Business Student expands The Spartan Garage

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Less than five years ago, a high school sophomore in Atlanta Georgia started a business in his parents’ garage selling custom automotive parts.

Now at the age of 22, that student is a Bowling Green business owner who says his success is entirely due to WKU.

Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the hill.

The Spartan Garage is an automotive customization company poised to expand in Bowling Green.

But it all started with a teenager looking to get parts to fix up his jeep.

 “I started an Instagram page and I was just promoting peoples jeeps all over the country and eventually a couple of companies recognized that we had built up a somewhat significant following, had been about ten thousand followers.”

By the time he was a senior, Robert Bowden not only had the jeep of his dreams but a full blown business in his parents Atlanta garage.

 “Once I got my business license, filled out applications, got approved to sell parts, built the website, that’s when I realized my foot is kind of in the door with this industry and then from there it just manifested.”

That’s also when Bowden, who has a learning disability, started looking at colleges.

It was Instagram where he first heard of WKU.

 “ That’s initially how I found it I went and talked to my college counselors at my high school and said hey here’s a university I found that I think might fit what I’m looking for, did a little more research and realized this checked a lot of boxes for what I need for a university.”

Those boxes included a smaller class size and close connection with faculty. As a freshman Bowden was connected to the Center for Research and Development. He added two students to his team and his business has soared from there.

 “It’s crazy to see going from small business accelerator and that small first facility and going to here and now planning on building the new building and everything. It’s very exciting.”

Currently located in the Bowling Green Corporate Park, The Spartan Garage is scheduled to build a state of the art service facility on Lovers Lane by the end of the year.

It’s a success story Bowden says would not have been possible anywhere else.

 “This all ties back to Western, I mean this ties right back to the beginning where if I hadn’t have come to a school like this where the university had these things to offer me, a lot of what has happened wouldn’t have happened. I know for a fact if I had gone to another university with this set of circumstances this would not have happened.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Bowden is taking a year off from his studies at WKU but when he returns he will continue pursuing the degree he started in entrepreneurship in the Gordon Ford College of Business.

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