

Cardinal Voices

Host: Joy Bonke and Andrew Richard

Episode Title: Jim Dwyer's Early Career at SVSU

Episode Topic: Jim discusses his time in his career at SVSU, helping students as well as his fellow peers.

Episode Guest(s): Jim Dwyer

Slogan/tag line: It's a great day to be a Cardinal!

Synopsis: A conversation with Jim Dwyer, who recently retired from SVSU after working here for 42 years. In this episode, we discuss his career and his philosophy on leadership.

Keywords: students, together, success, change

Episode Outline:

1. Introduction (0:00)
2. Memorizing mascots – how Jim connects with people from all over (10:02)
3. Quotes – does Jim have a favorite quote? (13:33)
4. Jim's philosophy of mentorship (26:46)
5. Scholarships that Jim has been a part of (37:02)
6. Outro (42:37)

Other Notes: Jim talked a lot of the importance of being there for students in this episode, which really sits well with the SVSU dartlets that we are a supportive, friendly community.

Credits:

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Thanks to the SVSU Professional and Technical Writing department for the use of their Podcast Recording Studio.

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 2

Hi, and welcome to Cardinal Voices, a podcast about the people who've shaped Saginaw Valley State University.

00:00:04 Speaker 2

We are your Co hosts, Joy Bonke.

00:00:06 Speaker 1

And I'm Andrew Richard.

00:00:07 Speaker 2

This is part two of our conversation with Jim Dwyer, who's worked at the University for 42 years and is retiring. Before retiring this year, he most recently served as the SVC Special Assistant to the President for Professional Development is truly.

00:00:18 Speaker 1

Dwyer has truly exemplified red pride throughout his time here and we wanted to sit down with him to learn more about his journey here, his career and the people he impacted along the way.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

In this section, we'll be having a conversation about his time at SVC.

00:00:31 Speaker 2

This section will be more about like your like overall career here at SVC you so you have been talking about like your first job here, how you got first hired in admissions or the.

00:00:42 Speaker 1

True, we would touch more on how Dick Thompson got you out of All Saints.

00:00:47 Speaker 1

I thought I was told those Nouvel.

00:00:49 Speaker 3

No, it's All Saints.

00:00:50 Speaker 2

There you go. Yep. So what was your first position at the college and how to do career evolved during your 42 years here?

00:00:58 Speaker 3

So I think it's a point when you asked my first job when again I was asked to apply and Dick Thompson called me.

00:01:05 Speaker 3

And again, I'm in my third year at All Saints.

00:01:09 Speaker 3

I go through the interview process not knowing what was going to happen, and he calls me and he goes, congratulations, you got the job, I said.

00:01:18 Speaker 3

OK, I want, I want a coach.

00:01:20 Speaker 3

I might still be able to coach because, well, we're not gonna be able to do that.

00:01:23 Speaker 3

You're gonna be a full time employee.

00:01:25 Speaker 3

So I said, well, I'm not interested.

00:01:27 Speaker 3

And he said, well, let's talk about it.

00:01:31 Speaker 3

So let's go have one beer.

00:01:32 Speaker 3

I think we had more than one just let you go.

00:01:35 Speaker 3

And again, I had known Dick OK because he was really my academic advisor during my time when I was a student here.

00:01:42 Speaker 3

So I had a great rapport with him and.

00:01:46 Speaker 3

So he says no, you have to take this job.

00:01:50 Speaker 3

I said OK.

00:01:52 Speaker 3

OK, then I I did acquiesce and then here I am.

00:01:56 Speaker 3

Gonna be my first professional job really, and he had to give me a \$300.00 cash advance so I could have some clothes to wear to work.

00:02:06 Speaker 3

OK.

00:02:07 Speaker 3

I didn't have, I didn't have a suit, you know, I didn't have anything because this didn't have it.

00:02:12 Speaker 3

Yeah, I had to have professional tire and then later that year.

00:02:18 Speaker 3

Saint Stephen High school basketball job opened up and I said, look, could I potentially apply for that as long as it was after work?

00:02:27 Speaker 3

And he did say yes, OK.

00:02:30 Speaker 3

And I did coach there for three years while I was in my first years of working at the university.

00:02:38 Speaker 3

That is, mind you, selling the school to try to track schools, students to come to 2nd Valley.

00:02:44 Speaker 3

That was my first job.

00:02:46 Speaker 1

Oh, what year was that in?

00:02:47 Speaker 3

So that was, you know, in 19.

00:02:51 Speaker 3

Katie, I went to the principal at All Saints since I have been offered this job when I leave and he said he said, well, I'm not accepting your resignation.

00:03:02 Speaker 3

Because I had humbly done some good things to keep religion alive again at the school and through some creativity.

00:03:09 Speaker 3

But eventually that we came to terms and then I started here I think in 80, I mean I October of 80.

00:03:16 Speaker 3

Little did I know at that time it would be the beginning.

00:03:20 Speaker 3

Of a 42 year ride and when we are entry level, I want you to imagine back then there was no cell phones, there was no drip campaign there.

00:03:30 Speaker 3

Was just some pretty material and then I had to go out and promote Saginaw Valley against really stiff competition.

00:03:38 Speaker 3

Right.

00:03:39 Speaker 3

But what allowed me to have some success was I spoke from my heart.

00:03:44 Speaker 3

Yeah, you know, and I just tried to tell people if you came here, you could have, in many ways, the experience I had.

00:03:50 Speaker 3

And then that was the beginning of this incredible mentorship Dick Thompson provided me.

00:03:57 Speaker 3

Because when you asked me my first job when you're first working.

00:04:02 Speaker 3

And some of you are going to be there when you go out in the workforce.

00:04:04 Speaker 3

You're not paid, getting paid enough.

00:04:07 Speaker 3

I want more job responsibilities.

00:04:10 Speaker 3

I want this, I want that and that's that comes with being a young professional and not once, not twice, but three times early in my career I was leaving.

00:04:21 Speaker 3

I was all set.

00:04:22

I was ready.

00:04:23 Speaker 3

To go.

00:04:24 Speaker 3

And every time he just, in his own wisdom, in his own style, just said no.

00:04:31 Speaker 3

Damn you.

00:04:32 Speaker 3

When you're 40 years old, you're gonna know why I kept you in higher education.

