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Jim Williams steps down as advisory chair

April 30, 2013



After three years, **Jim Williams (pictured left with Dr. Luke Pittaway)** is stepping down as the Chair of the Advisory Council for Georgia Southern University's Center of Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership (CELL).

"Three years as a volunteer is long enough and it is time for new ideas and new leadership to chair the CELL," Williams said.

As advisory chair, Williams held several responsibilities. He was joined by Director of CELL Dr. Luke Pittaway in reviewing the annual report for the advisory council, was responsible for setting the agenda for annual meetings, as well as played a role in inaugurated semi-annual meetings in 2012. He presided over each advisory council meeting and established six, first- time active committees made up of the advisory council members.

"My experiences as chair were great and rewarding to see the development and growth of the CELL's projects and activities, as well as assisting our director in his booming expansion of student, business and alums entrepreneurial activities," Williams said.

Williams proudly joined in representing CELL at Georgia Southern events with other College of Business and Administration (COBA) academic leaders. He helped the council to increase the number of CELL Advisory Council members.

"We worked to create and activate six active committees with 23 of our 36 CELL Advisory Council members participating," Williams explained. "We are now working with fledging and exciting entrepreneurs."

In addition to his work with the advisory council, Williams was asked to be a part-time professor for two years in the COBA at Georgia Southern. During this time, Williams helped marry the council members with his students and their projects.

"I brought a number of entrepreneurs, who were my friends and/or clients of my firm, to speak to my students," Williams said. "Many of them ended up joining the advisory council after visiting with the classes. Through teaching I was able to introduce the benefit of serving the CELL to them."

Williams even got the President of the university to agree to come and speak to his classes.

"Dr. Brooks Keel came and spoke to my classes about entrepreneurship, which was a little different from his usual visits," Williams said. "I truly enjoyed his talks and so did my students as each time he encouraged the students to ask questions...and they did."

In the future, Williams plans to continue to support the CELL and assist while remaining a major supporter.

"I'm planning to continue the operation of my 25-year-old investment banking and strategic advisory firm for prospective, start-up and existing entrepreneurs," Williams explained.

As far as the next advisory chair, Williams explained there will be an interim chair for at least one year and then a new chair will be selected for a two year term. Ray Wenig, President of the Ariel South East Angel Partners, will serve as the interim chair.

"My hopes for the future are that the CELL Advisory Council remains as an active proponent of entrepreneurship insuring the growth of entrepreneurship academic courses and degrees," Williams said. "I also hope it stays as an advocate of keeping the CELL as a vital part of COBA and Georgia Southern for the future!"

Director Luke Pittaway says goodbye to Georgia Southern

April 30, 2013



After five years, **Director Luke Pittaway (pictured left)** says his goodbyes to the Center of Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership and to Georgia Southern University. Pittaway has been offered a full professorship in entrepreneurship with tenure at Ohio University (OU) as well as Director of OU's Center for Entrepreneurship.

"I think Ohio University really spotted all the success that Georgia Southern has had over the years in entrepreneurship and they offered me an opportunity that I couldn't refuse," Pittaway said. "I'm so grateful to Georgia Southern for giving me the platform from which I could build my career to take on more opportunities such as this one at Ohio."

Pittaway will work to improve OU's entrepreneurship program across the campus as well as in the College of Business.

"What attracted them to me is that they are working to develop entrepreneurship in different colleges at the university," he explained. "For instance, they aim to have a program that helps journalists learn how to be self-employed." This is one aspect Pittaway is looking forward to the most.

Originally from the United Kingdom, Pittaway was drawn to the U.S. with an interest to build an entrepreneurship program in the states. He had started several entrepreneurship centers in the UK and was looking to develop one abroad.

"Entrepreneurship has been around longer in the U.S. and has been a part of the culture," he said. "I was interested to see what it would be like to develop a program here."

Pittaway recognized that Georgia Southern's entrepreneurship program was in a fairly early stage, and he saw a lot of things he could add value to.

