

Report on

**2016 Inspection of Hein + Associates LLP
(Headquartered in Denver, Colorado)**

Issued by the

Public Company Accounting Oversight Board

May 25, 2017

THIS IS A PUBLIC VERSION OF A PCAOB INSPECTION REPORT

**PORTIONS OF THE COMPLETE REPORT ARE OMITTED
FROM THIS DOCUMENT IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH
SECTIONS 104(g)(2) AND 105(b)(5)(A)
OF THE SARBANES-OXLEY ACT OF 2002**

2016 INSPECTION OF HEIN + ASSOCIATES LLP

Preface

In 2016, the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board ("PCAOB" or "the Board") conducted an inspection of the registered public accounting firm Hein + Associates LLP ("the Firm") pursuant to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 ("the Act").

Inspections are designed and performed to provide a basis for assessing the degree of compliance by a firm with applicable requirements related to auditing issuers. For a description of the procedures the Board's inspectors may perform to fulfill this responsibility, see Part I.C of this report (which also contains additional information concerning PCAOB inspections generally). The inspection included reviews of portions of selected issuer audits. These reviews were intended to identify whether deficiencies existed in the reviewed audit work, and whether such deficiencies indicated defects or potential defects in the Firm's system of quality control over audits. In addition, the inspection included a review of policies and procedures related to certain quality control processes of the Firm that could be expected to affect audit quality.

The Board is issuing this report in accordance with the requirements of the Act. The Board is releasing to the public Part I of the report and portions of Part IV of the report. Part IV of the report consists of the Firm's comments, if any, on a draft of the report. If the nonpublic portions of the report discuss criticisms of or potential defects in the firm's system of quality control, those discussions also could eventually be made public, but only to the extent the firm fails to address the criticisms to the Board's satisfaction within 12 months of the issuance of the report. Appendix A presents the text of the paragraphs of the auditing standards that are referenced in Part I.A. in relation to the description of auditing deficiencies there.

Note on this report's citations to auditing standards: On March 31, 2015, the PCAOB adopted a reorganization of its auditing standards using a topical structure and a single, integrated numbering system. See *Reorganization of PCAOB Auditing Standards and Related Amendments to PCAOB Standards and Rules*, PCAOB Release No. 2015-002 (Mar. 31, 2015). The reorganization became effective as of December 31, 2016. Citations in this report reference the reorganized PCAOB auditing standards.

PROFILE OF THE FIRM¹

Offices	5 (Irvine, California; Denver, Colorado; and Allen, Dallas, and Houston, Texas)
Ownership structure	Limited liability partnership
Partners / professional staff ²	27 / 233
Issuer audit clients	46
Lead partners on issuer audit work ³	11
Other names used in audit reports	Hein & Associates LLP

¹ The information presented here is as understood by the inspection team, generally as of the outset of the inspection, based on the Firm's self-reporting and the inspection team's review of certain information. Additional information, including additional detail on audit reports issued by the Firm, is available in the Firm's filings with the Board, available at http://pcaobus.org/Registration/rasr/Pages/RASR_Search.aspx.

² The number of partners and professional staff is provided here as an indication of the size of the Firm, and does not necessarily represent the number of the Firm's professionals who participate in audits of issuers. The number of partners cited above represents the number of individuals with an ownership interest in the Firm.

³ The number of lead partners on issuer audit work represents the total number of Firm personnel (not necessarily limited to personnel with an ownership interest) who had primary responsibility for an issuer audit (as defined in AS 1201, *Supervision of the Audit Engagement*) during the twelve-month period preceding the outset of the inspection.

PART I

INSPECTION PROCEDURES AND CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS

Members of the Board's inspection staff ("the inspection team") conducted primary procedures for the inspection from October 24, 2016 to October 28, 2016 and from November 7, 2016 to November 10, 2016.⁴

A. Review of Audit Engagements

The inspection procedures included review of portions of six issuer audits performed by the Firm. The inspection team identified matters that it considered to be deficiencies in the performance of the work it reviewed.

The descriptions of the deficiencies in Part I.A of this report include, at the end of the description of each deficiency, references to specific paragraphs of the auditing standards that relate to those deficiencies. The text of those paragraphs is set forth in Appendix A to this report. The references in this sub-Part include only standards that primarily relate to the deficiencies; they do not present a comprehensive list of every auditing standard that applies to the deficiencies. Further, certain broadly applicable aspects of the auditing standards that may be relevant to a deficiency, such as provisions requiring due professional care, including the exercise of professional skepticism; the accumulation of sufficient appropriate audit evidence; and the performance of procedures that address risks, are not included in any references to the auditing standards in this sub-Part, unless the lack of compliance with these standards is the primary reason for the deficiency. These broadly applicable provisions are described in Part I.B of this report.