00:04:36 Speaker 3

And then he at the time, was starting to get moved up, and then he became the Dean of students, and then he put me in the role as the interim director of admissions.

00:04:47 Speaker 3

I held that position not one, not two, but three years, OK, as interim director.

00:04:53 Speaker 3

And finally on Friday afternoon he went right down to the president at that time, Jack Ryder said in a.

00:05:00 Speaker 3

Enough because I was his boy.

00:05:02 Speaker 3

They didn't want to think he.

00:05:04 Speaker 3

I was getting this job simply because of my relationship with Dick

00:05:07 Speaker 3

Yeah, and the president finally said he can have it. That's when I became the director, probably about. I think I then proceeded to have a 28 year career. Yeah, in.

00:05:20 Speaker 3

Admissions with probably you know, 23 of them serving as the director.

00:05:25 Speaker 1

So when you were going through those problems at the beginning where you want more responsibility, you're not getting paid enough, how did you persevere through?

00:05:34 Speaker 3

Well, I think the advice I give to young professionals or anybody that is in a career path, the first thing I say to them get a mentor.

00:05:44 Speaker 3

You have to have a mentor to ground you in the realities of what you're trying to pursue.

00:05:51 Speaker 3

So for me, there was a time I could have.

00:05:54 Speaker 3

Left Saginaw Valley could have gone to new Valve Catholic Central and banned the coach.

00:06:00 Speaker 3

And This is why I say about money.

00:06:02 Speaker 3

Tours mentors.

00:06:03 Speaker 3

A good mentor can transform a person career path to make sure that you are in a career path that gives you passion and purpose.

00:06:15 Speaker 3

Because if you don't have passion and purpose, you just Wayne and you leave and you're always trying to find the best, you're always trying to find this.

00:06:24 Speaker 3

And that.

00:06:24 Speaker 3

And I think.

00:06:25 Speaker 3

When you have that kind of sage advice, you are blessed and I was blessed.

00:06:30 Speaker 3

I recently wrote him a two page letter to thank him for what he provided me.

00:06:36 Speaker 3

And he also taught me to be a servant leader.

00:06:39 Speaker 3

He taught me how to manage people, OK?

00:06:42 Speaker 3

And that it was never about you, never about you.

00:06:46 Speaker 3

It is about your team and how you empower people to grow and I use that as my mantra for my entire time.

00:06:54 Speaker 3

And managing people but in missions was interesting because.

00:06:57 Speaker 3

Again, you had to create a team, right?

00:07:00 Speaker 3

And one of the things I did, and I still believe this today, most of the people I hired, except for exceptional, there were few exceptions during my time in admissions, were all graduates of Saginaw Valley because I wanted people that loved the university.

00:07:17 Speaker 3

They had this great experience in and outside the classroom because I knew deep down you can talk about a lot of things, but if you can't create that emotion, if you can't create that feeling, if you can't take red pride to the next level when you're talking to prospective students and their parents, it doesn't matter what you know about the profession.

00:07:37 Speaker 3

And I think again that was that was really important for me to find those people to know that they then could go out and again create the int and meet our enrollment projections, yeah.

00:07:50 Speaker 2

So something that we found when when we were like talking to swak about this is you, you would have a really long run.

00:07:57 Speaker 2

With Dick Thompson being where you were the director of Admissions and Dick Thompson was the Dean of students, can you talk about how exceptional that having both of those positions filled by the same person is in like relation to?

00:08:11 Speaker 2

Other universities at the time and just like in the in the space of like being in higher education.

00:08:16 Speaker 3

You know, when you asked me that question, I think what that meant was this ability to really create an environment for the team, whether it was admissions, whether it was academic advising the registrar's office, OK, whether it was, you know, housing. It did.

00:08:35 Speaker 3

What we created was a culture, and that culture was the top priority.

00:08:41 Speaker 3

Was students, right?

00:08:42 Speaker 3

What is the why?

00:08:44 Speaker 3

Why do you?

00:08:44 Speaker 3

Work here, is it a job or is it a calling?

00:08:48 Speaker 3

So I think what Dick did was, and there's a reason why the facility was named after him because he had ability.

00:08:56 Speaker 3

To really work with people and to create an environment that people liked and enjoyed and wanted to be part of, you know, he he worked hard, but he played hard, OK?

00:09:09 Speaker 3

And I think the mantra was he set the tone by example, and I think that example was then emulated.

00:09:16 Speaker 3

By us, so that we could pass that down to those that worked under us.

00:09:21 Speaker 3

So we were blessed because many my institutions didn't have that culture, didn't have that environment.

00:09:29 Speaker 3

So when you had people like Mary Jo Brandimore, well, again, a building is named after, OK, what it created was just this always students first, and we weren't perfect.

00:09:42 Speaker 3

We had our blemishes, but I think that's what dig did and that that's what allowed me to succeed humbly in the years I've been, whether it was in there and other opportunities I had at the university.

00:09:56 Speaker 2

So you've talked a lot about connecting with students and, you know, building that culture.

00:10:00 Speaker 2

Teach you how?

00:10:01 Speaker 2

How do you approach?

00:10:02 Speaker 2

Like connecting with people when you 'cause you're always in admissions mode, from what we've heard.

00:10:07 Speaker 2

How do you?

00:10:08 Speaker 2

How do you?

00:10:08 Speaker 2

Choose to connect with people.

00:10:10 Speaker 3

You know, when you asked that question, I was telling some people today and I'm so sincere when I say this from the time I started in October of 80 till today if I have a chance to talk the story of Saginaw Valley.

00:10:25 Speaker 3

To prospective students and their families. So it doesn't matter if I'm in a restaurant when Pi where Saginaw Valley shirts, whatever, it doesn't matter a gear a lot.

00:10:35 Speaker 3

As soon as they say Saginaw Valley then it just opens the door for me to tell a story.

00:10:40 Speaker 3

So I would say for me is when you really believe in something.

00:10:46 Speaker 3

When you really, really deep down in your heart believe, then it's easy.

00:10:52 Speaker 3

It's not a job, right?

00:10:54 Speaker 3

It's a calling.

00:10:55 Speaker 3

And I think for many of the people that I've been blessed to hire and work here, whether it's a Gen Paul, whether it's a Gary Broswer or Robert Lemuel or Dan Strauss, who all have kind of directors positions on that first floor, or Rachel Florence, who runs the orientation program, I think they've taken that.