"I was only an associate professor in the UK, so Georgia Southern was a step up to a full professor with an endowed chair," Pittaway said. "I saw the value in the entrepreneurship program here and I felt Georgia Southern was the first solid opportunity I had been offered to add real value and grow a program in the U.S. "

When Pittaway arrived at Georgia Southern, he was named the William A. Freeman Distinguished Chair in Free Enterprise. After seven months, he volunteered to be the Director of the Center for Entrepreneurial Learning and Leadership because he felt it served as a vehicle to achieve the things he wanted to do with the entrepreneurship program.

"Then the Entrepreneur Zone (or the E-Zone) was built as part of the strategic plan for the center," Pittaway explained. "Thanks to Allen Muldrew (DSDA) and Ron Shiffler (COBA's Dean), and the support of others in the community we got the E-Zone of the ground."

The original idea for the E-Zone came from the University of Sheffield in South Yorkshire, England. Pittaway had helped to start an Enterprise Zone on their campus. Luckily, the Downtown Statesboro Development Authority and the city of Statesboro supported the idea for the E-Zone and helped to make the project a success.

In addition to the E-Zone, Pittaway feels some of the greatest accomplishments over the last five years have been the new minor in entrepreneurship and small business and the addition of extracurricular activities in entrepreneurship.

"There are several activities that students and members of the community now have opportunities to attend," Pittaway said. "Some of these include research seminars, E-Zone forums, public lectures, and the FastPitch Competition."

The FastPitch is a one-day competition designed to give students and local entrepreneurs a chance to pitch their innovative ideas to potential investors. It is welcoming to any and all types of ideas whether simple or more complex. The competition is just one of the many activities the Center helps make possible, yet Pittaway has enjoyed all of them.

"It has been a fantastic experience," he said. "I have enjoyed working for everyone at Georgia Southern and watching the entrepreneurship program advance."

In the end, Pittaway explains he owes much of his success to all the people involved with the program. *"I am more than grateful for the support of the people that have gotten involved and gotten the Center to the place it is today," he said. "Many of the successes have been driven by Georgia Southern students, the entrepreneurial fellows, and professors- it has been a team effort."*



Part of the Center team has included several Georgia Southern students. One team member was **Matthew Chambers (pictured right)**, Pittaway's graduate assistant. Chambers explains working for Pittaway has been the *"greatest professional experience"* that he could have asked for. *"I have truly enjoyed coming to work for him every single day for the past couple of years, as well as being a student in his class,"* Chambers said. *"His charismatic leadership is unlike anything I've ever witnessed, and he really allowed the entire team to utilize their own innate entrepreneurial skills to accomplish the tasks set forth to achieve the common goals of the Center."*

Another team member was **Kristina McCallum (also pictured right)**, undergraduate assistant in charge of marketing. McCallum has enjoyed her time working with Pittaway as well. *"I believe he has allowed me to grow and learn from this experience by guiding me while still allowing me to do things my way,"* she said. *"The way Dr. Pittaway established a network of students to work together has really helped over this last year."*

This network of students included Chambers, McCallum, Michelle Brown (social media director), Dhara Shah (public relations intern), Rachel Paule (service learning coordinator) and myself. *"Having Matt, Natalie, Michelle and Dhara as support really made this experience a lot easier and way more fun,"* McCallum said. *"We all had our own roles and goals, but together we were able to achieve an even bigger goal."*

Despite the fact that Pittaway is leaving, he is still excited for what is yet to come for the Center and the E-Zone. *"I'm excited for the E-Zone and I think that it will go forward rapidly as the new expansion plans take shape and develop,"* he said. *"I'm hoping the Center will continue to grow and I'm pleased to be leaving it in a sustainable situation."*

In the future, Pittaway encourages anyone to contact him via email at luke.pittaway@outlook.com, pittawayluke@gmail.com or through Linked-in at <http://www.linkedin.com/in/lukepittaway.com>. He will be at Georgia Southern until May 31st and will start at Ohio University on August 1st.

For more information about the E-Zone's new development, check out this link.