

Google retiree shares advice with freshmen

by Natalie Johnson - Tuesday, August 31, 2010

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As Google's 56th employee, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus Ed Karrels '97, rode the wave of the multinational Internet and computer software company's success.

On Sept. 5, Karrels, of Portola Valley, Calif., will share his story with 1,800 incoming freshmen during Odyssey, UWO's orientation for new students.

"During the fall Odyssey program, students reconnect with campus and have a chance to learn about campus resources," said Debbie Gray Patton, Odyssey director. "From Ed Karrels, students will learn about what it means to be a student at UW Oshkosh and begin to build pride in their university."

A computer science major, Karrels parlayed a series of internships and networking opportunities into a career at Google. After graduating in 1997, he interned at Argonne National Lab in Chicago, IBM in New York and Silicon Graphics in California.

At Google from 1995 to 2005, he accumulated enough stock to sell and retire at age 30, when the company went public. Today, Google employs more than 10,000 people worldwide.

Karrels stresses the importance of developing good relationships throughout college and staying in touch with supervisors and coworkers from internships. "It's all about connections," he said.

During Odyssey, Karrels also will advise students to take time during their freshman year to look for subjects that really interest them. "Find something that you are willing to put great effort into — not just slog along," he said.

"Take your general education classes up front to be more balanced and to really get a taste for your academic possibilities," he said.

Karrels came to UWO to study computer science, but he also continued to pursue his passion for music, something he is encouraging today's UWO students to do through the new Ed Karrels Continuing Music Performance Scholarship.

The \$6,000 renewable scholarship will be awarded to two students annually.

- [Learn more about the Karrels scholarship.](#)
- [Learn more about Odyssey.](#)