Certain deficiencies identified were of such significance that it appeared to the inspection team that the Firm, at the time it issued its audit report, had not obtained sufficient appropriate audit evidence to support its opinion that the financial statements

⁴ For this purpose, "primary procedures" include field work, other review of audit work papers, and the evaluation of the Firm's quality control policies and procedures through review of documentation and interviews of Firm personnel. Primary procedures do not include (1) inspection planning, which is performed prior to primary procedures, and (2) inspection follow-up procedures, wrap-up, analysis of results, and the preparation of the inspection report, which extend beyond the primary procedures.

were presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with the applicable financial reporting framework and/or its opinion about whether the issuer had maintained, in all material respects, effective internal control over financial reporting ("ICFR"). In other words, in these audits, the auditor issued an opinion without satisfying its fundamental obligation to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements were free of material misstatement and/or the issuer maintained effective ICFR.

The fact that one or more deficiencies in an audit reach this level of significance does not necessarily indicate that the financial statements are materially misstated or that there are undisclosed material weaknesses in ICFR. It is often not possible for the inspection team, based only on the information available from the auditor, to reach a conclusion on those points.

Whether or not associated with a disclosed financial reporting misstatement, an auditor's failure to obtain the reasonable assurance that the auditor is required to obtain is a serious matter. It is a failure to accomplish the essential purpose of the audit, and it means that, based on the audit work performed, the audit opinion should not have been issued.⁵

The audit deficiencies that reached this level of significance are described below—

⁵ Inclusion in an inspection report does not mean that the deficiency remained unaddressed after the inspection team brought it to the Firm's attention. Depending upon the circumstances, compliance with PCAOB standards may require the Firm to perform additional audit procedures, or to inform a client of the need for changes to its financial statements or reporting on internal control, or to take steps to prevent reliance on its previously expressed audit opinions. The Board expects that firms will comply with these standards, and an inspection may include a review of the adequacy of a firm's compliance with these requirements, either with respect to previously identified deficiencies or deficiencies identified during that inspection. Failure by a firm to take appropriate actions, or a firm's misrepresentations in responding to an inspection report, about whether it has taken such actions, could be a basis for Board disciplinary sanctions.

A.1. Issuer A

the failure, in an audit of ICFR, to perform sufficient procedures to test the design and operating effectiveness of controls over the occurrence and valuation of revenue and over the existence and valuation of loans (AS 2201.39, .42, and .44).

A.2. Issuer B

(1) the failure, in an audit of ICFR, to perform sufficient procedures to test the design and operating effectiveness of controls over the valuation of inventory (AS 2201.42 and .44); and

(2) the failure to perform sufficient procedures to test the valuation of inventory (AS 2501.11).

A.3. Issuer C

the failure, in an audit of ICFR, to perform sufficient procedures to test the design and operating effectiveness of controls over the valuation of long-lived assets (AS 2201.42 and .44).

B. Auditing Standards

Each deficiency described above could relate to several applicable provisions of the standards that govern the conduct of audits. The paragraphs of the standards that are cited for each deficiency are those that most directly relate to the deficiency. The deficiencies also relate, however, to other paragraphs of those standards and to other auditing standards, including those concerning due professional care, responses to risk assessments, and audit evidence.

Many audit deficiencies involve a lack of due professional care. Paragraphs .02, .05, and .06 of AS 1015, *Due Professional Care in the Performance of Work*, requires the independent auditor to plan and perform his or her work with due professional care and sets forth aspects of that requirement. AS 1015.07-.09, and paragraph .07 of AS 2301, *The Auditor's Responses to the Risks of Material Misstatement*, specify that due professional care requires the exercise of professional skepticism. These standards state that professional skepticism is an attitude that includes a questioning mind and a critical assessment of the appropriateness and sufficiency of audit evidence.

