

Q & A



WILLIAM
& MARY

CHARTERED 1693

PROFESSOR RAM GANESHAN

Professor Ram Ganeshan is the D. Hillsdon Ryan Professor of Business in the Raymond A. Mason School of Business. He teaches courses in Operations, supply chain, and Data Visualization. We will be talking to Professor Ganeshan today about what he does outside of work. He is a favorite professor in the MBA Core and been described by many students and staff as “the most interesting person in the Raymond A. Mason School of Business.” We polled students on questions to ask him and we present here the most asked questions.



Q. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us. As you may be aware, we are doing this so the student body can get to know you outside the classroom. We polled students for questions to ask you and what follows are questions that were most asked.

It's my pleasure. Go ahead.

Q. What is your earliest memory?

My mom picking me up from kindergarten. I couldn't wait to get home! I must have been 3 or 4.

Q. When are you happiest?

With family. Hiking in the mountains.

Q. When you are not hiking, how do you keep fit?

I swim, bike, and run consistently. I used to compete in road bike criteriums when I was younger. Its recreational now. That's a picture of me after a long ride.

Q. What's your Every-Day-Carry? And

can we take a picture of what's in your bag?

Sure. When I am going around town, I just carry a small credit card wallet, phone, and sunglasses. That wallet has an interesting story. It is made from leather retrieved from the "Metta Catherina" which sunk off Plymouth Sound in 1786! When I am in group meetings, I use an iPad for notes. One-to-one meetings I always go analog – a journal and an elegant fountain pen. I am currently training for a triathlon, so I wear a large Garmin sports watch. I carry a mechanical dress watch for meetings at work. This particular one – Charlie Chaplin used to use wear one of these -- is from the 1950's. It has a world timer and an alarm bell. An interesting fact is that it was made before India changed its time zone so the Indian cities on the dial are off by half an hour.

Q What's in that bottle?

That is plastic-trash from the Pacific Gyre, a trash pile the size of Texas in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. We



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were talking about sustainability in class today so I bought this along.

Q. Talking about sustainability, tell us about your low carbon life.

Lots of small things but it adds up. I bike to work. Small chores around town are also done by bike. We live in a small 100-year old home that has been retrofitted and certified as a “green” home. It uses about 30-50% less electricity and water than a similar size home built today. We buy produce locally through our CSA. We use public transport whenever possible. We invest in things that last. We recycle and reuse. We harvest rain water. We also invest in verifiable renewable energy, carbon capture, and water conservation projects around the world to offset the energy we do use.

Q. Be the change you want to see?

I am no saint, but something like that.

Q. Moving on, there is unanimous agreement that you are the best-

dressed person on campus. Can you tell us about your fashion sense?

Oh, my. The truth is that I really do not think about what I wear. It is sort of connected to your previous question – I believe in craftsmanship and willing to invest in few items but of high quality that lasts. I have discovered several pockets of excellence in my travels – the artisanal quality of fabrics made in the Province of Biella, the traditional hand-loomed tweeds from the Outer Hebrides, the simplicity of hand-spun and hand-woven Indian Khadi, or the natural leather tanneries of Chicago or Northern Sweden. The other part is having an excellent bespoke tailor who can transform these exquisite materials into elegant but understated garments. The same goes for shoes – skilled shoe-makers can make comfortable shoes from wooden models of your feet. Ironically, while the price of entry can be high, such bespoke items last a lifetime, making the cost of ownership lower than department store-bought products.

Q. What's your guilty pleasure?

A nice Burgundy wine and jazz on Vinyl (about the only PVC product in my home!), especially vintage Blue Note artists. After a glass of wine listening to Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Art Blakey or Lee Morgan, there is only pleasure, no guilt.

Q. Which of your hobbies takes most of your time?

Astronomy, Model railroading, and collecting Art & Antiques.

Q. What kind of art?

Pop art mainly. Were privileged to have one of our Warhol prints on display for the "Voyeurism" exhibit at the Muscarelle Museum.

Q. Who would you invite to your dream dinner party?

Sunil Gavaskar, Bob Dylan, and The Obamas.

Q. Which book changed your life?

Newton's *Principia Mathematica*. It convinced me to be a scientist. One of my goals this year is to re-read it, only this time in Latin.

Q. How come you speak so many languages?

English, Hindi, and Sanskrit were my required languages at school. Spoke Tamil at home. That's par for the course for many kids growing up in India. I am functionally literate in many languages. You know -- buy a train ticket or order from a menu. I

also encourage everybody to learn to say Please, Thank you, and I love you in as many languages as you can.

Q. Have you said "I love you" in any language and not meant it?

No. And I say it at least once a day.

Q. Who would play you in the film of your life?

Denzel Washington. Just kidding!

Q. How would you like to be remembered?

I am lucky that my job lets me touch the lives of many positively. Just being remembered would be nice!

Q. Thank you for your time Professor.

You are welcome.

