

Finding Fulfillment in Mentorship

ANNA MIRABELLA '12 RETURNS AS A MENTOR TO THE PROGRAM THAT MOST INSPIRED HER: THE ROBOTICS TEAM

When Anna Mirabella '12 began mentoring the Gatorbotics team in 2022, one of her immediate thoughts was, “We were like this too.” The team today may use different tools and technologies than 15 years ago, but the enthusiasm and motivation of the students is exactly the same. She had been considering mentoring the Gatorbotics team for a while, but after joining their kickoff meeting last fall, she recognized, “The team’s desire to solve problems was contagious, and I knew I wanted to be part of that environment again,” she says. She finally committed to carving out time to give back to a place and a program that shaped her.

It’s in the robotics space that Anna began to develop her voice and her path, so naturally, sharing this same gift with current students is truly a full circle moment, as we like to say. A four-year member of the Gatorbotics team, Anna recounts that exposure to hands-on technical experience and to industry mentors significantly impacted her decision to study mechanical engineering in college. Further, her time as team captain taught her valuable leadership lessons that she continues to utilize in her current role as a program manager.

REFLECTING AND GIVING

When it was time to consider career paths, Anna identified trends in the kinds of roles she played in classroom and extracurricular group projects: “I realized that I had built foundational skills at Castilleja that I could employ in a job, too.” As she contemplated her next steps, another thought crossed her mind. Anna’s college sorority helped re-emphasize the value of philanthropy and how contributing financial resources in conjunction with volunteer time can maximize impact. A spark ignited in Anna. She wanted to start contributing.

Upon graduating from college, Anna asked herself where she wanted to make an impact. She began donating to Castilleja’s robotics team, noting that as a student, she always valued having access to new tools.



“Even giving back in small ways can make a difference and maintain connection to community.”

— ANNA MIRABELLA '12

Now that she was in a position to give back, she wanted to help students develop skills in new areas, just like she had. “Even giving back in small ways can make a difference and maintain connection to community,” she observes. For Anna, it has been equally rewarding to invest her time, especially when doing so is encouraged and supported by an employer. “I would encourage alums to see if their company matches donations in order to maximize dollars or time,” Anna shared.

MUTUAL MENTORSHIP

One recent afternoon in the Bourn Lab, Anna stumbled upon the robot her team had built a decade ago. Excited by this discovery, Anna reached out to her former team and mentor about the memories that came flooding back to her. The connection was reignited as if time stood still.

Anna shared that mentoring taught her new skills she’s been able to bring back to her workplace. Perhaps it is unsurprising that once you become a learner and a leader, you will embody those attributes throughout your journey and empower others to do the same.