

A warm presence showing the way to empowerment



Endicott

College graduate Annie Bolton, 21, took up a challenge to get involved at school. (Jesse Poole)

By [Jesse Poole](#) Globe Correspondent /May 22, 2011

BEVERLY — When Annie Bolton, 21, traveled to Phenix City, Ala., during spring break to help build homes with Habitat for Humanity, she was following her dream of a career in nonprofit work. But the Endicott College student body president, who graduated yesterday, knows she might need to refocus her professional goals in light of the current economy.

Bolton is confident that her leadership experience in college and her volunteer work have uniquely prepared her for the corporate world.

A native of Belgrade Lakes, Maine, Bolton served as a class officer for three years with Endicott's Student Government Association. But she knew she wanted to contribute more.

Bolton helped make Endicott a more welcoming place by majoring in hospitality management, with a concentration on orchestrating events. Her course work came in handy when she decided to run for the top student government post.

"I wanted to be president in order to make the biggest impact possible on [student government] and the Endicott community," said Bolton. She set goals to improve communication with staff, faculty, and administration; spur more involvement from other students on campus; and implement new ideas. Each furthered the student government's roles and responsibilities, she said.

Bolton helped create new committees for increased collaboration, interaction, and involvement. She met with other college student governments in the region to discuss collaborative efforts, and also helped create an extra fund to help student clubs get rolling. The 20 or so clubs that were approved each received \$250. She guided the student government to revamp an activities calendar into a clubs and organizations newsletter so students have a greater sense of what college life has to offer.

Most of all, Bolton wanted to bridge the gap between students and administration. One of the first things she did was conduct a forum during which students could direct questions to her and Endicott president Richard E. Wylie.

“One of the greatest struggles in college is finding leaders who are interested in leading in student government,” said Wylie, “people who take the time and set agendas. But Annie’s one of these unique people.”

Brendan Cronin, operations manager and assistant professor of hospitality management at Endicott and one of Bolton’s professors, also has seen her determination. “Annie’s calm [demeanor] comes across as focused and conscientious,” he said. “Nothing seems to faze her, and the business world admires that trait.”

Cronin said that Bolton is inclusive and looks for consensual leadership. “This is definitely a strong attribute of leadership,” he said.

Although Bolton may appear a natural leader, she didn’t always view herself that way. Before college, she was an athlete, participating in ice and field hockey.

A longtime friend, Hilary Curtis, 22, who was involved in their high school’s student government, inspired Bolton to do so at Endicott. Though the two went to different colleges, they remained supportive of each other’s campus contributions.

“Hilary and I discussed the importance of being involved in our schools,” said Bolton.

Curtis, a health sciences major at Stonehill College in Easton who also graduated yesterday, said Bolton definitely leads by example. “I’m impressed,” she said. “Every time I talk with her she’s more involved and always starting another project.

“Annie allows the people around her to figure out where they fit in leadership,” said Curtis. “She’s supportive of her peers and very encouraging.”

While at Endicott, Bolton studied abroad twice, one semester in Leeds, England, and a January term in Madrid. “I’d like to work internationally later in life,” said Bolton. “I feel there’s a lot to be learned abroad.”

As student president, Bolton drafted a slew of proposals, many of which will take effect in the next school year. A so-called fun fund will give the student government more oversight and financial responsibility for parties and off-campus events.

Bolton will be gone, but what does she hope she’s left behind?

“The idea of empowerment,” she said. “The utilization of resources, and the importance of teamwork.” ■