00:11:15 Speaker 3

And you have to understand that when you really believe in something, then it comes across as genuine.

00:11:22 Speaker 3

That you're not, you know you're just not telling it to tell it or just being this hard salesman.

00:11:28 Speaker 3

OK no, you're telling people and every time when we have this opportunity you then show it with a story so whether it's medicine and you know the incredible things that Heidi Lang does and free you know pre professional programs.

00:11:42 Speaker 3

Or whether it's Mark McCartney talking about the accounting program, OK, or Cathy Macomber talking about the social?

00:11:50 Speaker 3

Our program, I can tell the stories and I can tell where people are and that's where people get lit up because they begin to see that can be done.

00:11:58 Speaker 3

And I think that's the connection that I've done.

00:12:01 Speaker 3

And then over the years people call me.

00:12:03 Speaker 3

I recently had a call.

00:12:05 Speaker 3

Jim, can you help this student first generation?

00:12:07 Speaker 3

They don't know what they're doing and they call me.

00:12:10 Speaker 3

But that's OK.

00:12:11 Speaker 3

You know, then I make my phone calls, or I might call Anderson, or I handle it myself, but in every one of those situations you begin to create that really we are a relationship.

00:12:21 Speaker 3

Business we don't deal with widgets, we deal with human beings, and our mission is to transform students, and I think that's the mode that many of us have been able to do during that time here.

00:12:35 Speaker 1

We were told that you like to memorize mascots.

00:12:37 Speaker 1

Is that true?

00:12:38 Speaker 3

Well, what happens is a lot of times when I'm talking.

00:12:42 Speaker 3

With and remember.

00:12:44 Speaker 3

I have talked with people over the years.

00:12:46 Speaker 3

Lots of people, yeah.

00:12:48 Speaker 3

Sometimes I will remember them, often by their high school or their mascot, faith in their name.

00:12:54 Speaker 3

And then I the name will eventually come to me.

00:12:57 Speaker 3

But one of the first thing I always ask people just like a student today, that was in line.

00:13:04 Speaker 3

That was in mechanical engineering, switched to computer science and now he's.

00:13:08 Speaker 3

Doing an internship at next year, I got hey man, what high school?

00:13:12 Speaker 3

You go there and then that creates the conversation and then I'll say, hey, I knew this person and did you know them?

00:13:18 Speaker 3

Did you know that, like, I asked you about Lakers?

00:13:20 Speaker 2

Right.

00:13:21 Speaker 3

I knew everybody at Lakers and so that is the way to start the conversation and then really get into what do they want?

00:13:29 Speaker 3

What are they?

00:13:29 Speaker 3

Looking for and then try to meet them emotionally.

00:13:33 Speaker 3

I have my Angelo.

00:13:34 Speaker 3

I used to have this on my wall every day.

00:13:36 Speaker 3

It's not what you say, what you do.

00:13:39 Speaker 3

It's how you made them feel that.

00:13:41 Speaker 3

You'll remember.

00:13:42 Speaker 3

And that was kind of my mantra.

00:13:44 Speaker 2

That your favorite quote?

00:13:45 Speaker 2

We also have heard that you you.

00:13:47 Speaker 2

Love quotes.

00:13:48

I do.

00:13:49 Speaker 1

Your big quote guy.

00:13:50 Speaker 3

Well, I'm, I I don't have a quote guy.

00:13:52 Speaker 3

My spirituality is very important to me.

00:13:54 Speaker 3

So Mother Teresa is a it has really impacted my Life OK?

00:13:58 Speaker 3

In many ways of how she let her life and what she believed.

00:14:01 Speaker 3

And so I think I really work hard on that is when I work.

00:14:05 Speaker 3

With people to.

00:14:06 Speaker 3

Try to inspire people to become a better version of themselves.

00:14:10 Speaker 3

And the same with.

00:14:11 Speaker 3

We're always a work in progress.

00:14:12 Speaker 3

How's that?

00:14:13 Speaker 3

Even after 42 years.

00:14:15 Speaker 3

I'm still a work in progress, yeah.

00:14:18 Speaker 1

With the quotes thing, what are some of your favorite quotes?

00:14:21 Speaker 3

I used to have like Gandhi be the change you want to.

00:14:23 Speaker 3

See in the.

00:14:24 Speaker 3

OK, OK.

00:14:25 Speaker 3

You know, it's Mother Teresa.

00:14:27 Speaker 3

It's not what you say, it's what you do.

00:14:29 Speaker 3

You know, I so I I I try to ground myself in humility that it's never about you.

00:14:37 Speaker 3

And that if you really want to make change, it starts with you.

00:14:40 Speaker 3

Yeah, you want change, then you have to be part.

00:14:43 Speaker 3

Of the change, right?

00:14:44 Speaker 3

I have a down in my workout room.

00:14:47 Speaker 3

I have this Zen proverb that says obstacle is the.

00:14:51 Speaker 3

Path, so I try to tell FIFA.

00:14:53 Speaker 3

You're always going to have obstacles, so.

00:14:56 Speaker 3

Get out of.

00:14:57 Speaker 3

It. Let's go.

00:14:58 Speaker 3

Let's make it happen and I've learned more.

00:15:01 Speaker 3

Be honest with you for my failures and my successes.

00:15:04 Speaker 3

And so I I try to.

00:15:06 Speaker 3

I wish I had it with you and I could show you I have this big book and every time I hear something, even this.

00:15:14 Speaker 3

5:30 this morning I saw a couple quotes. I read him in this book and then I will use them when it's the right time, when I have to say the right thing to a right person. One of the things that I I work really hard at is writing little notes to people.

00:15:29 Speaker 3

When I know they're struggling or they've been successful or they need a little spurt, I'll just say, hey, man, you're OK, and then I'll, I'll give him a quote and I'll say, hey, I believe in you.

00:15:39 Speaker 3

And when you say, does that work?

00:15:41 Speaker 3

Oftentimes, even in my retirement I had this book.

00:15:44 Speaker 3

People gave me what they wrote him and what you tend to forget.

00:15:49 Speaker 3

Was like I had people saying 25 years ago, you wrote this note to me and I learned I was OK and I then got through my challenges, my adversity.

