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Letter from the Editor

We are delighted to present to you the Summer/Fall 2016 edition of The Contemporary Tax Journal.

When I enrolled in the MST program in 2015, little did I know that it would turn out to be the most enriching experience of my life. The immense knowledge and the numerous learning experiences that I encountered on my journey, transformed me from an aspiring tax accountant to a competent professional. With immaculate curriculum and keen passion in all our MST program professors, it is no surprise that the program has produced some of the best tax professionals in the region. Being one of the few of the nation's student-oriented tax journals, it was a privilege for me to have chaired the Student editor's position for the 2016 Summer/Fall edition.

Our issue begins with the "Tax Enlightenment" section that covers topics such as tax consequences of virtual reality currency generated in virtual gaming worlds; recent developments in areas of the foreign earned income credit and exclusion of US citizens working abroad and the debt/equity characterization issue arising from transfer of assets to controlled corporations. This section also features an in-depth analysis of the employer's share responsibility rules under the Affordable Care Act.

The next section - "Tax Feature"- includes summaries from the Fourth annual IRS-SJSU Small Business Institute conference on navigating taxes with new economy clients that was held on June 22, 2016. Here we address issues such as the origins of taxing marijuana operations as well as the rekindled interest in the world of cannabis in recent times with the ethical predicaments a practitioner faces in taking on clients in this industry; the application of the residential rental rules in the context of new economy businesses such as Airbnb; tax issues in a sharing economy such as using personal cars for business purposes, characterization of these activities as a business or hobby and how the growth in the number of freelancers may cause ambiguity in areas of worker classification, challenges in tax compliance and recordkeeping.

The "Tax Maven" section captures the interview with former SJSU interim president Sue Martin where I had the opportunity to pen down her inspirational journey from the Treasury's office to the office of Dean and President. Not only is her story a motivation to all women professionals, but we believe that it will have a positive impact and reach on all aspiring young professionals.

The Contemporary Tax Journal has long been a forum where students can exhibit their ideas, opinions and tax understanding. We would like to thank all our authors for their valuable contributions and hope you find this issue enlightening and resourceful.

Shilpa Balnadu
Student Editor