

Worcester native A.J. Andreoli always expected to settle down in the city near his family one day – and in fact, he never moved away. He attended Assumption College and then joined the insurance firm, Sullivan Group, in Worcester.

Andreoli, now a vice president at Sullivan Group, believes that his degree in marketing and Assumption's strong emphasis on the liberal arts have been essential to his success. Combining business courses with an array of liberal arts courses developed his professional skills and his ability to think critically and creatively.

"Assumption gave me a solid liberal arts education," Andreoli says. "I was able to study subjects ranging from social and rehabilitation services, to international marketing, to acting. This really broadened my interests and perspectives on many topics. It is invaluable as you relate to people in work and in life."

Andreoli graduated from Assumption in 1998 with a strong academic foundation and a wide range of life lessons — everything from gaining leadership experience as captain of the varsity golf team to balancing a spreadsheet. But his most valuable experiences may have been facing his fear of public speaking, learning how to work with others, and being taught by professors with hands-on business experience.

Sometimes he learned those lessons in an unexpected manner. Andreoli enrolled in an acting class because he had a roommate who was interested in acting, but Andreoli was surprised when it became one of his most stressful classes.

"I didn't realize it at the time, but I was petrified to speak in front of anybody," he admits.

"I went from being very uncomfortable speaking in front of five people to being able to memorize a monologue and give it in front of 30 people with a light shining on me," he says. "Now when I get up and give a sales presentation in front of five people, it's actually easy."

Andreoli credits the marketing and business professors with enriching their classes with real-world examples, and he particularly remembers Professor Egidio Diodati's stories.

"He had a long career working in business so he used examples based on his own experiences to reinforce everything we studied," Andreoli says. "I found his stories hit home and it really helped me apply what I was reading in the textbooks."

Andreoli also credits the group projects his professors incorporated into classes with helping him be more effective at the 50-employee insurance firm.

"There were a lot of group projects at Assumption," he says. "Those experiences taught me that each person has a different personality, a different way they want to do things. Through trial and error with different group projects and different groups of people, I figured out how to use everyone's strengths and weaknesses. That skill is essential in the work place."

Andreoli also recalls close mentoring from his first advisor, David L. Christianson, a foreign language professor who passed away during Andreoli's senior year.

“He was the most caring, most gentle guy I’ve ever met,” Andreoli says. “Whether you were a foreign language or science or business major, he genuinely cared about you. He opened up new ways to think about things -- he helped me develop a more creative mindset.”

Students today still benefit from close relationships with professors in advisor relationships and in the classroom, as the average undergraduate class size at Assumption is 20 students. The average student/faculty ratio is 12:1, resulting in frequent interaction both inside and outside the classroom.

“I was impressed by the way the professors took a genuine interest in students and the close-knit feel of the campus,” the 32-year-old Andreoli says. “I liked the family atmosphere. When you go to some of those larger colleges, you don’t know anybody in your class because it’s like a city. Assumption was very intimate and there were always familiar faces.

“I also think that as a Catholic college, Assumption reinforced extremely important values that are much needed in today’s world,” states Andreoli. “Integrity, accountability, preparedness, and self motivation are encouraged and supported at Assumption.”

Since Andreoli’s graduation, Assumption has spent \$70 million on construction on its 185-acre campus, including the \$18 million Testa Science Center, the \$3 million Information Technology Center, the \$3.2 million Multi-Sport Stadium, and four additional residence halls. It recently completed renovations on The Admissions House. The College houses more than 90 percent of its undergraduates on campus.

“I was impressed with Assumption when I went there, and it just keeps getting better,” says Andreoli.