President's page, October 2015

Welcomes

01 October 2015

Exam success

Just before the summer break I had the privilege of signing more than 300 letters congratulating our students on passing their final papers in the May CTA exams and the June ADIT exams. This is a tremendous achievement since I know full well how demanding our exams are, not least because the volume of legislation on which candidates are tested increases each year.

For those intending to sit in 2016, the CIOT will be examining the provisions of the first Finance Act of 2015, with the additional complexities announced in the summer Budget coming into the syllabus from 2017.

On 18 September, the CIOT announced that 16 candidates had passed the Taxation of Major Corporates examination, part of the ACA/CTA Joint Programme. This route to a joint qualification is growing in popularity as more firms who deal with the tax affairs of major corporates adopt it as the way to train their tax professionals. As a result, the CIOT will be adding an additional owner-managed businesses route from next year, as well as the existing taxation of major corporates and indirect taxation Joint Programme routes.

I am looking forward to welcoming our successful CTA candidates to membership of the Institute and to marking their success at the forthcoming admissions ceremony on 12 November, the same day as my 48th birthday!

Welcome back John Cullinane

On 1 September I was delighted to welcome back former President John Cullinane to the CIOT as our Tax Policy Director. Having been a tax partner at Deloitte, leading its tax quality and risk function, John brings a wealth of experience to his new post. As

our lead spokesperson to media and political audiences, John will be communicating our objectives to policy makers and opinion formers. These include the need for greater simplicity and clarity in the tax system so people can understand how much tax they should be paying and why, and a fair balance between the powers of the authorities and the rights of payers.

I would like to thank Patrick Stevens for his tremendous work in this role over the past two years. He took the post as Tax Policy Director at an exciting time, with tax hitting the headlines almost daily and a general election looming. Patrick steered the CIOT's technical function expertly through these uncharted waters and I wish him a well-earned and long retirement.

James Bullock

Halfway through last month I heard the sad news that one of the tax world's greats, James Bullock of Pinsent Masons, had died. Those of you who attended any of our recent members' conferences will have seen first-hand his willingness and ability to create a better tax system that is fit for and fair to all. He will be greatly missed and I send my condolences to his family, friends and colleagues.

Raising the bar in the public debate of tax

The autumn season is always the busiest time in the Presidential calendar. As well as presenting lectures on the Finance Act and Bill 2015 to a host of our local branches, I am chairing tax debates in partnership with the Institute for Fiscal Studies at the Conservative and Labour party conferences.

On the subject of debates, for the first time this year the CIOT is sponsoring the annual sixth form Debating Matters competition run by the Institute of Ideas. The aim is to provide participating students with a strong intellectual challenge to help them develop and articulate better-informed opinions about the key issues of our time. The CIOT is involved as part of our effort to promote public discussion on tax issues.

The wording of 'our' topic has yet to be finalised, but it is likely to be in the area of corporate tax avoidance and tax incentives/competition. Students will argue on both sides in what is a bit of an experiment to see how debate on such an issue develops in this kind of environment. Some of our members, including me, will be part of the

judging panels. I’ll let you know how it goes.

Calling all younger members

Each year the Council of the CIOT meets for a day to review the Institute’s strategic direction.

We all recognise that the continued success of the CIOT relies on us recruiting volunteers from our membership to serve on our committees and ultimately, Council itself. As a result, on the evening before the next Strategy Day, the Council will be hosting a ‘world café’ event and we are looking for a cohort of our younger members (those aged 35 or under) to get involved. Look out for emails dropping into your inbox or contact me directly if you would like to join us. The date is 1 December.

Best wishes to you all.