

# BOMI LEARNERS SHARE THEIR STORIES



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We asked BOMI International students and graduates to share their experiences with us and how BOMI has improved their careers.



**Shari Barnes, RPA®**  
Property Manager  
S.C. Herman & Associates, Inc.

"I started my first class in January 2014, taking *Foundations of Facilities Management*, which is an essential class for anyone wanting to enter into commercial real estate. This class concisely showed the true aspects of property management from beginning to end. Upon taking the course, I immediately told our vice president that every member of the company should be required to take it.

"My boss asked me to start taking additional classes. Within eight months, I had finished all the classes needed for the RPA® designation. That year I took five classes, and each one added to my knowledge of the field and made me want to do more.

"Upon finishing all my classes, I knew it was not over. I had the responsibility to truly grasp the experience requirements and each task listed. My boss and I poured over the requirements and set a deadline to ensure that the goal was met. Each month, I would focus on two to three tasks that were not a part of my job duties at the time and attempt to master them. At that time, our property manager had just moved back into state, and I immediately went to her for mentorship.

"She helped train me step by step so I could truly understand what it means to be a property manager. We are now establishing the Property Management Department together. My company has supported me during this process, not only by subsidizing the classes, but ensuring that I was growing for my own career.

"Each opportunity and blessing worked hand in hand. Without the RPA® designation, I may not have had the opportunity to display what was taught to me. This designation helped me with my promotion to property manager in less than a year. Not only was it the designation, but the drive it created knowing that I could be a part of something great.

"I truly love this field and am continuing my education because I want to excel and gain more knowledge. I have gained mentors, teachers, and colleagues by attending one class back in 2014, and I am glad I signed up because it opened many doors."



**Christie Robles**  
Assistant Property Administrator  
Embarcadero Capital Partners

"I was introduced to BOMI International while speaking to a property manager in my company. She told me, 'Christie, if you want to make this a career path the first step is taking BOMI courses.' This is how my journey began.

"I have been taking BOMI International classes for about a year. As a result, I have been entrusted to draft six different budgets, working on the expenses totaling over \$6 million. I explain budget variances, complete accruals, draft lease abstracts, draft reports, and put together capital projects proposal requests. My company recognizes how well I'm doing and has asked me to become an assistant property manager.

"I now feel confident in my ability to be successful in this business because I have BOMI International giving me the tools to manage a property and think like an owner.

"If you're in this business and you're thinking about taking BOMI courses, stop thinking about it and take action. I know it might seem expensive, but I promise it is worth it and you will see your career thrive."



**Eric Mullins**  
Property Manager  
Holt Lunsford Commercial, Inc.

"My experience with the RPA® designation program improved more than just my career—it was life changing. For 14 years, I was a teacher who was languishing in a profession in which the average 'life span' is just three years. With fewer opportunities for promotion and limited educational training assistance, I decided to make a change at 38 years old in 2014.

"My competition was younger and graduating year after year with some having already interned in this industry. As a teacher, I had never heard of an asset manager. I did understand, however, that there were two components for a balanced professional—experience and knowledge. This, I knew, was the area in which I could improve immediately.

"I landed squarely in a situation that could only be described as 'providential.' My mentor was a former president of BOMA Dallas and used his vast experience to guide me in a controlled environment for several months. He introduced me to property managers, partners, and allied members who shared similar life-experience stories. I could never match their wealth of experience; however, I could gain instant credibility with a designation of some kind. Just as I was contemplating the financial and monumental task of obtaining this designation, providence intervened once again. The office in which I was working had an asset manager that heard about my situation and was willing to invest in my education by offering to pay for the RPA® designation program. I was frozen with fear and excitement at the possibilities that lay ahead. With which course do I begin? How long will this take? What if I fail? Or, what if I succeed? This was an opportunity for a life-changing moment that I could not let go.

"My courses began in January 2015 with *Real Estate Investment and Finance* and concluded in July 2017 with *Law and Risk Management*. There involved long hours of studying and striving to find a balance between family and work. After each course, I texted or called my mentor and that asset manager letting them know that their investment was paying great dividends. Perhaps their 'return' came in the form of knowing that they had done a good deed for someone who showed a little effort. It showed me that investing in people is not only good for your career, but for life."



**Michael Giese, RPA®,  
BOMI-HP™, LEED GA**  
Senior Vice President  
GlenStar Asset Management, LLC

"Real estate investments have become more complex over time, requiring a higher degree of sophistication by owners and managers than ever before. The RPA® designation program provided me with a forum to explore and master a number of core real estate subjects, from asset and risk management through leasing and marketing.

"I found the instructors to be knowledgeable and well informed, often mixing course content with practical examples based on their extensive experiences. Earning the RPA® designation was an important step in my overall career development, enabling me to assume additional roles and responsibilities over time. My participation in the program, from the courses, discussions, and readings, has broadened my understanding of commercial real estate and provides me with resources that I continue to use today."