KENNETH L. BILLS, PHD, CPA

E-mail: billsken@msu.edu
Phone: (517) 884-1677
N217 North Business Complex
Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Accounting – University of Oklahoma	May 2012
Master of Accountancy – Southern Utah University	May 2006
Bachelor of Arts- Accounting – Southern Utah University	May 2006
Associate of Arts- Accounting – College of Eastern Utah	May 2004

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Michigan State University, Associate Professor of Accounting	2019-Current
Plante Moran Faculty Fellow	2022-Current
University of Arkansas, Associate Professor of Accounting	2017-2019
Doris M. Cook Endowed Chair in Accounting	2018-2019
University of Arkansas, Assistant Professor of Accounting	2015-2017
Colorado State University, Assistant Professor of Accounting	2012-2015

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research is focused in the area of auditing using archival and secondarily field study methods. Topics of interest to me include auditor competencies, small audit firm challenges, audit regulation and oversight, and accounting associations and networks.

PUBLICATIONS

Bills, K. L., C. Hogan, and J. Puccia. 2026. Does the PCAOB's emphasis on management review controls improve financial reporting decisions? Evidence from goodwill impairments. Conditionally accepted at *Contemporary Accounting Research*.

Bills, K. L., C. Hayne, and S. E. Stein. 2026. Competing for talent: Addressing the "Biggest is Best" assumptions through small accounting firms' recruiting practices. Forthcoming at *The Accounting Review*.

Bills, K. L., R. Cating., C. Lin, and T. A. Seidel. 2025. The spillover effect of SEC comment letters through audit firms. *Review of Accounting Studies* 30: 311-351.

Bills, K. L., R. H. Huang, Y. Lin, and David Wood. 2024. The impact of chief audit executive turnover in Taiwan. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy* 46: 1-26.

Bills, K. L., M. Harding, T. A. Seidel, and M. Truelson. 2023. The influence of turnover among other top executives on financial reporting risk. *Auditing: A Journal of Practice & Theory* 43 (2): 43–72.

Prentice, J. D., K. L. Bills, and G F. Peters. 2023. The impact of benefit plan audits on the financial statement audit. *Accounting Horizons* 37 (2): 161-187.

Ahn, J., H. Akamah, J, K. L. Bills, and K. K. Saunders. 2022. Accounting firm associations and audit firm growth. *Auditing: A Journal of Practice & Theory* 41 (3) 45-65.

Bills, K. L., C. Hayne, and S. E. Stein. 2021. Collaborating with competitors: How do small firm accounting associations and networks successfully manage coopetitive tensions? *Contemporary Accounting Research* 38 (1): 545-585.

Zimmerman, A. B., K. L. Bills, and M. Causholli. 2021. The market premium for audit partners with Big 4 experience. *Accounting Horizons* 35 (2): 193-217.

Bills, K. L., M. Cobabe, J. Pittman, and S. E. Stein. 2020. To share or not to share: The importance of peer firm similarity to auditor choice. *Accounting, Organizations and Society* 83: 1-24.

Bills, K. L., C. Hayne, S. E. Stein. 2018. A field study on small accounting firm membership in associations and networks: Implications for audit quality. *The Accounting Review* 93 (5): 73-96.

Bills, K. L., L. L. Lisic, T. A. Seidel. 2017. Do CEO succession and succession planning affect stakeholders' perceptions of financial reporting risk? Evidence from audit fees. *The Accounting Review* 92 (4): 27-52.

Bills, K. L., L. M. Cunningham, and L. A. Myers. 2016. Small audit firm membership in associations, networks, and alliances: Implications for audit quality and audit fees. *The Accounting Review* 91 (3): 767-792.

Bills, K. L., Q. T. Swanquist, and R. L. Whited. 2016. Growing pains: Audit quality and office growth. *Contemporary Accounting Research* 33 (1): 288-313.

Bills, K. L., and N. M. Stephens. 2016. Spatial competition at the intersection of the large and small audit firm markets. *Auditing: A Journal of Practice & Theory* 35 (1): 23-45.

Bills, K. L., R. Glasscock, and D. Johnston. 2015. The capital market pricing of suspended exploratory well costs. *Oil, Gas & Energy Quarterly* 64 (2): 173-182.

Bills, K. L., S. E. Stein, and D. C. Jeter. 2015. Auditor industry specialization and evidence of cost efficiencies in homogenous industries. *The Accounting Review* 90 (5): 1721-1754.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Bills, K. L., L. M. Cunningham. 2015. How small audit firm membership in associations, networks, and alliances can impact audit quality and audit fees. *Current Issues in Auditing* 9 (2): 29-35.

