organization and became trained on the setup of the camera, sound, and the software tool required to broadcast this over Zoom. This itself was a notable undertaking and a time commitment. In 2023 we've begun to have someone else run the camera equipment to make it more reliable and professional, but the overall efforts to run hybrid meetings remain notable.