00:15:59 Speaker 3

I persevere and I want to let you know what I'm doing today and I never forgot that, so for me that's priceless.

00:16:07 Speaker 3

No money can pay when you get that kind.

00:16:11 Speaker 3

And that's why I say the culture at the university.

00:16:15 Speaker 3

So in the many jobs that I've been able to have, whether it was international programs, Vice President, alumni, career services, it doesn't matter.

00:16:24 Speaker 3

You're always in that position too sometimes.

00:16:28 Speaker 3

In 5 minutes 10 minute conversation, change your personal life.

00:16:34 Speaker 3

Sometimes it takes five years.

00:16:36 Speaker 3

OK, so I've had it.

00:16:38 Speaker 3

I've had it all.

00:16:39 Speaker 1

You just mentioned your past positions.

00:16:42 Speaker 1

Could you run through positions that you held at the university and what was one of your favorite parts of the job?

00:16:49 Speaker 3

So international programs, I was supposed to go in for three weeks and I'm gonna sign it up being I think almost four years because they they they had a lot of challenges at the time in the program and.

00:17:02 Speaker 3

And all of a sudden, here I am.

00:17:04 Speaker 3

Imagine this in a plane with one of our students, chanchan.

00:17:09 Speaker 3

To China.

00:17:10 Speaker 3

I'm in a 15 hour flight to China getting off the plane to recruit and meet with agents to recruit students to come.

00:17:17 Speaker 3

To Saginaw valley.

00:17:18 Speaker 3

And then I'm I'm in the plane with Sahar, whose at the time husband Marwan Waffle was the of business Dean.

00:17:28 Speaker 3

And I'm getting.

00:17:29 Speaker 3

Off the plane in Saudi Arabia, I'm thinking, am I gonna be OK?

00:17:34 Speaker 3

So and and then because of that one.

00:17:39 Speaker 3

Effort that eventually brought US 400 students from Saudi Arabia really on that one trip created this energy that these students came to Saginaw Valley? And then for me was how enriching international programs was because.

00:17:59 Speaker 3

I became humble when someone coming 6000 miles away come to this university.

00:18:06 Speaker 3

What happened so recently?

00:18:09 Speaker 3

But Jess Gualle ended up being like my stepson, so he was from the pool he and just to let you know, he came from the pool.

00:18:17 Speaker 3

He has no money and I over heard a conversation when he was a freshman at the Registrar's office and I said no, he can do this and that started my relationship.

00:18:26 Speaker 3

With him that he was at my house all the time.

00:18:30 Speaker 3

Yeah, I just went to his graduation out in George Mason, so it's pretty cool.

00:18:35 Speaker 1

Yeah, that's awesome.

00:18:37 Speaker 3

So the international was incredibly enriching experience.

00:18:40 Speaker 3

I used to wear all the garb.

00:18:42 Speaker 3

I went to all the international.

00:18:44 Speaker 3

I learned more about Sunnis and Shias and and just different things culturally.

00:18:48 Speaker 3

That was so enriching.

00:18:50 Speaker 3

But you know what you also learn?

00:18:51 Speaker 3

We're all.

00:18:52 Speaker 3

The same, yeah.

00:18:53 Speaker 3

Well, we're all.

00:18:53

Right.

00:18:54 Speaker 3

The same and then.

00:18:55 Speaker 3

From there I was.

00:18:56 Speaker 3

Asked to be.

00:18:57 Speaker 3

Humbly, the vice president.

00:18:58 Speaker 3

And, you know, think about I was at the institution for 30 years and I still wasn't ready to do the job because of the magnitude of responsibilities.

00:19:07 Speaker 3

But it was a great experience I had.

00:19:10 Speaker 3

A great team.

00:19:11 Speaker 3

And our job was to recruit and retain students. And here I was on the President's board and.

00:19:18 Speaker 3

And I to this day, did not like telling people as a vice president.

00:19:22 Speaker 3

You know why?

00:19:23 Speaker 3

Because I didn't want him to think I was some powerful guy, you know?

00:19:26 Speaker 1

Oh yeah.

00:19:27 Speaker 3

I I just want him to know that I'm the.

00:19:29 Speaker 3

Same as you.

00:19:30 Speaker 3

So I held the position Mary Jo Brandon Moore and I one thing that being a Vice president that made me more effective, I think because I started here's entry level so no one could.

00:19:42 Speaker 3

Ever say to me you don't understand me?

00:19:45 Speaker 3

And then I was married to an obstetrician that was working a lot of times, 80 hour plus hour work weeks.

00:19:50 Speaker 3

I had three children trying to have work life balance.

00:19:53 Speaker 3

OK, what it's like to be entry level, what it's like to not have a good boss.

00:19:58 Speaker 3

So what made me more effective was I could relate to people, so if they came and talked to me, I always.

00:20:05 Speaker 3

Listened and I always try to get where I could to get them answers.

00:20:12 Speaker 3

And then the president asked me, said he calls me up to his office at that time, President Bush and had made the change.

00:20:19 Speaker 3

He replaced Eric Gilbertson and Eric and I worked magically together for 26 years. He's the head president. I was the head enrollment, which is really, really uncommon to Don saying.

00:20:32 Speaker 3

You know, Jim, I have to do something with the alumni.

00:20:35 Speaker 3

I have to bring them home.

00:20:37 Speaker 3

You either went to school with these people, or you admitted him, or you did him.

00:20:42 Speaker 3

Will you come home?

00:20:43 Speaker 3

And you do it.

00:20:44 Speaker 3

Do you want to think about it?

00:20:45 Speaker 3

I said.

00:20:45 Speaker 3

There's nothing to think about.

00:20:47 Speaker 3

I want it and to create this synergy of alumni.

00:20:52 Speaker 3

And probably one of the successes I really liked was the legacy program.

00:20:57 Speaker 3

So people that graduated from Saginaw Valley, we started out.

00:21:00 Speaker 3

I had no idea what I was going to do, so we created a program.

00:21:04 Speaker 3

I had no money, created starter program, eventually convinced the president to give \$1000 scholarships and then we created a card and it had the the alums name on it and said anytime your son or daughter has a question.

00:21:20 Speaker 3

Or a challenge at the university you call me.

00:21:23 Speaker 3

I became the Ombudsman for those students.

00:21:26 Speaker 3

And if you say.

00:21:27 Speaker 3

Did they call all they called?

