

Alumna Betsy Hall Collins shares tips for climbing the corporate ladder during SIUE School of Business Power Breakfast

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University Edwardsville School of Business alumna Betsy Hall Collins is a shining example of how a driven, hard-working student can flourish in the corporate world.

The 33-year-old exuded a bright personality, unwavering perseverance and a passion for helping others as the featured speaker at the School's Executive Power Speaker Series breakfast held Tuesday, March 27.

"I wanted to be different than my peers, because I knew I had something to contribute. I swung for the fences," said Collins, a Charleston native who earned a bachelor's in business administration from SIUE in 2007.

Collins is director of global public policy for Walmart. She manages policy initiatives on health and wellness, veteran services and associate benefits. As a member of the Global Public Policy team, Collins is responsible for setting legislative and regulatory strategy, political development and reputation management for both Walmart and Sam's Club at the federal, state and local levels.

Approximately 75 School of Business faculty, staff, students and business professionals attended the power breakfast, an event the School has hosted for more than a decade. Collins marked the first guest speaker to have attended the event as a student. She told the audience about an SIUE mentor who challenged her to think long-term ahead of graduation.

"Former Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Nobby Emmanuel was a stern and focused mentor of mine," she said. "He asked me, 'where are you headed?' At the time I told him I wanted to be a vice president for a Fortune 500 company at the end of my career. What's fascinating now is that I work for the 'Fortune 1' company as a director, and I'm 33."

Collins offered three major tips for professional advancement:

- **Differentiate yourself, find your personal brand:** "Find that thing that makes you different from the people sitting next to you. Your resume needs to stand out."
- **Network like it's your job:** "The expectations these professors are setting, though they may seem daunting at the time, set you up to be ahead of many other students. Their work requirements, early classes, late classes and flexible schedules are putting you in charge of your own destiny."
- **Work hard/hustle:** "At the end of the day, that's what gets you across the finish line."

"Chance favors the prepared," she told students. "You have so many tools and opportunities here in front of you. Do the scary things now, when you can. Try that job that may seem a little out of your range. I've got a stack of business cards that if someone is brave enough to come ask for one, I will be happy to give you. I'm a resource for you."

Collins fielded questions on topics of finding a work life balance, succeeding as a female in a male-dominated field and what type of qualities she seeks in job candidates.

“I’m looking for people who have a personality,” she explained. “I want to see who you are, what you bring to the table and what makes you different. I’m also going to watch how you interact with others. I can teach you how to study a piece of legislation. I can teach you who the important legislators in the room are. I can’t teach you how to care about the small details. I can’t teach you how to be a nice person.”

Senior marketing and management major Madelyn Diden, of Canton, says she felt enlivened after hearing the alumna speak.

“It was inspiring to see how her efforts and motivation have helped her accomplish her life goals,” Diden said. “This experience was valuable, because I was able to network with professors and business professionals, as well as learn more about achieving career success from a woman who was once in my shoes.”

School of Business Interim Dean Tim Schoenecker expressed his appreciation for Collins’ return to campus. He underscored her advice to students to find a mentor who will challenge them and offer guidance as they look to the future.

“This event is a wonderful mini-mentoring opportunity for our students,” Schoenecker said. “Our curriculum places emphasis on the importance of mentorship, networking and building the soft skills that make our students stand out as strong job candidates in the business world.”

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