For senior marketing majors Cecilia Lockman and Evelyn Scott, being told to ask someone else for help turned out to be one of the most valuable learning experiences they’ve encountered at BU.

In September, Lockman and Scott approached Michael Tidwell, dean of the College of Business, for funding so members of the American Marketing Association (AMA) could attend the organization’s national conference in New Orleans. Tidwell saw this as the perfect opportunity to help Lockman and Scott gain professional marketing experience and suggested they ask a few alumni for support. But when they met with Chet Snavely as the spring semester began, the students got another unexpected answer: Snavely wouldn’t give the full donation, but he would help the students in another way.

President of Anchor Organization Realty, Snavely agreed to give $2,500, encouraging the students to ask three other alumni to help. He took Lockman and Scott through a sales call and gave them feedback on their presentation. He also worked with the students to formulate a donation structure that would allow people to give annually, ensuring funding for the future.

Both Snavely and Tidwell thought firsthand experience would benefit Lockman and Scott, and the students agree. Lockman, from Springfield, Pa., acknowledges the difference between roleplaying in class and a meeting in a business setting. “It’s different when it actually affects you,” she says.

Scott, of Mount Laurel, N.J., admits that while the pair was excited

The College of Business prides itself on providing the first steps to a successful life and career. Two accounting alumni and new Advisory Board members, say it was moments at Bloomsburg University that helped them in the professional world.

“A professor once indicated that I was not looking at my future in the correct light,” says Brenda Schreffler Nichols ’85, senior vice president and chief financial officer of Larson Design Group. That professor predicted she would be in management, rather than accounting, within five years, a prediction she says was “very disheartening to hear. But he saw some strengths in me that I wasn’t aware of.”

The professor’s words proved to be true. Nichols worked for a small accounting firm for five years and then became the controller of a startup company. Today she does very little accounting in her role with Larson Design Group.

Steven Morehart, a 1986 graduate, stayed on the accounting track and credits professors and their curriculum for leading him to his current position as a partner CPA at

Brenda I. Nichols
CFO, Larson Design Group
Diverse Perspectives continued...

ParenteBeard LLC. “The accounting and business curriculum and professors were well-equipped to contribute to my successful completion of the CPA exam,” he says. “This allowed me to focus on the day-to-day demands of my career as opposed to having the exam hanging over me.”

Nichols says the value of building relationships “cannot be underestimated” for future career success. “As a student at Bloomsburg University, you have a great opportunity to set yourself apart from others,” she says. “The key is developing relationships. With relationships, you can set yourself apart; someone can tell someone else why you are different and worthy of being considered the top candidate.”

Morehart advises students to “identify people who are in positions you someday want to be in and ask to spend time with them to learn about what they do.” He encourages students to find out what that job entails and ask what they can do to be successful in landing a position in that field. And, while it’s important to take a career seriously, Morehart offers this job search tip: “Be yourself and have a sense of humor.”

Marketing Students continued...

to have the experience, they were nervous about the actual meeting. Now, they’re much more confident and prepared for future projects. “I feel more comfortable in professional situations, especially interviews,” says Scott.

Their newfound confidence proved helpful when they approached Alan Dakey, CEO of People’s Neighborhood Bank and Chair of the College of Business Advisory Board. Dakey says he agreed to meet with Cecilia and Evelyn because, “I feel the real world experience of interacting with executives in the field brings knowledge and experience to the student they can’t gain in a classroom experience. My phone conference with the officers provided real world experience as they described the needs of the organization, it’s background and appropriately presented a case for support. Asking for support is one of the more difficult tasks a professional can experience and the only real way to gain experience and confidence is to “just do it.”

Snavely added, “the students aren’t the only ones who benefitted from this collaboration.” He says he wishes there had been opportunities to work with experienced businesspersons while he was a student. He plans to continue working with the university and hopes that Lockman and Scott can share their knowledge with other students. “You learn so much by being a mentor,” he says. “It’s a two-way street.”

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