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Genomas is a player in the new field of personalized medicine. According to the company website, the “one-size-fits-all” approach to prescribing medications is giving way to an advanced method of drug selection based on the capacity of the individual to process (metabolize) the prescription. That capacity can be determined through analysis of the patient’s DNA.

“For about 50 percent of the population, the suggested drug dose is appropriate. However, about 25 percent of us are below-average metabolizers and may face risks when a drug builds up and causes potentially serious or even life-threatening complications. And about 25 percent of people have an above-average ability to metabolize drugs. This capacity could lead to lack of efficacy, as the medication is broken down before it has its effect” (genomas.net).

Kocherla’s contributions to Genomas, according to company founder Ruaño, have touched every aspect of the business, from laboratory design and management to helping the company obtain Small Business Innovation Research grants totaling $7.2 million and beyond.

“Mr. Kocherla has excelled in many and varied capacities at Genomas: research and clinical scientist, laboratory manager, and presently director of operations. . . . (He) was instrumental in creating the Laboratory of Personalized Health, . . . a clinical laboratory serving doctors and patients in the New England region. Since its inception in 2004, test results on over 5,000 patients with mental ailments have directed psychiatrists in providing the right medication in the appropriate dosage amount, thereby preventing lethal adverse drug reactions.”

As an entrepreneur, Kocherla says he initially chose the program for its flexibility for working professionals and its personal touch. He also says Barney’s supportive faculty have helped him accomplish his goal of developing effective business strategies to guide his company in the ever-growing market of DNA-guided medicine.

Kocherla won first place in the Barney business plan competition with “Genomics and Health Care vis-à-vis Insurance and Cash-Based Business Models,” then presented it at the Connecticut Collegiate Business Plan Competition. At the state level he received the Inaugural Intrapreneurship Award. Associate Professor Irina Naoumova explains that intrapreneurship refers to an entrepreneurship mindset for in-company projects, a concept that is very popular now in the corporate world. She calls Kocherla a team leader, his project’s “heart and soul,” and observes that “his presentation skills added to the judges’ positive opinion on his business idea.”

Although the company has just six employees now, Kocherla sees great growth in its future, thanks to a redefined business plan that he developed at Barney. “For 2014, we project multimillion-dollar revenue. I feel that the Barney curriculum has provided me with booster rockets to rise to the executive level. Though graduation marks a new journey, I will not easily say goodbye to Barney.”

Mohan Kocherla M’13 is a remarkable young man who believes in the power of education. His story begins in India, where he received a bachelor’s degree in microbiology and chemistry in 2000 and a professional diploma in network-centered computing in 2001. That same year, Kocherla came to the United States and earned a master’s in 2002 in management information systems at Ferris State University in Michigan. In 2004 he received a second master’s in genomics and bioinformatics at The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. His MBA from the University of Hartford’s Barney School of Business was awarded in December 2013.

Despite his five degrees, Kocherla is not living the life of a perpetual student. Instead, he has been preparing himself, even before he knew it, to move up the ranks from research scientist to operations director and partner at Genomas, Inc., which is based on the Hartford Hospital campus.

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