00:21:29 Speaker 3

Whether it was roommate issues, financial aid, it was very rewarding.

00:21:34 Speaker 3

So we went from 60 students that first year to after five years we.

00:21:40 Speaker 3

Have over 1000.

00:21:40 Speaker 3

Wasn't involved at the university.

00:21:43 Speaker 3

The license plate program, yes, is just significant.

00:21:47 Speaker 3

If you have Saginaw Valley on the.

00:21:49 Speaker 3

Back of your license plate?

00:21:50 Speaker 3

Does that open the door for conversation, right?

00:21:54 Speaker 3

So we we we went back to the Cardinal.

00:21:57 Speaker 3

I got creative that we've gone to.

00:21:59 Speaker 3

It doesn't cost you.

00:22:01 Speaker 3

Anything your first year to put that state of license plate?

00:22:05 Speaker 3

I also said, wow, people say we gotta go to the secretary state.

00:22:09 Speaker 3

I even want overcame that obstacle.

00:22:10 Speaker 3

They just have to fill a form out, get it to alumni office.

00:22:14 Speaker 3

In two or three weeks they'll have that license plate on the back of their car.

00:22:18 Speaker 3

That also creates revenue long term for the legacy program.

00:22:22 Speaker 3

Just to let you know.

00:22:23 Speaker 3

So one other things I'll just say is the senior toast you guys have to remember this senior toast is very celebratory now.

00:22:31 Speaker 3

President comes in, has a champagne toast two weeks before Garber.

00:22:35 Speaker 3

Automotive on guard group generously.

00:22:38 Speaker 3

Provide us that the funding for that program have a great relationship with Garber.

00:22:43 Speaker 3

So those are just some of the things we were able to do during the time there and then when I went to career services.

00:22:50 Speaker 3

President calls me up. He says, hey Jim, the director is leaving. I said, yeah, I know. He calls me back 1/2 hour later.

00:22:56 Speaker 3

He says it's all yours.

00:22:57 Speaker 3

And so here I was my last year, kind of just mellow out, retired.

00:23:03 Speaker 3

And I go up to the office and not one person had any experience in the office.

00:23:09 Speaker 3

Everybody was.

00:23:10 Speaker 3

New so I had to walk into an office.

00:23:13 Speaker 3

It'd be like.

00:23:13 Speaker 3

Any going to new job with no name experience that in eight months, 10 months we have transformed the office to having a.

00:23:23 Speaker 3

Comprehensive career readiness strategy that now will begin this fall. And why did we do it? What's the ROI? If a family is going to give us \$80,000, what are we providing for them to ensure?

00:23:38 Speaker 3

Or that they're going to have an opportunity in a career path or indoor Graduate School upon graduating.

00:23:45 Speaker 3

It's really exciting.

00:23:47 Speaker 3

The road map we've created and even now across from our office, we're going to have the Cardinal closet so any student can walk in and get professional attire.

00:23:55 Speaker 3

Now that we have, it's really exciting.

00:23:58 Speaker 3

So those are.

00:23:58 Speaker 3

Just some of the things, but in every situation I had, I had to.

00:24:03 Speaker 3

Build it from the.

00:24:04 Speaker 3

Ground up. OK, and.

00:24:06 Speaker 3

The satisfaction in the team that I was able to create, you know, the team we were able to create, every one of those was amazing.

00:24:16 Speaker 3

And then once you got people on this to buy into what we're trying to accomplish.

00:24:20 Speaker 3

Great things happen.

00:24:21 Speaker 3

In our alumni.

00:24:22 Speaker 3

The last thing I'll say about the alumni is and I said this earlier in the podcast.

00:24:27 Speaker 3

They really want to.

00:24:28 Speaker 3

Help. Yeah, they really.

00:24:30 Speaker 3

Want to impact the success of the university and whether they refer students or they provide an internship, it doesn't matter.

00:24:38 Speaker 3

It's been very gratifying. Yesterday when you saw that couple come in right podcast, I introduced the the Milton's, they'd said.

00:24:47 Speaker 3

Because of what you did, Jim, and bringing his back home.

00:24:51 Speaker 3

We are on board and that's all you have to do is touch them, bring them back and then allow them to do their thing to impact the success of the university.

00:25:03 Speaker 1

So do you think the way the alumni want to give back to the university, do you think they feel a sense of pride and need to give back?

00:25:11 Speaker 1

To the university because they were given so much from the universe.

00:25:15 Speaker 3

Actually, I think when you ask that question, if you graduate, yeah.

00:25:20 Speaker 3

All you know you will enjoy it.

00:25:23 Speaker 3

You will too, but you guys have both had great experiences here.

00:25:27 Speaker 3

So what what happens is most students that graduate have really been impacted in some way by a faculty member, by staff, by being in a student organization.

00:25:38 Speaker 3

In by being an athlete, it doesn't matter.

00:25:41 Speaker 3

There's different.

00:25:41 Speaker 3

Let me touch points that really transform.

00:25:44 Speaker 3

So I I think, you know, when it's all said and done, that's what's most relevant, that what alumni want to do is they want to make sure that students know that they can have the same experience they had.

00:25:58

Right.

00:25:58 Speaker 3

And whatever they can do to help that, that's what they're willing to.

00:26:01 Speaker 1

Do I had a question?

00:26:03 Speaker 2

Give the question first.

00:26:03 Speaker 1

Go ahead.

00:26:05 Speaker 1

Well, the question was to build off of.

00:26:08 Speaker 1

Have you said like having a culture?

00:26:11 Speaker 1

Like you started off with nobody, with any experience or everything starts with an idea so everything starts with that license plate idea?

00:26:18 Speaker 1

How do you get people to buy into that culture and how do you build it from?

00:26:23 Speaker 3

The ground up so again through Dick Thompson, OK.

00:26:27 Speaker 3

You can always say OK, anybody can say I don't have enough money, I don't have any support, I don't have anything and I always say with my team.

00:26:37 Speaker 3

And I say my team 'cause, everybody plays, everybody sustain.

00:26:42 Speaker 3

No one is above anybody.

00:26:43 Speaker 3

My job is to keep that motivation going.

00:26:47 Speaker 3

So I'm gonna use Cris service as a great example.

00:26:49 Speaker 3

It was overwhelming for me at first.

