From his corner office high above midtown Manhattan, Leo Grohowski C’80 has counseled hundreds of Drew students.
On Park Avenue, high above Grand Central Terminal, they ascend to the 54th floor of BNY Mellon, founded by Alexander Hamilton in 1784 and today one of the world’s largest financial institutions. They are there to meet with Leo Grohowski C’80, who as chief investment officer, oversees nearly $200 billion in client assets. They speak with Grohowski in the Grand Central conference room, just down the hall from his corner office, with views down Park Avenue toward Midtown and the Empire State Building to the west.

Grohowski and the students discuss “finance and Wall Street and price-to-earnings ratios,” his own career path and the lessons he’s learned along the way. They also dive into their upcoming immersion in the job market. “Most of the students are juniors and seniors. They are thinking about graduate school, work opportunities,” Grohowski says. “How do I network? How do I interview? How do I get an interview?”

Grohowski encourages Drew students to arrange one-on-one meetings so he can focus on individual aspirations. On the day Drew Magazine spoke with him, in fact Grohowski met with Abdelrhman Elhady C’16, who participated in the Wall Street Semester the previous spring.

“Lots of students have taken him up on that,” says Marc Tomljanovich, an economics professor and co-director of the Wall Street Semester. “It says a lot about him, given that time is such a limited resource for him.”

Grohowski is paying forward the critical guidance he received from his Drew professors. He names not only professors of economics, such as Vivian Bull, Bill Carroll and Jerome Cranmer, but also Neal Riemer, a professor of political philosophy, and Donald Jones, a professor of social ethics. They provided guidance in the classroom and helped Grohowski find internships that propelled him toward his long and successful career in finance. In large part, Grohowski believes, the oversized influence of his professors was a function of Drew’s smaller classrooms, tight-knit campus and dedicated faculty.

“I can reel off the names and faces of these professors from 35 years ago,” Grohowski says. “I think that would be less likely to happen if I were sitting in a class with 300 other students.”

Grohowski’s support of Drew students goes beyond the Wall Street Semester. He served on the board of trustees for 12 years, chairing the Investment Committee. He jump-started The Fund, a student-run investment group, with $10,000 in seed money and, with his wife, Nancy, created the Grohowski Family Scholarship. The Scholarship is awarded to academically
Inspire and Aspire

Speed mentoring sessions give Drew students critical face time with business leaders.

Scores of Drew undergraduates meet local business leaders in an informal setting designed to encourage networking with professionals they might soon count as colleagues. The annual speed-mentoring sessions, started in 2014 by Jennifer Kohn, an associate professor of economics and business studies, are offered with the Chief Executive Council for Madison, a local business group whose members include Drew President MaryAnn Baenninger, Madison Mayor Bob Conley and representatives from area businesses like Quest Diagnostics, Realogy, Coldwell Banker and Sotheby’s International Realty. The sessions give students 10 minutes one-on-one with several mentors from a cross-section of the business world.

“I wanted an event that was able to get the maximum number of executives and students together in a meaningful and fun way,” Kohn says.

Kohn says the students gain three primary benefits from the speed-mentoring sessions: experience talking about themselves and networking; real-world information about careers; and confidence knowing professionals, like them, did not have all the answers as undergraduates.

About one-third of the mentors are Drew alumni, such as R.J. Voorman C’14, “a private wealth analyst with Merrill Lynch, met Grohowski during the 2013 Wall Street Semester. That summer, with Grohowski’s guidance, Voorman landed an internship in BNY Mellon’s marketing division, working on materials used by Grohowski and the 500 employees on his team. Voorman also contributed to a summer-long project on the student debt crisis, a topic investors were raising with Grohowski. Later that semester, Voorman pitched The Fund. The BNY Mellon gig was one of three internships Voorman had at Drew, each one arranged with the help of Drew alumni.

During the last week of his internship at BNY Mellon, Voorman met with Grohowski several times. “Part of it was career advice,” Voorman says. “Then it was ‘What did you get out of it?’”

Eliese Lissner C’11, an associate at a Manhattan-based events management firm, enrolled in the Wall Street Semester in the spring of 2009. As Grohowski counseled, she followed up with him after the students’ visit to BNY Mellon. With his help, she landed an internship at BNY Mellon, where she worked in the finance, marketing and events departments. Later, when BNY Mellon was organizing a charity golf outing, Grohowski remembered that Lissner was a golfer and invited her to participate in the event.

“Whenever I’m invited to an alumni event, I email him to see if he’s going to be around,” Lissner says. “When I talk about my Drew experience, he’s at the top of that list. He’s a nice, generous, kind, caring, happy-to-be-always-talking-about-Drew kind of guy.”

The hands-on, personal mentoring I received is what I try to dispense. I try to provide the type of guidance that I received.

Executive Privilege

Aspire

The hands-on, personal mentoring I received is what I try to dispense. I try to provide the type of guidance that I received.

talented, economically disadvantaged economics majors with a record of accomplishment in extracurricular activities. (At Drew, Grohowski was a two-time captain of the baseball team. After his senior season, as a member of the New Jersey College All-Star team, he played at Yankee Stadium against the New York State team.)

Perhaps most importantly, Grohowski also offers Drew students internships at BNY Mellon, an invaluable addition to their resumes. “It’s been a two-way street,” Grohowski says. “Drew’s been helpful in providing BNY Mellon with really good students.”

R.J. Voorman C’14, “a private wealth analyst with Merrill Lynch, met Grohowski during the 2013 Wall Street Semester. That summer, with Grohowski’s guidance, Voorman landed an internship in BNY Mellon’s marketing division, working on materials used by Grohowski and the 500 employees on his team. Voorman also contributed to a summer-long project on the student debt crisis, a topic investors were raising with Grohowski. Later that semester, Voorman pitched The Fund. The BNY Mellon gig was one of three internships Voorman had at Drew, each one arranged with the help of Drew alumni.

During the last week of his internship at BNY Mellon, Voorman met with Grohowski several times. “Part of it was career advice,” Voorman says. “Then it was: ‘What did you get out of it?’”

Eliese Lissner C’11, an associate at a Manhattan-based events management firm, enrolled in the Wall Street Semester in the spring of 2009. As Grohowski counseled, she followed up with him after the students’ visit to BNY Mellon. With his help, she landed an internship at BNY Mellon, where she worked in the finance, marketing and events departments. Later, when BNY Mellon was organizing a charity golf outing, Grohowski remembered that Lissner was a golfer and invited her to participate in the event.

“Whenever I’m invited to an alumni event, I email him to see if he’s going to be around,” Lissner says. “When I talk about my Drew experience, he’s at the top of that list. He’s a nice, generous, kind, caring, happy-to-be-always-talking-about-Drew kind of guy.”

“The hands-on, personal mentoring I received is what I try to dispense,” he says. “I try to provide the type of guidance that I received.”

REUNION 2017

Save the date! June 2–3.

Congratulations to the 2016 Alumni Achievement Award Winners, recognized during Reunion 2016 for volunteerism, achievement and dedication to Drew.

Achievement in Business Award
Chris Smith C’91
Frances B. Sellers Award
Miguel Gonzalez C’01
Achievement in the Liberal Arts Award
Maryann Nergaard C’71
Alumni Service Award
Bruce Bristol C’66, P’66
Achievement in Sciences Award
Rhonda Rush C’71
Volunteer Award
Emily (Knox) Blitz C’96
Young Alumni Award
Michelle (Orloski) McGrath C’06