AS 2301.03, .05, and .08, requires the auditor to design and implement audit responses that address the risks of material misstatement, and paragraph .04 of AS 1105, *Audit Evidence*, requires the auditor to plan and perform audit procedures to obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence to provide a reasonable basis for the audit opinion. Sufficiency is the measure of the quantity of audit evidence, and the quantity needed is affected by the risk of material misstatement (in the audit of financial statements) or the risk associated with the control (in the audit of ICFR) and the quality of the audit evidence obtained. The appropriateness of evidence is measured by its quality; to be appropriate, evidence must be both relevant and reliable in providing support for the related conclusions.

The paragraphs of the standards that are described immediately above are not cited in Part I.A, unless those paragraphs are the most directly related to the relevant deficiency.

B.1. List of Specific Auditing Standards Referenced in Part I.A.

The table below lists the specific auditing standards that are referenced in Part I.A of this report, cross-referenced to the issuer audits for which each standard is cited.

PCAOB Auditing Standards	Issuers
AS 2201, <i>An Audit of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting That is Integrated with An Audit of Financial Statements</i>	A, B, and C
AS 2501, <i>Auditing Accounting Estimates</i>	B

C. Information Concerning PCAOB Inspections that is Generally Applicable to Triennially Inspected Firms

A Board inspection includes a review of certain portions of selected audit work performed by the inspected firm and a review of certain aspects of the firm's quality control system. The inspections are designed to identify deficiencies in audit work and defects or potential defects in the firm's system of quality control related to the firm's audits. The focus on deficiencies, defects, and potential defects necessarily carries through to reports on inspections and, accordingly, Board inspection reports are not intended to serve as balanced report cards or overall rating tools. Further, the inclusion

in an inspection report of certain deficiencies, defects, and potential defects should not be construed as an indication that the Board has made any determination about other aspects of the inspected firm's systems, policies, procedures, practices, or conduct not included within the report.

C.1. Reviews of Audit Work

Inspections include reviews of portions of selected audits of financial statements and, where applicable, audits of ICFR. For these audits, the inspection team selects certain portions of the audits for inspection, and it reviews the engagement team's work papers and interviews engagement personnel regarding those portions. If the inspection team identifies a potential issue that it is unable to resolve through discussion with the firm and any review of additional work papers or other documentation, the inspection team ordinarily provides the firm with a written comment form on the matter and the firm is allowed the opportunity to provide a written response to the comment form. If the response does not resolve the inspection team's concerns, the matter is considered a deficiency and is evaluated for inclusion in the inspection report.

The inspection team selects the audits, and the specific portions of those audits, that it will review, and the inspected firm is not allowed an opportunity to limit or influence the selections. Audit deficiencies that the inspection team may identify include a firm's failure to identify, or to address appropriately, financial statement misstatements, including failures to comply with disclosure requirements,⁶ as well as a firm's failure to perform, or to perform sufficiently, certain necessary audit procedures. An inspection may not involve the review of all of the firm's audits, nor is it designed to identify every deficiency in the reviewed audits. Accordingly, a Board inspection report should not be understood to provide any assurance that a firm's audit work, or the

⁶ When it comes to the Board's attention that an issuer's financial statements appear not to present fairly, in a material respect, the financial position, results of operations, or cash flows of the issuer in conformity with the applicable financial reporting framework, the Board's practice is to report that information to the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC" or "the Commission"), which has jurisdiction to determine proper accounting in issuers' financial statements. Any description in this report of financial statement misstatements or failures to comply with SEC disclosure requirements should not be understood as an indication that the SEC has considered or made any determination regarding these issues unless otherwise expressly stated.

relevant issuers' financial statements or reporting on ICFR, are free of any deficiencies not specifically described in an inspection report.

In some cases, the conclusion that a firm did not perform a procedure may be based on the absence of documentation and the absence of persuasive other evidence, even if the firm claimed to have performed the procedure. AS 1215, *Audit Documentation*, provides that, in various circumstances including PCAOB inspections, a firm that has not adequately documented that it performed a procedure, obtained evidence, or reached an appropriate conclusion must demonstrate with persuasive other evidence that it did so, and that oral assertions and explanations alone do not constitute persuasive other evidence. In reaching its conclusions, an inspection team considers whether audit documentation or other evidence that a firm might provide to the inspection team supports the firm's contention that it performed a procedure, obtained evidence, or reached an appropriate conclusion. In the case of every matter cited in the public portion of a final inspection report, the inspection team has carefully considered any contention by the firm that it did so but just did not document its work, and the inspection team has concluded that the available evidence does not support the contention that the firm sufficiently performed the necessary work.

