

# give back

## TO SUPPORT THE FUTURE

*Matt Gilroy '02 believes it is every alum's responsibility to give back to Defiance College*

*by Michele Tinker, Director of Annual Giving*

“I believe it is the responsibility of every alumnus to give back to an organization that has been influential in your life on a personal and professional level.” For Matt Gilroy '02, that organization is Defiance College.

Following graduation, Matt did a two-year stint in Columbus, working for a recruiting firm. He found his way back to Defiance in 2003 and has been with ProMedica Defiance Regional Hospital for five years, where he is executive director of the hospital's Foundation. He has been active with the college as a volunteer during this time.

For three years, Matt served as a member of the Alumni Executive Board, an experience he says he highly enjoyed. He just stepped down from AEB, due to family responsibilities.

Matt is also a member of DC's Business Department national advisory board, and has been since its inception. The national advisory boards were created by President Mark Gordon, in an effort to assure that each area of study incorporates the skills the job market is seeking in its newest graduates. Professionals in different fields provide real-time and real-world advice to the academic departments in the development of curricula that meets the needs of the business world. In turn, representatives of the college share with the advisory boards what students are doing, focusing on internships, hands on learning experiences that link the classroom and the real world, international travel, service learning, and the program side of curriculum and projects such as Project 701.

Matt called this a great committee, noting that several highly regarded national companies are represented. “This brings considerable clout to the college in terms of national and international companies recognizing what the college is producing.” Matt emphasized.

A lot of the discussion has focused on international studies and the importance of the global marketplace. Virtually all the members of the advisory board have made statements about the necessity for learning experiences outside the classroom.



Matt has also participated in the Personal Success Plan sessions held with first year students during orientation. He appreciates being able to meet the incoming students and enjoys his part in guiding them through what the college experience will be, helping them figure out what their concerns are and what their goals are for their first year.

“I remember those days, worrying about what college would be like,” Matt says, and he adds that he also uses it as a great way to help students know what the Defiance community has to offer. He's also provided internships in the foundation's office for marketing and communications students, which have been “very successful,” he reports.

“I had a terrific experience in my college years...I believe as an alumnus, it is my responsibility to give back to the college – not only financially but also in supporting the students, as I received support.” He named people who were influential in his college career – his roommate Tim Meienburg, his advisor Jerry Hayes. “Everyone from Lou Joost at the information desk to President Harris,” he adds.

Matt related how, after the campus newspaper, *The Defender*, had done a glowing report on campus improvements, he wrote a letter to the editor describing how awful the potholes were in the student parking lot. The next day, he received a call saying President Harris wanted to speak to him. “You're right,” Jim Harris told Matt. “We'll take care of it.” This recognition of his voice as a student made a big difference in how Matt viewed the college.

To his fellow alumni, Matt issues a challenge: “Somebody gave to the college to help you – now it's your turn.” ♦