

## Woman to Woman

**Paul College's new mentoring initiative includes a focus on women**

Thursday, April 5, 2018



**NANCY BIXBY '81 AT A PAUL COLLEGE HOMECOMING MENTORING EVENT IN 2017**

Imagine attending a mentoring event while you were in college, and the person sitting across the table from you, who has agreed to serve as your mentor, is the CFO of a major corporation. Maybe she's the founder of her own company. But she's a woman in business, just like you hope to be, and she's ready to share with you the tips and tricks that she learned along the way to be successful.

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That's the idea behind the newest addition to Paul College's mentoring initiative, the Women in Business mentoring program. The program debuted during the official Paul College mentoring initiative kickoff at the Paul College Homecoming celebration last fall. The initiative brings together the college's different mentoring programs to enhance resources and support for mentors and mentees.

For Nancy Bixby '81, becoming a mentor for this program was an easy decision. Being a Wildcat is a Bixby family affair: Nancy and her husband are Whittemore School grads, and both of their children graduated from UNH. So the opportunity to serve as a mentor to young women in Paul College was especially exciting for the former COO and cybersecurity veteran.

"I really enjoy sharing my experience with others and helping them achieve their potential," Bixby said. "I always gain more than I put in. As I work to understand my mentee's motivations, goals and fears, I often uncover and clarify my own. It's a win-win."

Bixby met her mentee, Devin Cowhig '20, at the mentoring kickoff. Cowhig said she has enjoyed learning about Bixby's career in cybersecurity, a field with historically few women leaders. Bixby's recent transition to running her own business after her previous company downsized has also created good conversations between the two.

"She is really proficient in a lot of different fields and that helps her find really cool opportunities and projects to work on," said Cowhig.

"One of the main lessons I have learned, and one I like to see in anyone that I am working with, is a willingness to take on new initiatives and to be a lifelong learner," Bixby said.

For Kellie Sovak '19, who has a goal of working in fashion and retail, being matched with Annie Spano '14G, founder and CEO of

Style Collective, was a dream come true.

“I assumed that I would be matched with a mentor who had experience working with one of my majors, but I thought it would be a long shot to find someone involved in my desired industry as well. I was pleasantly surprised when I found out how well Annie’s and my interests aligned, since she works in marketing as an influencer and is strongly linked to the fashion industry,” said Sovak.

“Kellie asks questions that challenge me to think about how I would approach situations in today’s world,” said Spano. “I’m honored to provide whatever guidance I can.”

“It is always a good feeling knowing that someone is there for you and rooting for you to succeed, and I feel that Annie is part of my support system,” said Sovak.

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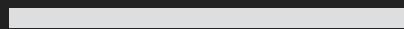
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