ALUMNA EMBRACES HER INTUITION TO JOIN THE AZTEC MENTOR PROGRAM

By Antoine Stevens-Phillips

Some people are born to mentor. When Marla Diann would go to her teen-
age son Taylor’s career day at school, she found herself giving life tips to her classmates.

“I was one of the parents at career day, sharing with these young 13-year-olds what they could do with writing or within a publicist career,” said Diann, ’83, public relations/journalism.

Today, she continues that tradition of mentorship at her alma mater in the Aztec Mentor Pro-
gram. Diann recently completed her fifth year in AMP, which helps students “Move from Campus to Career.” The semester-long program pairs seniors, juniors and graduate students with professional mentors who, through their expertise, provide advice and guidance as students move forward with their career goals.

Like many SDSU students, Diann found her path to career success wasn’t always easy, but great opportunities were closer than she thought.

“What was I going to do with this writing/journalism career?” said Diann, who worked as a publicist at Warner Bros. Entertainment Investment and Solar Power.

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Intrigued, Diann asked her a dozen questions about her career. The woman suggested that Diann use her public relations and journalism credentials to follow the same path. Diann knew intuitively that it was what she was meant to do.

It was a defining moment.

Diann was off on a mission to make this her full-time career. She parlayed her passion and excitement into a 22-year dynamic – and creative – career as an entertainment publicist in Hollywood.

In 2003, Diann survived breast cancer and began to segue into a new and equally rewarding career. She served as speaker chair for the Los Angeles chapter of the Susan G. Komen Foun-
dation and found a new community of inspiring women. After meeting with a business mentor and coach, Diann decided on a new purpose: coach, support and strategize with high-achieving female entrepreneurs in the creative field. Diann helps them establish trusted and savvy brands that attract desirable clients and higher revenues.

Diann also was determined to use her success in business to support future female entrepre-

neurs.

“Before the Aztec Mentor Program was created, I was looking for ways to get involved as a mentor,” she said. “Then I opened an email two weeks later about the AMP program, and I thought, ‘That’s it; that’s what I want to do!’”

Established in 2013, AMP has facilitated more than 10,500 mentor-mentee matches since the pro-
gram started.

A mentor in the Aztec Mentor Program since 2014, Diann is passionate about guiding SDSU female students who want to become successful entrepre-

neurs.

She engages her mentees through Zoom webinar conferences, sets weekly entrepreneurial goals for them and invites them to her inspirational training and networking event, “Creative Influencers Private Dinner.” At these events, Diann stresses the importance of knowing your innate “genius talents” and allowing intuition to inform your career path – encouraging participants learn more with Gay Hen-

“It’s unfortunate to be in a career for many years, then realize you hate it; it’s not a fit for you – and it never was,” Diann said. “It was someone else’s dream, not yours.”

“Know your genius talent, build your career on that and listen to your own intuition and not somebody else.”

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