

DO PHYSICS.

BE ANYTHING.

UNC PHYSICS



Adam Falk did.

Although Adam Falk took the traditional physics path by earning a Ph. D., teaching and conducting research, he wound up in a job few will ever hold, much less at the age of 44.

Falk, a 1987 University of North Carolina (UNC) graduate with a B.S. in Physics, was recently named the president of Williams College in Williamstown, Mass. Until he assumes his new role in April 2010, Falk will remain Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Johns Hopkins University (JHU). As a high-energy physicist Falk's research focused on elementary particle physics and quantum field theory, in particular the decay of heavy quarks. He completed his Ph.D. in Physics at Harvard in 1991 and then held post-doctoral positions at Stanford Linear Accelerator Center and the University of California at San Diego.

So given Falk's background, what's the connection between physics and running a college? Well, problem solving is problem solving.

"Anything I do that is quantitative, from designing class schedules to budgets to thinking about the capacity of the undergraduate

laboratories, draws from the problem solving skills I developed from physics" Falk said.

It's important for students to realize, Faulk said, there is a certain freedom that comes as a result of the problem-solving skills physics provides. That doesn't mean you'll always know where it will lead you.

"Physics teaches you to solve the problems that are in front of you and it also equips you to follow a path you don't understand," Falk said. "And I think students think they have to see all the way to the end and that isn't always necessary."

But the real point Falk wants physics students to get is that they truly can be anything.

"You can go to law school or do anything that requires careful analytical thinking," Falk explained. "The purpose of physics education is to teach people to think clearly and do that in a way that will achieve a specific goal."

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