WORKING PAPERS

"Strategic responses to resource dependence: How GNF, ANAF, and TNAF auditors navigate PCAOB remediation" with John Keyser, Arizona State University, Marietta Peytcheva, Lehigh University, and Aleksandra B. Zimmerman, Florida State University

"Contagion in small audit networks" with Evans Adu, SUNY Plattsburgh, Pietro A. Bianchi, Bocconi University, and Maria I. Vulcheva, Florida International University

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Strategic responses to resource dependence: How GNF, ANAF, and TNAF auditors navigate PCAOB remediation

- 2026 *University of Buffalo*, Buffalo, New York
- 2025 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, Charlotte, North Carolina (presented by John Keyser)
- 2025 *SEC Academic Update*, Washington D.C. (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2024 Qualitative Accounting Research Conference, Virtual (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2024 *University of Florida*, Gainesville, Florida (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2024 *University of Illinois Symposium on Audit Research*, Urbana-Champaine, Illinois (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2024 *Center for Audit Quality Smaller Firm Task Force,* Virtual (presented by John Keyser)
- 2024 *Case Western Reserve University,* Cleveland, Ohio (presented by John Keyser)
- 2024 *Lehigh University*, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (presented by Marietta Peytcheva)
- 2024 *Florida State University*, Tallahassee, Florida (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2023 *SEC Academic Update*, Washington D.C. (presented by Ally Zimmerman)

Competing for talent: Addressing the "Biggest is Best" assumptions through small accounting firms' recruiting practices

- 2025 *Egyptian Online Seminars in Business, Accounting and Economics,* virtual. Available at: https://youtu.be/Eqb49y4nhGs
- 2024 *University of Florida,* Gainesville, Texas (presented by Christie Hayne)
- 2024 *Lehigh University*, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (presented by Christie Hayne)

Are expanded audit reports informative of future goodwill impairment beyond observable market signals?

- 2023 *Florida International University,* Miami, Florida
- 2023 *University of Kansas,* Lawrence, Kansas
- 2023 *Florida State University* (presented by Chris Hogan)
- 2023 *University at Buffalo* (presented by Chris Hogan)

Does the PCAOB's emphasis on management review controls improve financial reporting decisions?

Evidence from goodwill impairments

- 2022 *International Symposium on Audit Research*, virtual (presented by Jenn Puccia)
- 2022 *Deloitte/University of Kansas Symposium*, Lawrence, Kansas (presented by Jenn Puccia)

The effect of top executive turnover and local market characteristics on financial reporting risk

- 2021 *Brigham Young University*, Provo, Utah
- 2021 *University of Oklahoma*, virtual workshop
- 2021 *University of Wisconsin-Madison*, virtual workshop
- 2021 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, virtual (presented by Mike Truelson)
- 2020 *Tennessee Accounting Research Symposium*, Knoxville, Tennessee (presented by Michelle Harding)

Internal auditor turnover, financial reporting quality, and audit risk assessment

- 2020 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, Houston, Texas

Do auditors learn from their clients' SEC comment letters?

- 2019 *Texas Audit Research Symposium*, Austin, Texas (presented by Ryan Cating)
- 2019 *AAA Annual Meeting*, San Francisco, California (presented by Ryan Cating)
- 2019 *Texas Christian University Workshop*, Fort Worth, Texas
- 2019 *Brigham Young University Workshop*, Provo, Utah (presented by Tim Seidel)
- 2019 *University of Kansas Workshop*, Lawrence, Kansas (presented by Chenxi Lin)
- 2018 *University of Arkansas Workshop*, Fayetteville, Arkansas (presented by Ryan Cating)

Collaborating with competitors: How do small firm accounting associations and networks successfully manage coopetitive tensions?

- 2019 *CAR Conference*, Ottawa, Canada
- 2019 *Global Management Accounting Research Symposium*, East Lansing, Michigan
- 2019 *CAAA Auditing Midyear Meeting*, Ottawa, Canada (presented by Christie Hayne)
- 2019 *AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting*, Nashville, Tennessee
- 2018 *Michigan State University Workshop*, East Lansing, Michigan
- 2018 *23rd Symposium on Audit Research*, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois
- 2018 *University of Paderborn Workshop*, Paderborn, Germany (presented by Christie Hayne)
- 2018 *University of Notre Dame Workshop*, South Bend, Indiana (presented by Christie Hayne)
- 2018 *West Virginia University Workshop*, Morgantown, West Virginia
- 2018 *Virginia Tech University Workshop*, Blacksburg, Virginia (presented by Sarah Stein)

