Colt Dorsey’s internship with the Brooklyn Nets is a testament to networking. He met Zachary James, ’08, two years ago and maintained contact. Now, thanks in large part to James, Dorsey stands out among the team’s 40 interns. He is one of only three or four full-timers, one of four from Pennsylvania—and the only one intern in VIP Services.

Originally from Fredericksburg, Pa., Dorsey attended Harrisburg Area Community College his freshman year before transferring to Temple, drawn to the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management’s sport and recreation management program. At the end of his sophomore year, he and three classmates created the Sport Marketing Association of Temple, now 30 members strong.

For Dorsey, that was just the beginning. He interned during his junior year with Global Spectrum, implementing a paperless ticketing system for the New York Liberty, James joined the Nets in 2010, and Dorsey interned in VIP Services.

"Hearing their stories makes you want to be in their spot even more," said Dorsey, who has already explored full-time positions with the team. "When you’re talking to these people, it pushes me even harder.”

Zachary James, ’08, could give a tour of the Barclays Center in his sleep. His route, while familiar to him, is eye-popping to guests. Stroll through the main entrance to gaze down at the gleaming court and then continue to the lower-level Calvin Klein Courtside Club, a luxurious restaurant where fans can get an up-close look at players entering and exiting the locker room.

Then it’s on to the Vault, the lavish and ultra-exclusive area of 11 private suites for celebrities and other high rollers. From there, it’s through the players’ tunnel and onto the court, with its distinctive, herringbone-patterned hardwood. As if that weren’t enough, guests can stop by the 40/40 Club to talk business during the game.

It’s a dream for most. For James, it’s another day at the office. As manager of business development and premium all-access manager, James sells all-access passes, suites and season tickets for the Barclays Center, the country’s first $1 billion arena, which will host more than 200 events per year. Thanks to a connection from his senior internship at the New York Liberty, James joined the Nets immediately after graduating with his sport and recreation management degree. He proved himself in inside sales, earning a promotion after just three months to an account manager for season tickets, and later to an account manager of VIP access and experience.

While the Nets have faced their share of struggles on the court, James said he and his colleagues constantly maintain their strong commitment to in-game entertainment and customer service. James is currently focused on improving the team’s Business Alliance, a networking and business-to-business platform for the all-access ticket holders, suite holders and sponsors.

James said his success has come through combining his degree in sport and recreation with an understanding of tourism and hospitality. After all, being hospitable and cultivating personal relationships with fans is what keeps them happy and interested in coming back.

“I feel lucky that I went to a school that focused so much on both spectrums because it’s definitely needed to move forward and really diversify all you can do,” said James, a member of STHM’s Alumni Association Board of Directors.

James knows the Barclays Center inside and out, but there are waves of wow moments for him too. “And that solidifies in your mind that you made the right decision,” he said. “Seeing it from a hole in the ground to hardhat tours to today, it makes you really appreciate the company and that you stuck with it.”

Rosella Eleanor LaFevre contributed to this feature.