ARMD Alumni Fill Various Roles at Scheels

Scheels is a destination for sporting goods and fashion throughout the Midwest, and it’s also where many NDSU ARMD alumni find great careers. Several alumni work at Scheels’ corporate office in Fargo in various positions including web product merchant, human resource assistant, assistant store leader, shop manager and visual display specialist.

Amber Barth started part time at Scheels in 2007 selling men’s clothing. She is now an assistant store leader. In this position, she leads specialty shop managers to grow sales and margins in their departments. “This is anything from managing open-to-buy, ordering product, marking product down, merchandising, training part-timers, etc.,” she says. Amber is also on buying teams that determine product assortment for every Scheels store. “It’s great to know your voice is being heard and also to see the success of the product you helped bring into the stores.”

Lindsey Roster, who has worked in sales, specialty shop management and buying during her 11 years at Scheels, recently transitioned from assistant store leader to human resources assistant. She handles hiring, orientations, insurance processes, employee issues and training new HR associates at other Scheels stores. “The HR position opened up, and I had to take a deep look at what I was doing and where my passions lie,” Lindsey says. “I found that I loved working with people, and HR focuses on just that. I also loved hiring and getting people going on their path at Scheels.”

Carrie Gill has been a corporate visual display specialist at Scheels for two years. Carrie worked in banking after graduation but wanted to use her minor in ARMD, which led her to Scheels. “I work with all 26 Scheels stores’ display teams and help them with any display needs they have, as well as determine, purchase and set displays for new stores and remodels,” she says.

The e-commerce side is maintained by web product merchants like Lora Larson and Ashley Helm, who both been with the company for about two years. Lora manages shoes, and Ashley handles men’s and women’s fashion for the website. They decide which products are sold online, enter product images and descriptions, send out promotional emails, and manage how items are placed on the site. “I am able to help create emails that are sent out to our customers and direct and plan photoshoots when they are necessary,” Ashley says. “It is awesome to see what sales are produced from the things that I have created.” “There are many facets to my job: creative, analytical, and technical,” Lora says. “Online, things can change so fast, and you are always learning new systems and changing things to keep up with the industry.”

One thing all of these women agree on is their love for the Scheels culture. “It is nice to work for a company where everyone really cares about their job because we are all owners here and understand that what we put in directly correlates to how much we get out of our jobs.” Lora says of the privately-held, employee-owned company. “The culture is one of constant change, challenging and training to improve oneself, making sure customers and associates are number one and excelling based on performance rather than seniority,” says Lindsey.

They also agree on how their education has helped in their varied careers. Along with aesthetics, trends, fabrics and everyone’s favorite, retail math, ARMD courses taught them the overall process of the retail industry. “It helped me understand the business side of retail and what all has to come together to be successful,” says Amber, “meaning from the production of product to buying product to the sales of product.”
In December 2016, Dr. Holly Bastow-Shoop retired as head of the Apparel, Design and Hospitality department. In the fall of 2016, she received Professor Emeritus status for her work at NDSU. Her contributions during her 33 years at the university include leading the NDSU tartan project, adding Hospitality and Tourism Management and an online master’s degree in Merchandising, and serving on many boards within NDSU and the College of Human Development and Education. Dr. Bastow-Shoop reflected on her career below.

Q: How long have you been at NDSU?
A: I began at NDSU in 1983. Interestingly, I had just found out I was pregnant with our second son Jacob. I had to go in to tell my new boss I would need a little time off in February/March of 1984! Back then there was no maternity leave, so students from one of my classes came to the hospital for their oral final! I became head of the department fall of 1991. At that point, we had the two programs, Apparel/Textiles and Interior Design. HTM was added to our department in 2001.

Q: Why did you decide to go into higher education?
A: I began my career in retailing after having majored in it at Virginia Tech. I moved to Washington DC to work for a major retailer after graduating in 1972. It was a really fast-paced, do-or-die kind of job. I loved that there were never two days alike. I also realized I would need to move a great deal in order to get promotions. I was also influenced by my “boyfriend” (now husband of 40 years) to move closer to where he was after he returned from the Vietnam War. So I decided to look into grad school at Kansas State, as he was in law school in Topeka, Kansas. I was offered a teaching assistantship at Kansas State. This was my first official teaching job. I had done a lot of “teaching” via many youth opportunities in 4-H and girl scouts, etc. I just didn’t realize that was actually what I was doing at the time. I found I loved teaching at that point.