00:26:51 Speaker 3

I don't know how they're doing business.

00:26:53 Speaker 3

I don't know how they.

00:26:54 Speaker 3

Operate OK, but but I always say.

00:26:58 Speaker 3

This is the red pride difference.

00:27:00 Speaker 3

You look at it, you evaluate it and you say, OK, this is where we're going to go.

00:27:05 Speaker 3

This is where we need to go.

00:27:07 Speaker 3

And then you get everybody buying and what I notice when you do that and you have everybody engaged.

00:27:14 Speaker 3

They're not a bystander, they're they're they're just as involved with with the journey.

00:27:19 Speaker 3

Then what you begin to see is talent come up and ideas come up.

00:27:24 Speaker 3

My 2 grad assistants that I have in career services now.

00:27:28 Speaker 3

Are amazing, they are gifted, OK?

00:27:32 Speaker 3

And but the staff that I've putting together, the team that we've now created, it gave me background in this.

00:27:39 Speaker 3

But, but do they know where they're going in this road map?

00:27:43 Speaker 3

And now that they've been part of developing it, but part of that was my experience.

00:27:48 Speaker 3

Right, I've had enough loss.

00:27:50 Speaker 3

Is that what you learn is if you don't get by in by everybody you know, if everybody doesn't believe they're part of it, you'll never succeed.

00:28:00 Speaker 3

Never succeed.

00:28:01 Speaker 3

And that's why I've always managed people is.

00:28:04 Speaker 3

You have to.

00:28:05 Speaker 3

Empower people.

00:28:06 Speaker 3

You have to let people fail.

00:28:09 Speaker 3

You have to let people succeed.

00:28:11 Speaker 3

And you have to just say it's OK where this is where we're going to go.

00:28:16 Speaker 3

It's OK if we have a little.

00:28:18 Speaker 3

The journey, no journey, you know they like, Mother Teresa says.

00:28:22 Speaker 3

You know, you write your thing with a crooked line.

00:28:25 Speaker 3

As you develop your faith.

00:28:27 Speaker 3

There's no one straight line.

00:28:28 Speaker 3

It's crooked, you know, and you tell your story through that crooked line and what you teach people is if you would have seen what we did in career services.

00:28:39 Speaker 3

With no experience, what you begin to see, it doesn't matter what.

00:28:43 Speaker 3

It is you.

00:28:44 Speaker 3

Just look at.

00:28:45 Speaker 3

If you just say, where do we want to go and let's go and take off and then see this in.

00:28:52 Speaker 3

Incredible results. And again, in this situation, in your time with the international program, the same alumni build up from the ground floor, had no money, had no budget, and nothing. And then if you went to last year's homecoming, you would have just seen this incredible transformation.

00:29:12 Speaker 3

What we do at homecoming, the alumni celebration used to have maybe 12 tea.

00:29:16 Speaker 3

Close to celebrate these distinguished alum. Now it's packed and there's 42 tables in.

00:29:22 Speaker 3

There and people are just, you know.

00:29:24 Speaker 3

Shouting from the mountain top.

00:29:26 Speaker 3

Of the success of these alum.

00:29:27 Speaker 3

When when you look at again the grad fair, now when students come in and they they're picking up their cap and gown, it's all this festivity you create, you create it.

00:29:37 Speaker 3

And that, but you have to engage your team and everybody is a part of that.

00:29:42 Speaker 1

Yeah, so photos archive again.

00:29:45 Speaker 1

We found another picture and I my question is like what event was this and?

00:29:52 Speaker 1

What did it?

00:29:52 Speaker 1

Correspond with and what year if you can.

00:29:55 Speaker 1

Tell when you.

00:29:55 Speaker 2

What is the context of this 'cause?

00:29:55 Speaker 1

That is, yeah.

00:29:56 Speaker 1

What's the context of this picture?

00:29:57 Speaker 2

This is a wild.

00:29:59 Speaker 3

I think we were having a contest to have a fun time.

00:30:05 Speaker 3

So who could build?

00:30:07 Speaker 3

The plane who could get the farthest distance and whoever did it. 1A prize.

00:30:13 Speaker 3

OK, so when I look at this picture, it reminds me just as an example.

00:30:18 Speaker 3

Whereas their emissions every week when people came back from being recruiting students, they had to tell their success story for the week.

00:30:27 Speaker 3

And then what we would do is we would start out because at that time Sabrina Velazquez would say Hail Mary in Spanish and we just get to get it going.

00:30:37 Speaker 3

And then everybody would tell a story.

00:30:39 Speaker 3

Then we would rate the story.

00:30:41 Speaker 3

They would either get half a altoid, a full altoid, or no altoid 'cause the story.

00:30:47 Speaker 3

Less than effective.

00:30:48 Speaker 3

OK, but it was just like this.

00:30:51 Speaker 3

One of the things I've always tried to do is you have to have fun too, you know?

00:30:56 Speaker 3

I mean, you gotta have fun.

00:30:57 Speaker 3

So will you see this airplane flying out?

00:30:59 Speaker 3

We're having a a contest or whether it's deltoides or whether I take people out for Starbucks in the morning and just say, hey, how you doing?

00:31:09 Speaker 3

It just, it creates that humanist in in the product and it creates an environment where people want to be and that's what you got to do as a manager is create that environment.

00:31:19 Speaker 3

So this was just another little.

00:31:22 Speaker 3

One game.

00:31:23 Speaker 3

With lots of laughs, lots of.

00:31:25 Speaker 3

People remember that and it just kind of takes the the stress off of or trying to accomplish, yeah.

00:31:31 Speaker 1

Awesome. Nice.

00:31:31 Speaker 3

That's that's what that picture was.

00:31:33 Speaker 3

But I I've done a lot of different things.

00:31:36 Speaker 3

Over the years to.

00:31:37 Speaker 3

Engage staff one time for for United Way.

00:31:41 Speaker 3

We were a fundraiser.

00:31:43 Speaker 3

You could go to.

00:31:45 Speaker 3

Bid on hotel Dwier so I live in this nice house, OK?

00:31:50 Speaker 3

That it was half my off the road and this man made like.

00:31:54 Speaker 3

So the whole admissions team was given responsibility.

00:31:58 Speaker 3

So we had we met people when they drove in, we had ushers that took and we were all dressed up.

