

Full Designation Scholarship Recipient Testimonials



Teresa Amaro, RPA, was the recipient of the Full Designation Scholarship in 2013. She joined CBRE in September 1997 as an Administrative Assistant and quickly found her passion was in the commercial real estate industry. As a Real Estate Manager, from 1998 through 2011, Teresa was responsible for a mix of office and industrial real estate totaling approximately 750,000 square feet. In 2011, Teresa became the Real Estate Manager for 250 S. Wacker, an 18-story office building located in downtown Chicago, totaling 244,961 square feet.

Teresa earned her RPA designation two years after receiving the scholarship. Although she was already a seasoned manager, there was much more to learn as is always the case in property management. The knowledge she gained about environmental issues, mechanical equipment, real estate finance and risk management has given her more confidence, insight and perspective in her job. She has become a better manager for her clients and tenants.

“Earning my RPA was an enriching experience and I feel more confident in my role as a property manager. There is so much value in learning with your peers about the many facets of property management. I especially appreciated that the classes were taught by experienced real estate professionals who work in the industry and know the real challenges we face in managing buildings. The knowledge I gained and the relationships that were developed are invaluable. I am so grateful to BOMA/Chicago because I would not have been able to accomplish this without their generous scholarship.”



Joe Sherman, RPA/FMA, was awarded the 2014 Full Designation Scholarship. Joe began his career in Facility Management in October 2002 while working as the Director of Operations for Botanicals, Inc., an upscale event design firm located in a 30,000 square foot design studio on the border of Bucktown and Lincoln Park. He was hired by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as Operations Coordinator in August 2007. Working under Director of Facilities, John Maas (RPA/FMA), Joe learned every aspect of managing Symphony Center, the 294,211 square foot performance home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. In 2015, Joe took on the role of Production Manager. Orchestra Hall is a National Landmark concert hall, built in 1904, making Joe’s facility management experience very unique, almost niche-like.

In regards to the instructors, Joe states, “When one is taking 10 classes, back-to-back, it would be a reasonable expectation to have some weak links in the bunch – not so with the BOMA/Chicago education & professional development program. Every instructor I had was very well-suited to the material & tremendously committed to sharing the wisdom of their experience in CRE and facility management. This standard of excellence extends itself across all facets of the incredible educational programming that BOMA/Chicago offers to their members, such as the Brown Bag Seminars.”

“Being awarded the Full Designation afforded me the luxury of taking every class that was available. Consequently, I was able to earn the RPA/FMA in less than two years – it was like a graduate program in commercial real estate and facility management.”



Zaena Rihani, CMCP, was the recipient of the Full Designation Scholarship in 2018. In December 2016, Zaena joined CBRE as part of the of the Property Management team which coordinated the opening of the 150 North Riverside Plaza, a 1.2 million square foot class A office building. She began her career in commercial real estate as a Real Estate Services Administrator and advanced to becoming the Assistant Real Estate Manager in February of 2019.

Zaena states, "I am immensely grateful to BOMA/Chicago and the scholarship committee for awarding me the Full Designation Scholarship. The RPA provides a strong educational foundation which is valuable for a successful career, especially when one is new to the industry. Receiving this scholarship not only assisted me in achieving my real estate license and CMCP certification, but also increased my confidence in making decisions as a CRE professional. I was also able to gain insights from experienced professionals and expand my professional network. Through the scholarship, I was paired with a seasoned mentor and received one-on-one career guidance. The scholarship is a great opportunity and I encourage all professionals to pursue their RPA!"