Q: What has been your favorite part about working at NDSU?
A: I really do love to teach. Students are invigorating, and each generation looks at the world differently. I will really miss the classroom. I have also really enjoyed working with faculty. I have had the opportunity to work with many and assist them in their growth and development over the years. It has been great fun to see new young professors grow and flourish!

Q: What do you consider your greatest accomplishments during your time here?
A: All the students I have had a hand in educating! In addition, all the faculty I have been privileged enough to mentor. I am also pleased with how well the Tartan Scholarship Project is going. We have been able to hand out thousands of dollars in scholarships to students in ADHM over the last five years! All faculty and students need to be congratulated on all the time and effort they have put into this project! We are in the process of getting the NDSU tartan trademarked and vastly increasing the product selection and sale of goods. I will continue to do some volunteer work on this project.

Q: What do you plan to do in retirement?
A: We will be traveling a lot. I will also figure out how to use my time productive-ly, but that is a work in progress!

Q: What will you miss most?
A: Not being around the students, faculty and staff. The students brought so much joy into my life with their chipper attitudes and zest for life. Some of the faculty and I have worked together for almost the whole 21 plus years. The presence of all faculty and staff have been a big part of my life and will be missed.

Q: What do you plan to do in retirement?
A: Retirement will afford me the opportunity to do fun things with my girlfriends, as they are all retired. I do have several hobbies that I will reconnect with. I do plan on doing volunteering work. We have a daughter and son-in-law in Tucson, Arizona; we will now have the time to extend our visits with them.

Dr. Holly Bastow-Shoop and Joanne Cook celebrate their retirement in December!
Alumna Starts Own Interior Styling Business for Home and Retail

ARMD alumna Aarika Michel is launching a new interior and retail styling business. The new venture, called Eclectic Prodigy, will serve clients in the Seattle area and virtually online. Aarika’s vision for Eclectic Prodigy allows this business to adapt as it grows, but initially she will focus on interior decorating for individual clients and styling services for retailers. “Now more than ever,” she says, “I think visual merchandising should be a focus for brick and mortars to engage and captivate a customer into their doors, rather than (or in addition to) only their online business.”

“Eclectic” is also a good word to describe Aarika’s career. Even before graduating in 2008, she worked at local retail stores and magazines and interned at SELF magazine in New York City. After graduating, she bravely moved to NYC without a job secured. Aarika found work in reality television casting and wardrobe before becoming a visual merchandiser for high-street clothing brand Topshop/Topman. This job took her to Chicago where she was promoted to Visual and Creative Manager and opened Topshop/Topman departments in Nordstrom stores. That gig led to a Visual Merchandising Strategist position at Nordstrom in Seattle, Washington. “There has been an opportunity within each role that has prepared me for the next step, which has unintentionally veered me into new avenues,” Aarika says. “I tend to thrive on challenging myself and filing a new trade under my belt.”

Thinking it was the right time for something new, Aarika left Nordstrom in November to start her own interior styling business. “About every two to three years, I get an itch for a new challenge or venture,” Aarika says. “NYC for three and a half years, Chicago for three years, Seattle is coming up on three years. So it seems to be only natural to pull the plug and reinvest my energy.” She almost went into interior design after high school but found a passion for apparel instead. Now, she’s giving into her lifelong love of interiors. “Whether I was executing as a merchandiser, coaching and training as a manager or creating the merchandising strategy as a corporate planner, I found myself most passionate when using my hands to bring an idea to life,” she says. “The idea around having my hands on such an array of possibilities and projects excites me, and to be able to do what I love every day is worth a shot!”

Visit the Eclectic Prodigy website to learn more.

Student Completes Multifaceted Summer Internship at Lot 2029

Most internships focus on learning one part of a business, but this summer, Abby Krusemark got to experience everything from operating an online store and running social media marketing to organizing a lookbook photoshoot and helping open a new store. Abby interned at Lot 2029, a locally-owned boutique started by Hope Goldammer, a graduate of NDSU’s ARMD program, and her mother Madonna Wald, which opened in downtown Fargo in 2013.