Accounting firm associations and audit firm growth

- 2018 *European Accounting Association Annual Congress*, Milan, Italy (presented by Herita Akamah)
- 2018 *AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting*, Portland, Oregon (presented by Herita Akamah)
- 2017 *BYU Accounting Research Symposium*, Provo, Utah

The impact of benefit plan audits on financial statement quality and financial statement auditor choice

- 2020 *AAA Annual Meeting,* Virtual (presented by Jaclyn Prentice)
- 2017 *International Symposium on Audit Research,* Sydney, Australia
- 2017 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, Orlando, Florida (presented by Jaclyn Prentice)

To share or not to share: The importance of peer firm similarity to auditor choice

- 2018 *International Symposium on Audit Research*, Maastricht, The Netherlands (presented by Matt Cobabe)
- 2018 *European Accounting Association Annual Congress*, Milan, Italy (presented by Matt Cobabe)
- 2018 *AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting*, Portland, Oregon (presented by Sarah Stein)
- 2017 *Michigan State University Workshop*, Lansing, Michigan (presented by Sarah Stein)
- 2017 *Virginia Tech University Workshop*, Blacksburg, Virginia (presented by Sarah Stein)
- 2016 *University of Arkansas Workshop*, Fayetteville, Arkansas

- 2016 *BYU Accounting Research Symposium,* Provo, Utah (presented by Matt Cobabe)

The market premium for audit partners with Big 4 experience
- 2019 *AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting*, Nashville, Tennessee (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2018 *University of Notre Dame Workshop*, South Bend, Indiana
- 2018 *European Accounting Association Annual Congress*, Milan, Italy (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2015 *International Symposium on Audit Research*, Boston, Massachusetts (presented by Ally Zimmerman)
- 2015 *AAA Annual Meeting*, Chicago, Illinois (presented by Ally Zimmerman)

A field study on small accounting firm membership in associations and networks: Implications for audit quality
- 2017 *Utah State University Workshop*, Logan, Utah
- 2017 *AAA Annual Meeting*, San Diego, California
- 2017 *International Symposium on Audit Research* Sydney, Australia (Presented by Sarah Stein)
- 2017 *Virginia Accounting Research Conference*, Charlottesville, Virginia (presented by Sarah Stein)
- 2017 *University of Kentucky Workshop*, Lexington, Kentucky
- 2016 *University of Illinois Workshop*, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois (presented by Christie Hayne)
- 2016 *BYU Accounting Research Symposium* Provo, Utah (presented by Christie Hayne)
- 2016 *University of Melbourne Workshop*, Melbourne, Australia (presented by Christie Hayne)

Auditor switches and long run firm performance
- 2016 *University of Arkansas Workshop*, Fayetteville, Arkansas (presented by Joshua Hunt)

Do CEO succession and succession planning affect stakeholders' perceptions of financial reporting risk? Evidence from audit fees
- 2016 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, Scottsdale, Arizona
- 2015 *University of Miami Workshop*, Miami, Florida
- 2015 *Ball State University Workshop*, Muncie, Indiana
- 2015 *University of Arkansas Workshop*, Fayetteville, Arkansas

Small audit firm membership in associations, networks, and alliances: Implications for audit quality and audit fees.
- 2014 *International Symposium on Audit Research,* Maastricht, The Netherlands
- 2014 *AAA Midyear Meeting*, San Antonio, Texas (Presented by Lauren Cunningham)
- 2013 *BYU Accounting Research Symposium,* Provo, Utah
- 2013 *University of Arkansas Workshop*, Fayetteville, Arkansas (Presented by Lauren Cunningham)

Auditor industry specialization and evidence of cost efficiencies in homogenous industries
- 2013 *AAA Annual Meeting*, Anaheim, California
- 2013 *International Symposium on Audit Research,* Sydney, Australia
- 2013 *KU Leuven Workshop*, Leuven, Belgium

Spatial competition at the intersection of the large and small audit firm markets
- 2015 *University of Arkansas Workshop*, Fayetteville, Arkansas
- 2013 *International Symposium on Audit Research,* Sydney, Australia (Presented by Nathan Stephens)
- 2013 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 2012 *BYU Accounting Research Symposium,* Provo, Utah

Growing pains: Audit quality and office growth
- 2013 *AAA Audit Midyear Meeting*, New Orleans, Louisiana (Presented by Robert Whited)
- 2012 *AAA Annual Meeting*, Washington D.C.
- 2012 *International Symposium on Audit Research*, Tokyo, Japan
- 2012 *University of Oklahoma Conference on Regulation and the Audit Industry*, Norman, Oklahoma

