

University of Missouri

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MIZZOU

Continuing the Tradition

Mizzou student experience forms a foundation for professional success.



Former MSA President Elizabeth Barton Ubell leads corporate strategy and continuous improvement at Grainger in Lake Forest, Illinois. She is pictured with husband Brian, and sons Andrew, left, and William. Not pictured: daughter Katherine, born Sept. 25, 2014. Photo by Christine Plamann.

Story by Angela Dahman

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Elizabeth Barton Ubell, the granddaughter, niece, cousin, sister and daughter of Mizzou alumni, followed in her family members' footsteps and enrolled in 1993.

"I knew I was going to get a great general education at the University of Missouri," says Ubell, BA, BS BA '97, "but it was also a family tradition."

Leaving Oak Grove, Missouri, a town of 3,000, and coming to a then-22,000-student campus was an adjustment. Getting involved "provided a way for me to make such a big place more approachable," Ubell says.

Ubell got involved with several organizations: the Missouri Students Association, Outreach, Summer Welcome, Greek Life and Homecoming Steering Committee, among others.

"Through all of these things, I was able to have leadership experiences that formed the foundation of skills that I still use today," Ubell says.

She also developed a network of friends who serve as professional sounding boards and coaches.

"We might not be in the same industries," Ubell says, "but their professional successes and points of view are relevant to me, and I still learn from these people two decades later."

After graduating magna cum laude from Mizzou in

1997 with degrees in business administration and international studies, Ubell went on to earn an MBA from the University of Michigan and work for multiple Fortune 500 companies. Now she leads corporate strategy and continuous improvement at Grainger in Lake Forest, Illinois.

Ubell says the combination of classroom learning and extracurricular leadership experiences was critical to her success.

She made a gift to the Mizzou Student Experience fund in 2013. “While giving money to my colleges is important,” Ubell explains, “I wanted to support the grooming I was able to gain through extracurricular activities. They are equally accountable for my success.”

Her gift helps ensure tradition as well.

“As we think about giving to the university, it’s important that we recognize our student experience from an extracurricular perspective, from a social perspective and in the classroom,” to ensure that “the tradition of the university can live on in all three aspects.”

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