Abby had worked at Lot 2029 as a sales associate for about two years before beginning her internship. This summer was an entirely new experience for her, though, as most of the internship was spent at Lot 2029’s online headquarters running the online portion of the business. Abby had to name, price and enter products into the online inventory system.

The timing of her internship happened to coincide with the opening of Goldammer’s new kitchen boutique down the street, Mint and Basil. This gave Abby the opportunity to help open a new store, which she called “a very fascinating experience.” She helped with painting, pricing products, merchandising, and getting ready for the grand opening.

As if those responsibilities weren’t enough, Abby continued to do visual merchandising at the main Lot 2029 location and was trusted to place a jewelry order for the store. Her favorite part of the internship, however, was creating a product lookbook.

Abby chose the theme “Dreaming Out Loud,” found a location, created

Abby Krusemark models for the Lot 2029 lookbook she organized to promote the boutique

Aarika Michel brings passion and visual merchandising experience to her new business
Lot 2029 internship continued

Abby’s internship led to a promotion at Lot 2029, and it also gave her great experience for wherever her career takes her. She graduated this December 2016 and will continue her role at Lot 2029 as the Online Operations and Social Media Content Coordinator. “Not only did I learn more about myself, but I also gained a better understanding of the realities of running an online business,” Abby said. With all of her experience and education, succeeding in a visual merchandising or fashion marketing career should be no problem.

Students Discover Close-to-Home Career Options on Minneapolis Study Tour

This past October, more than 20 Apparel, Retail Merchandising and Design students embarked on a study tour to Minneapolis to learn more about their career options. The diverse group ranged from freshman just discovering industry careers, to seniors searching for jobs after graduation. They visited various businesses in the twin cities, seeing great industry options available to them in this metropolitan area.

The group visited the Evine headquarters in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, to learn about the TV home shopping and online retail format. They heard about careers in merchandise planning and buying before taking a behind-the-scenes tour of the studio. Students even got to see Paula Deen film her segments live.

Visits to various stores, including Duluth Trading Company, Evereve and Anthropologie, provided a closer look into retail. The Duluth Trading Company store manager gave an insightful tour of the unique Fridley store, and employees from Evereve’s home office gave extra information on corporate buying and visual merchandising roles within the company. A store tour of Anthropologie included hands-on activities where students styled mannequins using various store themes and created visual display elements for the store.

Students also explored career paths in product development. A visit to Creative Apparel Concepts showed them how collegiate branded apparel is designed and sold to major retailers like Walmart. The Merchology visit taught them about a company making co-branded apparel with other companies’ logos on brand name products. The group also spent time with Target’s Product Design and Development team, touring their new collaborative open-concept offices and learning how their favorite Target products transform from idea to reality.

The students enjoyed a dinner with ARMD alumni who live and work in the city, where alums spoke about their careers and gave advice on a panel. The group also saw the musical Cabaret at The Orpheum Theater to experience a bit of downtown Minneapolis culture.

Molly Pfaff, an ARMD junior, got a lot out of the tour. “I took away great advice for when I go into the workforce from every company and tour, everyone had something new and insightful to say, which I thought was so cool. I loved hearing all the different sides and opinions on finding a job and being successful.”
Apparel, Retail Merchandising & Design Interns Take New York

This past summer, two ARMD students set their sights on interning in the Big Apple. Securing internships in the nation’s competitive fashion capital was challenging, but Lauren Veldman and Keyona Elkins were determined. Lauren got an internship at Olive + Oak, a women’s contemporary clothing brand, and Keyona interned at Fashion Snoops, a trend forecasting company. Over the summer, they explored the city, gained experience in the industry, grew personally and professionally, and worked hard, proving that Midwest girls can hold their own in the big city.

Each student shared a reflection on her internship below.

Lauren Veldman – Olive + Oak

Interning in New York City was a dream come true. It was surreal every day being able to walk into the heart of the Garment District and pursue something I love. Every day was an adventure, and just being able to work in a showroom was so much fun! In the office, I would respond to e-mails, send samples to showrooms, attend buying meetings, check inventory levels, make Excel recaps, fill orders, tidy the showroom, tag samples and answer phone calls.

My favorite part was all the different buyers I was able to meet from various stores like Costco and Buckle. Each meeting had its own course of action, and each buyer was very different! My biggest challenge was learning everything as fast as possible. They had many technological programs and terms I was not familiar with, and I was constantly finding out new ways of doing things. This was also fun because my knowledge of the fashion industry grew tremendously!

