

Alumni Spotlight Q&A: Richard Trogman, MSHA '91

What was your healthcare experience prior to commencing the MSHA program?

I had no healthcare experience prior to attending CSUN. I obtained my undergraduate degree in Psychobiology at UCLA. I was accepted into the MSHA program without any real healthcare experience, which is now a general requirement; however, I was working in the retail industry while I was pursuing my degree. Having no prior experience in the healthcare industry gave me a fresh perspective about healthcare. I was able to form an unbiased viewpoint as to how I perceived the industry. Also, I was encouraged by my professors and peers to not be discouraged because my lack of experience. I am a living example that it is possible to complete this program without prior healthcare experience and still achieve success in their career.

What is your current job and what was your pathway?

I am the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Kaiser Permanente Woodland Hills Medical Center. After I graduated with my MSHA degree, I worked for the Insurance Commissioner Office for the State of California, where I worked on a healthcare reform plan for the state. A year later, my preceptor from my field experience contacted me about a job opportunity at Kaiser Permanente in their Finance department. I got the job and worked on their decision support system. Afterwards, I held a series of different positions in the last 24 years of my career within Kaiser's local, regional and national regions.

What did you like about the program?

The academic content was well rounded, and I have been able to apply it in my career. Also, I liked that the professors had real world practitioner experience. Also, the strength of the student body and wealth of knowledge they brought to class everyday was very beneficial, since I was able to learn from their experiences as well. In addition, I liked that it's practical focused, not research or theoretical. This helped me gain hands on experience in the healthcare industry through assignments, projects and the field experience.

How do you see things changing in healthcare and what advice would you have for students as they prepare for their careers?

Things are constantly changing in the healthcare industry, so the practical advice would be to prepare to be flexible and adaptable, as well as develop transferable skills. The content of the job may be less important than the ability to lead in different environments. Having a flexible leadership style is essential, in order to avoid being rigid and narrow minded.

What makes CSUN's MSHA program stand out from the other programs in Southern California?

It's a locally based program that has a diverse academic approach to healthcare administration. Its diversity provides a rich foundation to springboard the graduate students into the complex spectrum of the healthcare industry.