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Connections

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Mentors Help Graduates Turn Dreams Into Reality

By Andrew Zamorski

COLLEGE GRADUATES WHO, AS STUDENTS, WERE ENCOURAGED BY MENTORS TO PURSUE THEIR HOPES AND DREAMS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO FEEL ENGAGED IN THEIR CAREERS AND FULFILLED IN THEIR LIVES, ACCORDING TO A NATIONAL GALLUP-PURDUE UNIVERSITY SURVEY.

That’s certainly the case for students, alumni and business professionals who participate in mentorships across the Driehaus College of Business. Business Exchange profiles three of these mentorships and how they have inspired both mentees and mentors.

JAKE GLOVER AND KIM KOZENY

Last spring, **Jake Glover (BUS '17)** was a senior marketing major quickly approaching graduation when he went to see MaryAnn Gibney, who was the manager of student and alumni engagement at the Center for Sales Leadership at DePaul.

Glover was interested in working for Jellyvision, an interactive employee communication software company, and sought Gibney’s help in finding a connection at the Chicago-based company. Serendipitously, Gibney had just returned from lunch with **Kim Kozeny (BUS '09)**, who expressed an interest in becoming a mentor and was working at that time as a Jellyvision account executive.

“Really good mentors genuinely want to help mentees,” says Glover. “(They) take them under their wing and rise up with them.”

That is what Kozeny did for Glover. During casual conversations that spanned a range of topics, Glover asked Kozeny what it is like to work at

Jellyvision, how to get a job there and what he could do to stand out as a job candidate. Kozeny knew how much Glover wanted to join Jellyvision, so she introduced him to her sales leadership team. Glover made a great first impression and was invited to return the following week for an interview.

“As a mentor, it’s important to understand what your mentee wants out of your relationship,” says Kozeny. “It is my job to help them

find out what they are passionate about and to help fulfill that passion.”

Kozeny prepared Glover for the Jellyvision job interview, giving him feedback on his sales pitch, suggesting resources to read about the company and going over the interview process.

“I’ve been very lucky with the people who have mentored me in the past,” says Kozeny. “They gave me confidence to follow my own career aspirations. To do that for someone else is extremely fulfilling.”

Glover landed a job at Jellyvision as a business development representative and has been working there for more than a year. He now hopes to move up into an account executive role and continues meeting with Kozeny for career advice.

One of Glover’s former classmates has recently expressed interest in working for Jellyvision, so he has reached out to her in what he calls a “mini-mentor” role. Glover says it is his chance to pay it forward.



IT IS MY JOB TO HELP THEM FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT AND TO HELP FULFILL THAT PASSION.” – MENTOR KIM KOZENY WITH HER MENTEE, JAKE GLOVER

MARY HENDRICKSON AND GREG WARSEK

Real estate major Mary Hendrickson is no stranger to working with mentors. She was assigned to a commercial banker mentor in her real estate career management course for a short-term classroom project. Seeking even more advice about careers outside of the classroom, she jumped at the opportunity offered by Professor Stephen Bell, associate director of The Real Estate Center, to be paired with a second mentor.

"I was hoping to get more knowledge about the industry since I was just starting my first internship," says Hendrickson. Since she was interning in the capital markets group at Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), a global commercial real estate services firm, Hendrickson was paired with Greg Warsek, group senior vice president at Associated Bank, who manages a commercial real estate loan portfolio.

"Greg helped me figure out the grand scheme of what I was doing in my internship. He also helped explain his role in the banking industry, which made my job easier," Hendrickson says.

Warsek serves on three university advisory boards, including DePaul's Real Estate Center board. In the last 30 years, he estimates, he has mentored between 50 and 75 students, focusing on young professionals who are trying to make the right decisions as they go back to school or make job moves.

"When I first started looking for a job, I was helped by a friend of a friend who didn't need to help me, but did it anyway," says Warsek. "Now I am at the point in my career where I can make phone calls and introductions and get students' résumés moved to the top of the pile.

"Being a mentor gives me a really important perspective (about working) with young people because I have three different generations of employees to manage," says Warsek. "I learn

a lot from them. They teach me how they view the world and what is important to them, and it makes me a better leader for Associated Bank."

Hendrickson is now in her second year working at JLL and continues to meet with Warsek regularly by phone or in person to talk about business school, future plans and industry topics. Networking is a huge part of their relationship. While selling raffle tickets at a gala to raise money for stomach cancer research, Hendrickson ran into Warsek, and he immediately introduced her to his friends, colleagues and other contacts.

Making contacts can be intimidating, but Hendrickson says that she feels comfortable asking Warsek for help. "Everyone should get a mentor," says Hendrickson. "You have no reason not to. It makes the world smaller, it gives you connections to the industry and it helps you find your direction."

MENTORS CONTINUED ➤



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EVERYONE SHOULD GET A MENTOR. IT MAKES THE WORLD SMALLER, IT GIVES YOU CONNECTIONS TO THE INDUSTRY AND IT HELPS YOU FIND YOUR DIRECTION.” - MARY HENDRICKSON, WITH HER MENTOR, GREG WARSEK

RANA IRFAN ZAID AND JOHN ECONOMOS

Rana Irfan Zaid moved to the United States from Pakistan during his sophomore year of high school and got a part-time job working at a local hotel. He enjoyed working in the hospitality industry, and his manager recommended that he pursue it as a career.

Following in the footsteps of his older brother, Zaid decided to study at DePaul's School of Hospitality Leadership. The senior loves all facets of the hospitality industry but is currently interested in food and beverage.

"Having the best guidance in the industry was really important for me to find success within a niche industry," says Zaid. "I wanted to pair up with a mentor in hospitality who could help me navigate through challenges and guide me toward my goals."

Through the hospitality school's mentorship program, Zaid was

connected to John Economos, a partner at Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises (LEYE), the Chicago-based, family-owned restaurant group that manages and licenses more than 120 restaurants.

"I like being a point person for someone looking for guidance in the industry," says Economos. "If I had a mentor in college, I probably would've started my career much earlier and with more confidence." Economos, the general manager at Beatrix in Chicago's Streeterville neighborhood, studied communication management in college and had no hospitality experience. Through LEYE's internal management training program, he worked his way from carryout clerk at Di Pescara restaurant into management through a series of positions with various LEYE restaurants.

"I come from a family of teachers, but I have never been a great teacher until I started mentoring students," says Economos. "I am in a role where it's not about me, but how I help develop others. I enjoy when Rana asks me for advice."

Economos and Zaid met frequently at LEYE restaurants to talk about the industry, the interviewing process and opportunities throughout the company. Economos also let Zaid shadow him at Beatrix to see how to manage a restaurant. He then helped Zaid land a hosting job at LEYE's upscale RPM Italian restaurant, as well as a spot in LEYE's management intern program this summer.

"I was really lucky to find a mentor who I aspire to be like," says Zaid. "John has helped expose me to different parts of the industry and become more informed. He has helped complete me."

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HAVING THE BEST GUIDANCE IN THE INDUSTRY WAS REALLY IMPORTANT FOR ME TO FIND SUCCESS.” – RANA IRFAN ZAID, WITH HIS MENTOR, JOHN ECONOMOS