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11-20-2019

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Office of Marketing and Communications

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University Park, IL,
November
20,
2019

COB Alumnus Says Governors State Logistics Worked for His Career



In the world of Supply Chain Management, Rick Blasgen, '82, (B.A.) leads the largest professional association, and readily admits he chose [Governors State University](#) for his bachelor's degree simply for its logistics.

An aspiring musician at the time, Blasgen sought out Governors State because it allowed him to study and work part-time while still playing in a band on weekends. But

he changed his tune once he earned his [bachelor's degree in Business](#) with an emphasis on Finance.

In 1983, he took a job with Nabisco as an inventory analyst, a move that launched his Supply Chain Management career that has spanned three decades with food retail giants and a professional association.

Leading supply chain and logistics operations and initiatives for Nabisco and Conagra, Blasgen earned a global reputation as an expert in the field; which he has watched emerge from the shadows as costs to be managed, to become a critical economic driver.

Today, as chairman of the U.S. Department of Commerce Advisory Committee on Supply Chain Competitiveness, Blasgen provides counsel and guidance to the administration on issues and concerns that affect the supply chain sector, which is directly linked to the U.S. gross domestic product.

“I didn’t realize it at the time, but the classes I took at Governors State—Economics and Macroeconomics—gave me a great foundation in Finance that allowed me to understand what was going on and to speak intelligently and to confidently make decisions early in my career,” Blasgen said.

What is Supply Chain Management?

Think about the last thing you bought in a store. How did it get there? From retail forecasting, to the acquisition of raw materials, to manufacturing, to distribution to market—the whole horizontal flow of information and goods is supply chain management.

Describe your current professional role.

As president and chief executive officer of the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP), I am responsible for overall strategy and operations for the organization of Supply Chain Management professionals. We educate, connect, and develop professionals, as well as help set policy and standards to help ensure a higher standard of living for consumers by making sure goods get to market in the most efficient way.

What’s next for you professionally?

I am fortunate to lead CSCMP, and to be able to travel around the world and talk about supply chain management. I love speaking to and working with companies, and taking my several decades of experience from the food industry and what I've learned about collaboration to help companies improve their supply chain performance. This profession is now a destination career, and I’m attempting to communicate that to those in lower levels of our educational system. Careers in supply chain management are exciting, extremely rewarding, highly paid, and sought after around the world. My

passion for the discipline grows as we become more prominent and understood as an industry. I intend to do everything I can to drive Supply Chain Management further!

Why did you choose GSU?

I was playing in a band every Friday and Saturday night and did not want to give that up. Governors State allowed me flexibility with classes in the morning, afternoons, and evenings. I could work part time while going to school to gain my degree and also perform on the weekends. I knew it was a good school too, with a breadth of majors. I was always good at math, and wondered what to do with that skill. I vividly recall a stock broker coming in and talking about how we could invest our money wisely to generate income down the road. That's how I became a Finance major.

What are you most proud of when you look back at your GSU experience?

I am very proud of how GSU has grown and become more prominent in modern learning today. It is a substantial force and will only grow in our region, and I look forward to helping the university accomplish its short and long term goals.

What advice would you share with current GSU students?

Know that your career is not a sprint, it is a marathon—a journey! Rely on your own instincts, understand your skills, both professionally and personally, and build those into your portfolio for your future.

Not everything can be done digitally. Go out and build your network, get to know people face to face, on a personal level. You will rely on those friendships, both personal and professional, throughout your career.

Know that you have to like what you do, but there are times in any career that will be challenging. Those experiences will shape your future and your ability to be a more effective leader. There's a phrase I like, 'The road to excellence is always under construction.' There is a future, go create that.