Alumni Spotlight

Sheryl Robinson Bagalio '88

Interest in All Things International

Multicultural experiences have always been important to Sheryl Robinson Bagalio '88. As a Political Science and International Studies student at Ramapo College, Bagalio planned to go into the Foreign Service, but when she took her Senior Seminar course, comparing the economies of Japan, Canada and U.S., she didn’t know it would be one of the most pertinent classes she would take at Ramapo. Sheryl also took a number of courses about women’s studies and participated in Ramapo’s United Nation’s Club, all while taking a full course load and working 24 hours a week.

“I knew when I went to school, I wanted something global. At Ramapo there is so much diversity.”

Bagalio’s interest in all things international evolved into her career as the worldwide director of Regulatory Affairs and a member of the Leadership Team for the Diabetes Care Unit at Becton Dickinson (BD). Prior to working for BD, Bagalio served as director at Advanced Bionics, acting director at Ethicon, regulatory affairs specialist for Stryker Orthopedics and press secretary to U.S. Congressman Joseph Brennan (D-ME). As director of Regulatory Affairs, Bagalio collaborates with engineers, scientists, government agencies and professional colleagues around the world to develop safe and effective medical devices, in-vitro diagnostics and combination products.

Through her work in Regulatory Affairs, Bagalio has had the opportunity to travel to numerous countries and to meet people all around the world. She has presented at conferences and partnered with offices in China, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan and Switzerland. Bagalio learned how to recognize, accept and respect foreign customs. While negotiating with companies with different cultures, Bagalio keeps in mind how to communicate effectively and respectfully.

“When you are trying to negotiate and maintain cooperation, it is imperative to know and understand other cultures and customs. There is a great deal of competition for jobs today, and employers need employees to have experience with diverse cultures. One of the things I look for when I am hiring is a global perspective, not only from a business aspect but a cultural one.”

Bagalio believes the ability to effectively and respectfully communicate with others is key. She explains, “You can be the smartest guy in the room, but if you can’t clearly and effectively communicate your ideas, the person who can will get the opportunities.”

The professors Bagalio had at Ramapo helped open a new world to her and revealed the importance of mentors, which was reinforced during her professional career. At Ramapo, she was able to meet with professors before and after class, and was invited to dinner at the home of one professor to interact with a large group of international students. Bagalio notes, “The caliber of the faculty was incredible, and professors were always so approachable.” She credits significant personal and academic growth to Professor Michael Fluhr, one of the most engaged and passionate instructors she’s ever had.

Bagalio believes having a mentor and a sponsor is vital to career success. She mentors junior colleagues and co-leads a diversity-initiative at BD called Women’s Initiative Network (WIN). Through WIN, Bagalio reaches out and guides young women, helping them learn and grow from professional and personal experiences.
“Sometimes you don’t know it’s possible to achieve a certain goal until someone suggests that it’s possible, and you have what it takes. Keep your mind open to all opportunities – there are gifts everywhere. Everything you do is a chance to learn. Every job I’ve had, every turn I took, every encounter has prepared me for the challenges and responsibilities I face today.”