00:32:05 Speaker 3

We had waiters, we had bartenders, we we had, you know, the menu of the day.

00:32:11 Speaker 3

And these people had this extraordinary experience.

00:32:15 Speaker 3

But my team never forgot that right?

00:32:18 Speaker 3

And we called it Hotel Dwight and these people that one or paid enough money for this United Way fundraiser.

00:32:24 Speaker 3

It was, but it was fun, right?

00:32:26 Speaker 3

And it.

00:32:26 Speaker 3

Was just a way of team building.

00:32:28 Speaker 3

And you have.

00:32:29 Speaker 3

To have those kinds of experiences.

00:32:31 Speaker 3

I can go on and on the different things.

00:32:33 Speaker 3

We've done over the years to make that happen.

00:32:36 Speaker 2

Since we were talking about admissions, you had one of your longest runs was admissions, right. So during that time there we we looked up the, the enrollment went from about 5000 to almost nine, 10,000. What were some of the key initiatives or like what do you attribute to that level of success?

00:32:53 Speaker 3

I think for.

00:32:55 Speaker 3

Us it was if we could get someone on campus.

00:32:59 Speaker 3

Because, uh, one of the challenges Saginaw Valley had over the years is saying, Oh Valley, you know, they don't never been on campus.

00:33:07 Speaker 3

They've never seen it.

00:33:09 Speaker 3

And so there was two things that I think allowed us to be successful.

00:33:12 Speaker 3

The team, most of the people that were part.

00:33:15 Speaker 3

Of the team were alumni.

00:33:17 Speaker 3

And I most of the time hand picked.

00:33:20 Speaker 3

People that had extraordinary experiences on campus, OK, so whether it was Greek life where there was athletics, it didn't matter.

00:33:28 Speaker 3

And then was creating an aura of we were all in this together.

00:33:34 Speaker 3

So if you talked to Kelly Addis today, who now works there, she goes gym.

00:33:38 Speaker 3

Back then it was amazing what we did.

00:33:41 Speaker 3

'cause, we just cared about each other because we had to get to a goal, right?

00:33:46 Speaker 3

So you can work at the university and say I work hard and that's true.

00:33:51 Speaker 3

But in my job I was a coach and if I didn't win, if I didn't get meet the goals of the projections, we lost.

00:34:00 Speaker 3

OK, so our job was to as a team knew that we had to do what we had to do and so I had the lowest budget of the 15 public.

00:34:12 Speaker 3

Universities, the whole time I was in their tour guides at that time, didn't I get paid?

00:34:18 Speaker 3

OK, which you get paid now.

00:34:20 Speaker 3

OK, So what we had to do was to draw.

00:34:24 Speaker 3

Five, it really started with people.

00:34:27 Speaker 3

So the real success of us being successful was creating an environment in emissions that allowed us to compete successfully compete against the Centrals.

00:34:39 Speaker 3

The Grand Valley is the Michigan State.

00:34:41 Speaker 3

We weren't going to lose because how we.

00:34:45 Speaker 3

Engaged our people, yeah.

00:34:46 Speaker 3

So we'd have to go to a lot of college nights and say no valley and then just get people to.

00:34:51 Speaker 3

Come visit, OK?

00:34:52 Speaker 3

And so was the team and it was just this ability.

00:34:57 Speaker 3

And when I say the team, I want you to think that every director on the 1st floor came from admissions today, came from the Admissions Office.

00:35:06 Speaker 3

So when you create that environment of getting it done, having fun getting it done.

00:35:12 Speaker 3

It starts.

00:35:13 Speaker 3

You can't do it without a team.

00:35:16 Speaker 3

So great coaches, OK.

00:35:18 Speaker 3

Successful coaches in any entity or in a business, OK does not succeed without the team.

00:35:27 Speaker 3

And I think when I look back, when I look back to people today.

00:35:32 Speaker 3

That are in the other offices.

00:35:34 Speaker 3

It started because when you came into admissions you were part of a team that had to win.

00:35:42 Speaker 3

And when I say had to win if we didn't make enrollments issues happened at the university.

00:35:48 Speaker 3

So we always had to have that in the.

00:35:50 Speaker 3

Back of our mind.

00:35:52 Speaker 3

But at the same time, we had to just have this ability to support each other back and we did that well, OK?

00:36:00 Speaker 3

And I'm so proud of over the years, the teams that we had.

00:36:04 Speaker 1

That's incredible.

00:36:06 Speaker 1

That's incredible.

00:36:06 Speaker 1

I love hearing about Team Dynamics and how to get a team to buy in and everything, so I've always been interested in that stuff.

00:36:13 Speaker 3

You know, and I think where the team buy in starts is you have to work hard at knowing your team.

00:36:19 Speaker 3

You know, you have so Amber today, I've learned.

00:36:21 Speaker 3

More about amber.

00:36:23 Speaker 3

In the last two days, that really is pretty cool.

00:36:27 Speaker 3

She is and what she is and what she believes in.

00:36:30 Speaker 3

And then you take that talent.

00:36:32 Speaker 3

And then once you recognize their talent, then the key is empowering people to grow and giving them responsibilities to make sure that they feel that they are engaged, that they're important and that in the end, no one is better.

00:36:46 Speaker 3

Now, one person is better than the team and if you can kind of create.

00:36:51 Speaker 3

That environment and you have all these alum that had these extraordinary experiences.

00:36:56 Speaker 3

When you can speak from the heart, belief is easy, and then you can really share the values of what Saginaw Valley will offer you if you do a lot to come.

00:37:05 Speaker 2

Given I have one last one and this kind of goes back to some of the initiatives that you have helped lead with the legacy program.

00:37:05 Speaker 1

Any other questions for that section?

00:37:13 Speaker 2

You've helped establish the legacy scholarship.

00:37:15 Speaker 2

You've also put some funds into a private scholarship in the name of your Father, Jim Dwyer, senior.

00:37:21 Speaker 2

Could you speak to why that was?

00:37:23 Speaker 2

Important for you?

00:37:25 Speaker 3

I'm tearing up when you ask that question, OK?

00:37:28 Speaker 2

I have Kleenex.

00:37:30 Speaker 3

I think my dad was extraordinary.

00:37:33 Speaker 3

My dad was just a special guy.

00:37:35 Speaker 3

My mom passed away when I was five years old and we had four children in the family, and then my dad eventually remarried.

