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MBA Spotlight: Jacob Warren, Ph.D.

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Jacob Warren

by Benjamin Tankersley

For many, earning an MBA opens a gateway to being a professional business leader or perhaps a chief executive officer. For Jared Warren (MBA, 2016), an MBA opened up a gateway to becoming a dean on the other side of the country.

Jacob became dean of the University of Wyoming's College of Health Sciences on July 1, 2022. He believes his business mindset helped him stand out to the firm conducting the search. "We don't often talk about academia being a business," Jacob said, "but the bottom line is that it is about revenue, it is about retention of students, and it is about change management and strategic planning. I think the ability to bring that perspective, combined with my training as a researcher in the health sciences and public health, might have played a role in that."

Already a double eagle before completing his MBA, Jacob was also on faculty with Georgia Southern before completing the program. While completing his MBA, he served as director of Mercer's Center for Rural Health and Health Disparities. It was there that Jacob realized he needed to add some business skills. "I was essentially running a business, and I had never gained any skills whatsoever in systems thinking and HR and change management and any of the things I was expected to do," Jacob explained. "I didn't have the training base in it, so I decided to go back and get my MBA."

Two factors contributed to Jacob's decision to earn his MBA at Georgia Southern: his previous time here as a student and a faculty member and the fact that his father also earned his MBA from Georgia Southern. Once in the program, Jacob made the trek from Macon to Savannah two nights each week to attend class. He found that the coursework in change management, systems thinking, and theory of constraints resonated with him most.

"While I was ... [at Georgia Southern], I had Jackie Eastman [Ph.D., professor of management] as a professor, and we did some research that actually extended beyond the MBA program," Jacob recalled. "She was a really great faculty member I got to know."

Soon after completing his MBA, Jacob became an associate dean at Mercer and started to put his new skills to use. Through it all, he kept coming back to the focus on systems thinking. "That's the big piece of how to look at the nuts and bolts and be sure that it's all moving but not losing sight of the bigger picture with the entire system and how the financial and personnel decisions we're making are going to affect that entire system," stated Warren.

The call to move to Wyoming, though unexpected, was the perfect opportunity. "The more I learned about [the position] the more I realized it was a tremendous opportunity to utilize the skills that I have been gaining and honing over the years in a place where I can have a true impact," Jacob explained. "The opportunity to work with all these disciplines in rural health—which was my specific field before I came into administration—was really just an overwhelming opportunity."

Parker College congratulates Jacob on his new position. We look forward to hearing more about his successes in the future.

For more information about the Georgia Southern MBA program, please visit parker.georgiasouthern.edu/mba or contact the Graduate Programs Office by phone at 912-478-5767 or email at mba@georgiasouthern.edu.

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