My initial plan after graduating UF was to attend law school. However, I could not refuse the opportunity Dollar General presented me. In my first year with the company, despite my limited retail experience, I worked with employees and leaders up to the highest levels of the organization to help implement operational changes as I traveled around the country. While traveling, I took on an extra assignment of managing the change implementation schedule of approximately 5,000 stores – an impact of over $17 million. Volunteering for that extra assignment had a direct impact on my career – leading to my current position of solely managing the company’s entire labor budget, the largest expense of this $9-billion retailer! Even though my career has had little to do with traditional marketing activities, the combination of classes I took for my Marketing major has proven useful. UF’s Retailing Center and business classes are held in high regard in companies around the country – and for good reason. A detour from law school, I am now looking ahead to pursue an MBA while working and very excited about my career possibilities.

My advice to current UF students is to participate whole-heartedly in class-room exercises – especially in case studies and group projects. It may annoy a professor or student or two, but don’t be afraid to question! Retail is constantly changing and the companies and individuals who question the practices of yesterday tend to be the ones that succeed in the future. And to recent graduates, don’t be afraid to volunteer for extra responsibilities and put in the extra hours. Choose challenges that match your strengths and make sure your efforts are worthy of notice. Faculty members at UF, such as Cecilia Schulz, are great resources and I owe her a great deal of thanks for her help and support. Even today, I turn to her first when I’m not sure how to approach a new situation.