00:37:43 Speaker 3

He was a man of.

00:37:44 Speaker 3

8th there's nothing better for me to now know for the rest of my life with trusting that signal values open, that two students will annually get a really, really good scholarship and.

00:37:59 Speaker 3

Because of that, we've started one in my wife, mother name too, 'cause.

00:38:04 Speaker 3

That's really important to me, 'cause I was able to do it right and to know if you look at my.

00:38:10 Speaker 3

There's different things out there.

00:38:11 Speaker 2

I was going to ask about those, yeah.

00:38:12 Speaker 3

OK, that are very spiritual.

00:38:14 Speaker 3

Driven and one is keep the faith JPD.

00:38:18 Speaker 3

That's my dad and I I look at that daily and my dad taught me the values.

00:38:24 Speaker 3

He taught me about hard work.

00:38:26 Speaker 3

He taught me resilience.

00:38:28 Speaker 3

He taught me persistence and.

00:38:30 Speaker 3

Because of that I have been able to take those values.

00:38:35 Speaker 3

And what a better honor. And and I think down the road, those alums that are in a position to do so like I was can do something in honor of. And again, I think now these people get a \$2000 scholarship that can really help offset their costs. OK, and then I get notes back from those students.

00:38:55 Speaker 3

And it's really cool.

00:38:56 Speaker 3

It's just yeah, because that's what we're supposed to do if you've been blessed, you're supposed to give.

00:39:02 Speaker 3

Back, you know.

00:39:03 Speaker 3

And that's one of the things I've been able to do and I do it with great pride and.

00:39:09 Speaker 3

Thanks for asking that question, because I don't really talk about it.

00:39:13 Speaker 3

About it, you know, because I don't want it to.

00:39:16 Speaker 3

Be one of bragging.

00:39:17 Speaker 3

You know.

00:39:17 Speaker 3

Hey, look what I did.

00:39:18 Speaker 3

No, I did it because when someone has done something for you, like my dad and how he raised me, you know what else can I do?

00:39:29 Speaker 3

Have him live in his memory or his passion, or what he believed in that I can pass on to others.

00:39:36 Speaker 3

And now her mom, Cheryl's mom is pretty good and I I've started that. That's really important to.

00:39:41 Speaker 3

Me, yeah, absolutely, yeah.

00:39:43 Speaker 1

The quote that is associated with.

00:39:47 Speaker 1

That scholarship is the harder I work, the luckier I get.

00:39:52 Speaker 1

So what does that quote mean to you?

00:39:56 Speaker 3

So I think, you know, as people get into their careers or whatever people like to do, I think that you have to understand that things just don't happen.

00:40:07 Speaker 3

OK, that if you really want to succeed in life, you have to have the ability to really focus on the attitude, the commitment to excellence.

00:40:19 Speaker 3

It's never going to be easy.

00:40:21 Speaker 3

The roadblocks, as I told you, my model is obstacles.

00:40:25 Speaker 3

The path OK, so for me is when I watched my dad, OK?

00:40:32 Speaker 3

And how hard he worked and what he provided us.

00:40:35 Speaker 3

But I've taken that and I've tried to instill that in my children.

00:40:39 Speaker 3

I've instilled that with my staff.

00:40:41 Speaker 3

So when people, when my staff says Jim, what is it going to take for me to to move up?

00:40:46 Speaker 3

I want to move up.

00:40:47 Speaker 3

I used to get the sage advice from Dick Thompson.

00:40:50 Speaker 3

He goes, Jim, you never promote yourself.

00:40:52 Speaker 3

It's people you work with that recognize your talent that moved you.

00:40:57 Speaker 3

And I always remind people that it's not you just get get anything handed to you.

00:41:02 Speaker 3

So the harder you work, the more that you take it on just like this past year.

00:41:07 Speaker 3

My latest was through services.

00:41:10 Speaker 3

I can sit back now and look ten months later what happened because of this hard.

00:41:15 Speaker 3

Work of the.

00:41:15 Speaker 3

Team to now where that office is going and so it's not luck.

00:41:21 Speaker 3

You don't get lucky.

00:41:23 Speaker 3

You gotta be willing to.

00:41:25 Speaker 3

You gotta be willing to take defeat.

00:41:27 Speaker 3

You gotta be willing to be resilient.

00:41:30 Speaker 3

You gotta be willing to work above and beyond.

00:41:33 Speaker 3

And if you are, things will lie up.

00:41:36 Speaker 3

You know, some of these people ask me, well, Jim, how did you get through to eventually be a vice president?

00:41:40 Speaker 3

Well, first of all, I didn't need to be a vice.

00:41:42 Speaker 3

President, OK.

00:41:43 Speaker 3

That wasn't my goal of working at Saginaw Valley to be a, you know, Vice President, having this powerful.

00:41:48 Speaker 3

Does it show my goal?

00:41:50 Speaker 3

Always was to help students.

00:41:52 Speaker 3

And wherever that led me within the institution, that's what I took.

00:41:57 Speaker 3

But what I'm most proud is empowering my staff, my team and I.

00:42:03 Speaker 3

When I say my team, I always say our team 'cause it's not mine, is far that if you're willing to work and if you're willing to, to really.

00:42:12 Speaker 3

Get off the wine.

00:42:14 Speaker 3

Get off.

00:42:14 Speaker 3

I don't have enough.

00:42:16 Speaker 3

You pour me or me.

00:42:18 Speaker 3

There's no pour me, OK?

00:42:20 Speaker 3

When you're here, no, no, no, no, you.

00:42:23 Speaker 3

Look at it.

00:42:24 Speaker 3

You try to.

00:42:25 Speaker 3

Figure it out and then you move forward.

00:42:27 Speaker 3

And when you do that and you're willing to work, tremendous things happen.

00:42:32 Speaker 3

And I've seen that happen to people once they take that, embrace those kinds of thoughts.

00:42:38 Speaker 1

Tremendous advice, though tremendous advice.

00:42:43 Speaker 1

Thank you for listening to the first installment of the Cardinal Voices Podcast.

00:42:46 Speaker 1

Be sure to follow the podcast for more conversations with people who have shaped this view.

00:42:50 Speaker 2

And as always, it's a great day.

00:42:52 Speaker 2

To be a cardinal.