- 2011 *Accounting Rookie Camp*, Miami, Florida
- 2011 *Colorado State University Workshop*, Fort Collins, Colorado
- 2011 *Utah State University Workshop*, Logan, Utah

Auditor-client acceptance: A positive assortative matching market

- 2011 *AAA Auditing Section Midyear Meeting*, Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 2011 *University of Florida Conference,* Gainesville, Florida (presented by Kevan Jensen)
- 2010 *BYU Accounting Research Symposium,* Provo, Utah
- 2010 *University of Oklahoma Workshop*, Norman, Oklahoma

REGULATORY CITATIONS

Bills, K., L. Cunningham, and L. A. Myers. 2016. Small audit firm membership in associations, networks, and alliances: Implications for audit quality and audit fees. *The Accounting Review* 91: 767-792.

Cited in *PCAOB Release No. 2024-003*, proposing to amend reporting requirements for registered firms (April 9, 2024). Available at: https://assets.pcaobus.org/pcaob-dev/docs/default-source/rulemaking/docket-055/2024-003-firmreporting.pdf.

MEDIA MENTIONS

Bills, K. L., C. Hayne, and S. E. Stein. 2026. Competing for talent: Addressing the "Biggest is Best" assumptions through small accounting firms' recruiting practices. Forthcoming at *The Accounting Review*.

Ulrich, K. (2026, April 15). Ask the expert: How can small firms compete for accounting talent? *How can small firms compete for accounting talent?* https://broad.msu.edu/news/ask-the-expert-how-can-small-firms-compete-for-accounting-talent/

CPAPracticeAdvisor. (2026, April 14) https://www.cpapracticeadvisor.com/2026/04/14/how-can-small-firms-compete-for-accounting-talent/181605/

NetGains. (2026, April 21) https://www.thenetgains.co/p/tax-season-s-over-5-ways-to-use-the-slowdown

RESEACH MADE AVAILABLE FOR CPE

Prentice, J. D., K. L. Bills, and G F. Peters. 2023. The impact of benefit plan audits on the financial statement audit. *Accounting Horizons* 37 (2): 161-187.

Practitioner relevant research made into CPE (January 2024). Available at: https://store.calcpa.org/catalog/activity/the-impact-of-benefit-plan-audits-on-the-financial-statement-audit---1000002855

COURSES TAUGHT

Advanced Auditing (Graduate) — Michigan State University, University of Arkansas
-Average professor rating – 4.62/5.00

Auditing (Undergraduate) — University of Arkansas, Colorado State University, University of Oklahoma
-Average professor rating – 4.50/5.00

Energy/Oil and Gas Accounting (Graduate) — University of Arkansas, Colorado State University
-Average professor rating – 4.78/5.00

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COURSE

ACT 575 – Oil and Gas Accounting — Colorado State University 2014

Student objectives of the course are (1) understand basics about the oil and gas industry including terminology, history, and technological advancements as it relates to oil and gas exploration, production, distribution, and marketing (upstream, midstream, and downstream); (2) be familiar with accounting-specific issues in the oil and gas industry; (3) possess the skills necessary for a job in the oil and gas industry or the industry knowledge necessary to work with oil and gas clients in public accounting.

ADVISING

Dissertation Chair – Stephen Osowski	2026
Dissertation Committee – Tom Shang	2026
Dissertation Committee – Jenn Puccia	2024
Dissertation Committee – James Anderson, Aaron Fritz	2022
Dissertation Committee – Ryan Cating	2021
Dissertation Committee – Stuart Dearden	2018
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Advisor and Thesis Member	2017
Dissertation Committee – Jaclyn Prentice	2016
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Advisor and Thesis Member	2015
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Member	2015
Undergraduate Honors Option Instructor	2014
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Member – Two Theses	2013
Undergraduate Honors Thesis Member – Two Theses	2012

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Tanner, LC, Senior Auditor, Salt Lake City, UT	2006-08
LearnKey, Inc., Assistant Controller, Saint George, UT	2005-06
Graduate Assistant, Southern Utah University, Cedar City, UT	2005-2006
Joseph F. Crandall Accounting, Staff Accountant, Saint George, UT	2004

SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY

Michigan State University

Faculty Director of MS Programs in Accounting	2024-Current
Department Master's Curriculum Committee (MCC)	2019-2022, 2024-Current
Committee Chair	2025-2026
Department Advisory Committee (DAC)	2020-2022, 2023-Current
Committee Chair	2021-2022
University Committee on Faculty Affairs (UCFA)	2025-Current
College Master's Program Curriculum Committee (MPC)	2026-Current
Department MSADA Program Director Search Committee Chair	2025
Department Doctoral Program Committee	2019-2025
Department Faculty Recruiting Committee	2019-2020, 2024-2025
Co-Director of PhD Program in Accounting	2021-2024
University Fellowship Nomination Committee	2022

