Kyllan Cody values two very different skills she learned in the Sloan Program: how to think strategically about health care operations and—equally important in her eyes—the value of teamwork.

“In most of our classes, we had group projects,” she explained. “You had to constantly develop collegial relationships with your classmates, and that’s a very important skill to have in the health industry.

“It is extremely difficult to achieve all of your goals by yourself, especially with multiple initiatives you are constantly juggling at one time,” she said. “Being able to work effectively with colleagues and communicate with your employees is vitally important. Having the opportunity to work with a great team with similarly aligned goals really makes a difference in the passion I have for my job.”

Even as an undergraduate at Wake Forest University, Cody was interested in health care. She had planned on going to medical school until an academic advisor recommended she take an introductory course in health administration.

“I really enjoyed the multifaceted nature of the field,” she said. “It allowed me to realize that I could still have a direct impact in health care without direct involvement in patient care. That led me to apply to several programs, including the Sloan Program. I was drawn to the comprehensive course work the program offered and the opportunity to develop a better understanding of health care accounting and financial management.”

During her first year in the program, Cody met alumnus Jon Vollmer ’81, now an executive vice president of Health Management Associates (HMA), which owns and operates a large group of acute-care hospitals across the country. He hired her for an internship at East Georgia Regional Medical Center. After graduation, she accepted a position as an assistant administrator with HMA. To date, she’s worked at two of their hospitals. “I have had the opportunity to hone my skills through my various roles with HMA and benefited tremendously from the mentors I have gained within the organization,” she said. In five years in the industry, Cody says the biggest surprise has been the pace at which the industry is evolving and the level of strategic thinking required.

“It’s dynamic,” she said. “There are so many different solutions to consider. It makes it complicated to determine the best strategy or solution. But that’s what makes it worthwhile and fulfilling. I have to think outside of the box and come up with new and creative ideas to conduct business, but I love every minute of it.”

“The program has a strong alumni network that gives students access to mentors who offer advice and bring their real-life industry experience to students. It’s an invaluable asset.”