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Professor Q+A: Jim Brau

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I sauntered into the large auditorium as 2 Unlimited’s song welcomed me to class. At the front, a man in a football jersey and jeans sat next to a projector talking to students and drinking out of his water bottle. I quickly realized this was not my average Intro to Finance lecture. As class began it was easy to see that my professor, Jim Brau, cared a whole lot about us and our success in the class.

Jim Brau has worked diligently to provide his students an exceptional and understandable experience. From an Airborne Ranger infantry officer to the Joel C. Peterson Professor of Finance, Brau teaches from experience the importance of hard work, humor, and the gospel. Here’s a glimpse into a bit of his life.

By Annie Pond

What is your favorite part of teaching at a university?
I love working with young people. My patriarchal blessing talks about how I will work with the youth. As I get older and older, BYU students become younger and younger! To me they are still the youth of the Church!

What has been one of your funniest moments as a professor?
It probably has to be this year when RateMyProfessor awarded me as the Hottest Professor in the Country based on chili peppers from students. If you’ve ever seen me, you know that’s gotta be a joke!!

You invite your students to visit you at VASA while you exercise. How come?
These Vasa office hours are for mentoring – things like career ideas, choosing a major, finding an internship. This type of mentoring is great at the gym. We kill two birds with one stone! I pay for a guest pass so students without a gym pass can come to Vasa office hours as well.

Music is played as students shuffle in before class. What’s your favorite song to jam out to before class? Why?
“Ya’ll ready for this?” I play it the first day of class to pump everybody up for the semester.

What is one piece of advice you would give to a university student trying to figure out life?
“Enjoy the journey.”

If you had $10 million right now, what would you do?
Assuming it is after-tax and after-tithing, pay off my mortgage and invest the rest.

What do you want to do when you grow up?
Serve couple missions with my wife Bunny, compete in bodybuilding shows in the senior master’s (old guy) class, and have fun with future grandchildren.