

Chapter 22

Interview with Hasan Pirkul, Dean of the Jindal School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas

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1. Where did you grow up? Do you think that it has any impact on your life's work?

I grew up in Turkey, mostly in the capital city, Ankara. It must have had an impact; however, it is difficult for me to determine to what extent. It is hard for me to say how it would be different if I grew up somewhere else.

2. Where did you go to school? Why there?

I received my Bachelor's degree from Bosphorous University in Istanbul. I chose this school because it was the top school in Turkey. Also, it was in Istanbul (away from home).

3. What did you do after your first degree (if second degree, where was that done, what did you do after that?) How did you get into your first major area?

Immediately after graduation, I came to the United States to attend Simon School at the University of Rochester. I wanted to do a Ph.D. in the Operations Research/Operations Management field. I ended up double majoring in Operations Management and in Information Systems.

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4. Have you had any particularly significant mentors in your career?

I can think of three role models and mentors. First my father, second my advisor Bezalel Gavish and finally, my current boss Hobson Wildenthal.

5. How has your career evolved?

Upon leaving Rochester, I joined the Fisher School at Ohio State University. I worked there for 15 years and rose through the ranks to full professor. In 1996, I was invited to consider the deanship at The University of Texas at Dallas. I have been the dean at UT Dallas for the last 17 years.

6. Looking back, what do you feel is your biggest contribution?

I think my biggest contribution has been to take over a small, unaccredited school and help it to become a tier one national level school.

7. What do the next 10 years hold for you?

I hope to continue leading our school and further improving the quality of the education we provide to our students.

8. How has your view of teaching/ education evolved over the years?

When I was young, teaching was not much more than a part of my job. After my own children went to college, their experiences helped me gain a deeper level of understanding and appreciation of teaching, advising and mentoring young people.

9. What problems or hurdles do you perceive in your area of work? How do you overcome/ combat those problems/hurdles?

Our school is young and still rapidly growing. We have to strike a balance between establishing controls and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation. The biggest challenge is to live with and tolerate a certain level of chaos. Some days, it does get frustrating, but I always try to look at the big picture and resist the urge to become overly bureaucratic and controlling.

10. How has the structure of the academic profession affected your career?

Academic freedom and a quest for knowledge were big positives in attracting me to an academic career. Now, the ability to make a significant impact on young lives keeps me motivated to work hard every day.

11. What characteristics do you think are important for a good servant leader?

Lead by example, make time for your colleagues, have empathy, be compassionate and be fair.

12. Is there anything in your career you would have done differently? Any regrets?

No.

13. What advice would you have for today's newly minted Ph.D.'s?

Work hard and don't get discouraged by bad reviews.

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