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# MBA Alumnus Named to 40 Under 40

October 19, 2022

by **Benjamin Tankersley**

The moment Steven Haught (MBA, 2016) found out he was named to Georgia Southern's 40 Under 40 List was overwhelming, to say the least. "I got an email about ten minutes before the announcement, and I am just sitting there in disbelief," Steven recalls. "I called my wife immediately [to share the news], and she's super excited. At the same time, when the announcement goes out, my friends are getting notifications, and my family starts texting me, and it's just overwhelming."

Steven and the other 40 Under 40 members were honored in a special ceremony during Homecoming weekend. The ceremony, organized by Georgia Southern's Alumni Association, allowed the honorees to meet and mingle with each other. Steven was one of several Parker College of Business alumni to be honored, including LaShai Campbell, who was part of his MBA cohort.



*Steven Haught at 40 Under 40 ceremony*

"To even be in the same breath as you, I am honored because I think that you are way more amazing than I could ever wish to be," Steven said of LaShai. "She was the first person I found when I walked into the Bishop building, and I was like, I just want to hug you. I'm so excited to see you again and celebrate your success."

Following his wife's lead, Steven decided to pursue his MBA at Georgia Southern after talking with faculty, including Bill Wells, Ph.D., associate professor of finance, and Bill Norton, Ph.D., associate professor emeritus of management, during his undergraduate program in hospitality management. "I considered a few different colleges and talked to some people within the program," Steven commented. "I got into Georgia Southern, and it ended up being the only place I applied. That was really the only place I wanted to go at that point."

Some selling points for Steven were that the program was local and flexible, but the key selling point was the value of the degree. "Obviously being where I was living was a big factor," Steven remembers. "There was also great value. I felt I was getting a very good education but at a more affordable price than really anywhere else. I looked at several programs around the states, and, while there were some more prestigious schools, with most of them, you end up paying for a name."

After completing his MBA program, Steven left for Atlanta. While in school, he had worked as a manager at LongHorn Steakhouse with the intention of transitioning into support operations. He ended up getting a corporate job with Waffle House. “Culturally, we have a saying that it’s a show-up culture,” Steven said. “Half the job is just show up. I legitimately walked in the front door of the Waffle House office and said I’m here to ask about a job. Long story short, I interviewed and got the job.”

He soon began working in the finance department working with construction, real estate and property management. The job involved doing financial models, regression analysis, and expense audits. “In Fall 2017, I had an opportunity to take on, as a side project, learning project analytics at Waffle House and just really excelled at it,” explained Steven. “We applied it to a lot of what we were doing, and it pushed forward how we were auditing expenses, tracking cost over multiple years, and applying it to everything imaginable.” He then applied the project analytics in real estate, doing geospatial analytics. This led to Waffle House creating a position as a real estate analyst, into which Steven moved in January 2020.

Outside of work, Steven serves as the alumni board president for Delta Chi and helped create the Atlanta area alumni chapter. It was this work, advising young men regionally, that helped him stand out and be selected for the 40 Under 40 nomination. “It was such an impactful thing for me, coming out of a small town and coming into Statesboro, which is a little bit bigger, and then coming to Atlanta, which is huge, and helping these young guys navigate through those waters,” Steven said. “The goal is to help get them in a good position and make better decisions. It was something that helped me grow a lot.”

Congratulations, Steven!

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