University of Arkansas

Director of the Master of Accountancy and Integrated Master of Accountancy	2016-2019
Chair of Department Graduate Curriculum Committee	2016-2019
Department Assurance of Learning Committee	2016-2019
College Graduate Programs Committee	2016-2019
Chair of Accounting Scholarship Committee	2018-2019
College Assurance of Learning Task Force	2016-2017
Department Workshop Series Coordinator	2016-2017
College Undergraduate Programs Committee	2016
Clinical Professor Search Committee	2016
Assurance of Learning Assessment Committee	2015-16

Colorado State University

Student Engagement Committee	2015
Department Research Committee	2014-2015
MBA 360 Review Task Force	2014
Energy Task Force	2013-2015
Books Across the Core Committee	2013-2015

Department Chair Search Committee 2013
Dean's Faculty Advisory Committee 2012-2013

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Editor, *Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory* June 2023-Current
Editorial Board, *The Accounting Review, Contemporary Accounting Research* 2020-Current
Editorial Board, *Auditing: A Journal of Practice and Theory* 2017-Current
Ad-Hoc Reviewer for *Accounting, Organizations and Society, Review of Accounting Studies, Accounting Horizons, Journal of Managerial Accounting Research, European Accounting Review*, *Journal of Accounting, Auditing, and Finance*, *Journal of International Accounting Research*, *Managerial Auditing Journal*, and *Finance Research Letters*
AAA Auditing Section Executive Committee Secretary 2022-2024
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Washington, DC 2024
Reviewer, AAA Financial Accounting and Reporting Section Meeting, Denver, CO 2024
University of Indonesia Program Pascasarjana Ilmu Akuntansi Invited Academic Talk, Virtual 2023
Reviewer, International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) 2023
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Denver, CO 2023
AICPA Assurance Research Advisory Group (ARAG) Member 2019-2021
Reviewer, AAA Financial Accounting and Reporting Section Meeting, Virtual 2021
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Virtual 2021
Reviewer, Hawai'i Accounting Research Conference, Honolulu, HI 2020
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA 2020
Scientific Committee Member *Annual Congress of the European Accounting Association* 2019
Panelist, Accounting Doctoral Scholars (ADS) Conference Orientation, Chicago, IL 2019
Co-Chair of the 2019 AAA Auditing Section Midyear Meeting in Nashville, TN 2019
Vice-Chair of the 2018 AAA Auditing Section Midyear Meeting in Portland, OR 2018
Scientific Committee Member *Annual Congress of the European Accounting Association* 2018
Discussant, AAA Annual Meeting, Washington D.C. 2018
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Washington D.C. 2018
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA 2017
Discussant, AAA Midyear Meeting, Scottsdale, AZ 2016
Reviewer, AAA Midyear Meeting, Scottsdale, AZ 2015
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL 2015
Ad-Hoc Reviewer, *Mountain Plains Journal of Business and Economics* 2014
Reviewer, AAA Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA 2014
Reviewer, AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting, San Antonio, TX 2014
Discussant, AAA Annual Meeting, Washington D.C. 2012
Reviewer, AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting, Savannah, GA 2012
Reviewer, AAA Auditing Midyear Meeting, Albuquerque, NM 2011

OTHER ACTIVITIES

2014 AAA/Deloitte Foundation TrueBlood Seminar Westlake, TX
AAA/Deloitte Foundation Seminar Attendee
2011 AAA Doctoral Consortium Tahoe City, CA
AAA Doctoral Consortium Fellow
2007-2008 Utah Association of CPAs Salt Lake City, UT
UACPA ProNet Council Member

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

Certified Public Accountant (CPA) licensed in Utah (6546881-2601) Since 2007
American Accounting Association (AAA) Since 2008
Auditing Section, American Accounting Association Since 2009
Certified Fraud Examiner (former) 2012-2020

COMPETITIVE GRANTS AND AWARDS

Auditing: A Journal of Practice & Theory Outstanding Service Award	2019
Ministry of Science and Technology Grant, Taiwan	2018
William J. Alley International Business Scholar Award, OU Foundation	2012
Outstanding PhD Student Award, University of Oklahoma	2011
Outstanding PhD Student Award, University of Oklahoma	2010
AAA Doctoral Consortium Grant	2011