Identified deficiencies in the audit work that exceed a significance threshold (which is described in Part I.A of the inspection report) are summarized in the public portion of the inspection report.⁷

The Board cautions against extrapolating from the results presented in the public portion of a report to broader conclusions about the frequency of deficiencies throughout the firm's practice. Individual audits and areas of inspection focus are most often selected on a risk-weighted basis and not randomly. Areas of focus vary among selected audits, but often involve audit work on the most difficult or inherently uncertain areas of financial statements. Thus, the audit work is generally selected for inspection based on factors that, in the inspection team's view, heighten the possibility that auditing

⁷ The discussion in this report of any deficiency observed in a particular audit reflects information reported to the Board by the inspection team and does not reflect any determination by the Board as to whether the Firm has engaged in any conduct for which it could be sanctioned through the Board's disciplinary process. In addition, any references in this report to violations or potential violations of law, rules, or professional standards are not a result of an adversarial adjudicative process and do not constitute conclusive findings for purposes of imposing legal liability.

deficiencies are present, rather than through a process intended to identify a representative sample.

C.2. Review of a Firm's Quality Control System

QC 20, *System of Quality Control for a CPA Firm's Accounting and Auditing Practice*, provides that an auditing firm has a responsibility to ensure that its personnel comply with the applicable professional standards. This standard specifies that a firm's system of quality control should encompass the following elements: (1) independence, integrity, and objectivity; (2) personnel management; (3) acceptance and continuance of issuer audit engagements; (4) engagement performance; and (5) monitoring.

The inspection team's assessment of a firm's quality control system is derived both from the results of its procedures specifically focused on the firm's quality control policies and procedures, and also from inferences that can be drawn from deficiencies in the performance of individual audits. Audit deficiencies, whether alone or when aggregated, may indicate areas where a firm's system has failed to provide reasonable assurance of quality in the performance of audits. Even deficiencies that do not result in an insufficiently supported audit opinion may indicate a defect or potential defect in a firm's quality control system.⁸ If identified deficiencies, when accumulated and evaluated, indicate defects or potential defects in the firm's system of quality control, the nonpublic portion of this report would include a discussion of those issues. When evaluating whether identified deficiencies in individual audits indicate a defect or potential defect in a firm's system of quality control, the inspection team considers the nature, significance, and frequency of deficiencies;⁹ related firm methodology, guidance, and practices; and possible root causes.

⁸ Not every audit deficiency suggests a defect or potential defect in a firm's quality control system, and this report may not discuss every audit deficiency the inspection team identified.

⁹ An evaluation of the frequency of a type of deficiency may include consideration of how often the inspection team reviewed audit work that presented the opportunity for similar deficiencies to occur. In some cases, even a type of deficiency that is observed infrequently in a particular inspection may, because of some combination of its nature, its significance, and the frequency with which it has been observed in previous inspections of the firm, be cause for concern about a quality control defect or potential defect.

Inspections also include a review of certain of the firm's practices, policies, and processes related to audit quality, which constitute a part of the firm's quality control system. This review addresses practices, policies, and procedures concerning audit performance, training, compliance with independence standards, client acceptance and retention, and the establishment of policies and procedures.

END OF PART I

PARTS II AND III OF THIS REPORT ARE NONPUBLIC
AND ARE OMITTED FROM THIS PUBLIC DOCUMENT

PART IV

RESPONSE OF THE FIRM TO DRAFT INSPECTION REPORT

Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(a), the Firm provided a written response to a draft of this report. Pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act and PCAOB Rule 4007(b), the Firm's response, minus any portion granted confidential treatment, is attached hereto and made part of this final inspection report.¹⁰

¹⁰ The Board does not make public any of a firm's comments that address a nonpublic portion of the report unless a firm specifically requests otherwise. In some cases, the result may be that none of a firm's response is made publicly available. In addition, pursuant to section 104(f) of the Act, 15 U.S.C. § 7214(f), and PCAOB Rule 4007(b), if a firm requests, and the Board grants, confidential treatment for any of the firm's comments on a draft report, the Board does not include those comments in the final report at all. The Board routinely grants confidential treatment, if requested, for any portion of a firm's response that addresses any point in the draft that the Board omits from, or any inaccurate statement in the draft that the Board corrects in, the final report.



