

TRANSCRIPT: GRAHAM WESTON INTERVIEW

Mr. Graham Weston · Chairman and Former CEO - Rackspace Hosting

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An interview with Mr. Graham Weston, Chairman and Former CEO of Rackspace Hosting. Weston is a 1986 graduate from Texas A&M and an inducted member of the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry.

This video was posted February 23, 2011 on the Tyrus R. Timm Registry YouTube Channel.

Mr. Graham Weston | Transcript
Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry | Department of Agricultural Economics | Texas A&M University

Could you please introduce yourself and tell us a little about your career?

I'm Graham Weston, Ag[gricultural] Eco[nomics] Class of 86', and I'm the Chairman and former CEO and founding investor of Rackspace Hosting which is the world's leading specialist in hosting and cloud computing, and we today—we have 3000 employees. We are public. The—you can buy our stock. RAX is the symbol, and we are here in the U.S. and around the world nearly—over three quarters of a billion dollars in revenue. Prior to Rackspace, I was in the commercial real estate business.

Why did you choose to study Agricultural Economics?

I studied agricultural economics because I had every intention of returning from—after college to run our family's ranch, and about halfway through, I found that I probably was not going to run the ranch as I got very interested in the real estate business. And so I considered changing degrees, but really ag[gricultural] school was very flexible and supportive of the changes that I needed to make, and I really had no desire to leave the ag[riculture] college. And the support that I got from my advisor and the administration was critical to my knowing that finishing the ag[riculture] school was for me.

What activities at Texas A&M most influenced your career?

Interestingly, one of the things that happened during my time at A&M was something that didn't even happen during school. Dr. Litzenberg required all of his students to attend a weekend-long course on selling, selling and salesmanship, and that course was a very important thing where we pulled—my eyes were opened to being able to sell yourself and your ideas was something. That idea was something that was really instilled in us as being important, so really I complement Dr. Litzenburg because he made us do something that had nothing to do with the college curriculum. And I think that is one of the little bits of magic that the agriculture college can bring that is unique to this day.

How has your degree in Agricultural Economics helped you in your career?

My degree in agricultural economics was a perfect preparation for my life as an entrepreneur. I have had a number of different ventures during my career, but perhaps the most important of them was meeting three college students who had an idea to build a hosting company and that today is Rackspace, and that I think is perhaps the most important business event of my life.

What are your thoughts on being selected to the Tyrus R. Timm Honor Registry?

Well it's an honor to be part of the Ty Timm Registry and to be recognized by my old college as doing something good, so it's an honor to be on that list.

What advice do you have for a student unsure of career decisions?

For every student who is trying to figure out what to do for their career, my advice is that they figure out where their strengths lie, and that's where all the success comes from in our lives. It's what makes us good. It's what makes us stand out. And for me it was to be an entrepreneur and to be an independent small businessperson. That's really been the odyssey of my life is being an entrepreneur and starting and running businesses, some of them small, some of them bigger.

Would you comment on your continuing efforts to support the Department of Agricultural Economics?

I have created an award in the ag department that is designed just to help teachers make their classes better. And this fund is used by a handful of ag[gricultural] eco[nomics] teachers that have been selected by the dean I think and to help fund some of their extra activities that may otherwise not happen.

What advice do you have for a student unsure of career decisions?

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I think I was lucky to find out that I was an entrepreneur when I was very young, and so I found I've always had a passion for it and a passion for business, and that's really what's fueled my progress. It's vital that every student figure out where their passions lie. And underneath those passions are strengths, their talents. Those are things that make you naturally capable in certain areas. Figuring out what those are is so important. The earlier you can figure that out, the better. So many people don't really figure out where they, where they shine until their 40s and 50s, so I hope that each student can figure that out as early as possible.

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