

# *impact*

*of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences*



## *Society-Ready Graduates*

# Preparing for Careers in Retailing and Consumer Studies

### **Issue**

Demand exceeds supply for graduates who can fill jobs in the expanding field of retailing. According to the National Retail Federation's Retail Industry Indicators, retail added 3.3 million new jobs between 1988 and 1998. Projections are for 3 million new retail jobs by 2008 for a grand total of 25.4 million jobs throughout the industry. One in five American workers is employed in retail—with register sales exceeding \$3 trillion last year.

### **What has been done?**

The University of Arizona College of Agriculture and Life Sciences offers a program of undergraduate and graduate study in Retailing and Consumer Sciences. The rigorous, comprehensive curriculum offers

courses in global retailing, services retailing, e-commerce, supply-chain management and leadership development. Eligible students complete structured internships in a variety of retail formats worldwide. These have included department stores, discount retailing and specialty retailers. In addition, the Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) team is an extracurricular activity where students are given the chance to develop leadership, mentoring, teamwork and communication skills, by learning, teaching and practicing the fundamentals of free enterprise. The Southwest Retail Center that is affiliated with the Retailing and Consumer Studies Division facilitates the connection between academic instruction and experiential learning.

### **Impact**

Between 70 and 80 percent of the retailing program's graduates are placed in retail jobs upon graduation. Positions include merchandise analyst, assistant buyer, merchandiser, buyer, store manager, and HR recruiter. About 78 percent of the students completing an internship through the program said the experience was instrumental in developing their career expertise. These internships have in many cases led to direct employment after graduation at the sponsoring firm.

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