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April 6, 2017

Ms. Helen A. Munter
Director
Division of Registration and Inspections
Public Company Accounting Oversight Board
1666 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Re: Public Response to the Report on 2016 Inspection of Hein + Associates LLP Issued by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB)

Dear Ms. Munter:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the PCAOB's Draft Report of the 2016 Inspection of Hein + Associates LLP. We support the mission of the PCAOB and believe that the inspection process is valuable in enhancing the quality of audit engagements.

We appreciate the constructive dialogue that we have had with the PCAOB staff in the course of our inspection. We are taking appropriate actions in response to the report findings.

Audit quality has been and continues to be our highest priority. We look forward to working with the PCAOB staff to further those efforts.

Sincerely,

Hein + Associates LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James N. Brendel".

James N. Brendel, Managing Partner

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacob J. Vossen".

Jacob J. Vossen, National Director of Audit and Accounting

APPENDIX A

AUDITING STANDARDS REFERENCED IN PART I.A

This appendix provides the text of the auditing standard paragraphs that are referenced in Part I.A of this report. Footnotes that are included in this appendix, and any other Notes, are from the original auditing standards that are referenced. While this appendix contains the specific portions of the relevant standards cited with respect to the deficiencies in Part I.A of this report, other portions of the standards (including those described in Part I.B of this report) may provide additional context, descriptions, related requirements, or explanations; the complete standards are available on the PCAOB's website at <http://pcaobus.org/STANDARDS/Pages/default.aspx>.

AS 2201, An Audit of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting That is Integrated with An Audit of Financial Statements		
Selecting Controls to Test		
AS 2201.39	The auditor should test those controls that are important to the auditor's conclusion about whether the company's controls sufficiently address the assessed risk of misstatement to each relevant assertion.	Issuer A
TESTING CONTROLS		
Testing Design Effectiveness		
AS 2201.42	<p>The auditor should test the design effectiveness of controls by determining whether the company's controls, if they are operated as prescribed by persons possessing the necessary authority and competence to perform the control effectively, satisfy the company's control objectives and can effectively prevent or detect errors or fraud that could result in material misstatements in the financial statements.</p> <p>Note: A smaller, less complex company might achieve its control objectives in a different manner from a larger, more complex organization. For example, a smaller, less complex company might have fewer employees in the accounting function, limiting opportunities to segregate duties and leading the company to implement alternative controls to achieve its control objectives. In such circumstances, the auditor should evaluate whether those alternative controls are effective.</p>	

AS 2201, An Audit of Internal Control Over Financial Reporting That is Integrated with An Audit of Financial Statements		
Testing Operating Effectiveness		
AS 2201.44	<p>The auditor should test the operating effectiveness of a control by determining whether the control is operating as designed and whether the person performing the control possesses the necessary authority and competence to perform the control effectively.</p> <p>Note: In some situations, particularly in smaller companies, a company might use a third party to provide assistance with certain financial reporting functions. When assessing the competence of personnel responsible for a company's financial reporting and associated controls, the auditor may take into account the combined competence of company personnel and other parties that assist with functions related to financial reporting.</p>	Issuers A, B, and C

AS 2501, Auditing Accounting Estimates		
EVALUATING ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES		
Evaluating Reasonableness		
AS 2501.11	<p>Review and test management's process. In many situations, the auditor assesses the reasonableness of an accounting estimate by performing procedures to test the process used by management to make the estimate. The following are procedures the auditor may consider performing when using this approach:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify whether there are controls over the preparation of accounting estimates and supporting data that may be useful in the evaluation. b. Identify the sources of data and factors that management used in forming the assumptions, and consider whether such data and factors are relevant, reliable, and sufficient for the purpose based on information gathered in other audit tests. c. Consider whether there are additional key factors or alternative assumptions about the factors. d. Evaluate whether the assumptions are consistent 	Issuer B

	<p>with each other, the supporting data, relevant historical data, and industry data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">e. Analyze historical data used in developing the assumptions to assess whether the data is comparable and consistent with data of the period under audit, and consider whether such data is sufficiently reliable for the purpose.f. Consider whether changes in the business or industry may cause other factors to become significant to the assumptions.g. Review available documentation of the assumptions used in developing the accounting estimates and inquire about any other plans, goals, and objectives of the entity, as well as consider their relationship to the assumptions.h. Consider using the work of a specialist regarding certain assumptions (AS 1210, <i>Using the Work of a Specialist</i>).i. Test the calculations used by management to translate the assumptions and key factors into the accounting estimate.	
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