After interning in New York City, my outlook on life is very different. I feel more well-rounded as a person and a fashion major. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I feel more than prepared for my future career. One of the most valuable lessons I learned while being in New York was other people’s views of our part of the country. It was no secret that they thought I came from cow pastures and farmland (which is partly true). Their perception of the Midwest is not as welcoming as I thought it to be. Being able to work closely with people from different parts of the country really helped me value where I come from.

After two months of my internship, I had my coworkers wanting to visit the Midwest, as I spoke very highly of it! I was so proud to have changed their mindset and shown them that it was a very beautiful area to have grown up in.

Keyona Elkins – Fashion Snoops

Interning and living in New York this summer was definitely a life-changing experience. We visited Fashion Snoops on the New York study tour the summer before, and I was very intrigued with the process of trend forecasting. So when I started applying for internships, I got in touch with them and was offered an intern position in the kids department. I spent most of my time sorting photos, searching for images online and editing collages in Photoshop. I also got to spot trends from retail and trade shows, write copy for reports, do competitor research, select trends to feature in a trade magazine and interpret an inspiration board into specific future trends.

I really liked the creative aspect of interpreting how changes in culture will affect fashion in the next couple years and then finding the perfect images to show that in a way that was applicable for our clients. At the end of my internship, I created two retail reports on my own, meaning I had to sort through hundreds of pictures our freelancers took around the world, pull out the trends in everything from color to details to accessories, choose which were most important to include and write captions that explained each trend.

It was so inspirational working with such creative people and getting to sit in on meetings. My internship was pretty fast-paced, and I had to learn a lot just by trial and picking up on procedures. I learned to be more outgoing and proactive and to take risks with my work. Trend forecasting is so complex and immersive, but I feel like a learned a lot of the process and now have a much better understanding of how trends develop and impact the industry.

Interning in the city had been a goal of mine for so long, and while it wasn’t always easy, being a New Yorker for the summer was amazing and helped me learn and grow in so many ways.
FABO Kicks Off School Year with Speakers, Events

The Fashion, Apparel and Business Organization balanced learning, networking, and volunteering this fall semester. They kicked off the semester by holding a networking social complete with root beer floats, snacks, and a viewing of last year’s fashion show. To keep members up to date on industry happenings and opportunities, FABO organized a mix of student and professional presentations. Members led discussions on Topshop’s current runway-to-retail venture, standout shows from New York Fashion Week, and Target’s new smaller store format for large cities. Students who interned over the summer also shared presentations on their field experiences.

Brooke Selk, a shoe buyer for Scheels, spoke about what her job entails. Kelly Griffin spoke from Minneapolis via Facetime to tell members about her job as a footwear, accessory and intimate apparel buyer for Evereve. These two speakers taught FABO members more about buying and showed them how similar jobs can be very different between companies.

FABO members volunteered at the annual Boo! Halloween event for children held on NDSU’s campus. They helped kids play Witch Pitch, a game where they threw “eye balls” into cups on a board, and handed out candy. FABO also got the opportunity to help register attendees at this year’s Bridal Fantasy Show as a way of raising funds for their student organization.

FABO wrapped up the semester with another great networking event, their annual Christmas party. This year’s dinner was held at Herd and Horns by the NDSU campus. Members exchanged “secret Santa” gifts and got the chance to connect with each other and share their love for fashion.

Make sure to “like” FABO on Facebook to stay updated and be the first to hear about this year’s spring fashion show.

Save the Date

16th Annual FABO Fashion Show
April 26, 2017 at noon
Great Plains Ballroom
NDSU Memorial Union

FABO is looking for fashion show sponsors who would like to support the organization and gain great exposure from the approximately 500 attendees who will watch the show. If your business would like to buy advertising space in the program or donate door prizes to be given away at the show, please contact Sara Sunderlin at sara.sunderlin@ndsu.edu.

Editor’s Note: My name is Keyona Elkins, and I am a senior in the Apparel, Retail Merchandising and Design program minoring in Journalism and Business Administration. I hope you’ve enjoyed this newsletter. If you have ideas for future newsletters or would like to share about your career, please email me at keyona.m.elkins@ndsu.edu or Linda Manikowske at linda.manikowske@ndsu.edu.