

## Meet Our New Provost, Dr. Jeremy Qualls

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I've been in academics for a long time. I guess my story started back when I was, I guess when I was a kid growing up in Tennessee. And so, my dad really pushed me towards academics and studying and the value of education. And so for the past 25 years I've been in education.

I've done everything from being a faculty member to being a dean to being a vice president of research. So originally, I was going to be a physician. I was looking at pre-med and got accepted into medical school but, at the same time, I was also accepted into the new physics program that opened up, the National High Magnetic Field Lab in Florida. And so, I kind of had to weigh do I want to do pre-med or do I want to go into research and do physics?

And so, they had this amazing new lab. They have the world's largest magnets there. They had Nobel Prize guys there, and so I went to the path of academics. And I loved it, and I haven't stopped since.

When I'm not working, I'm working on my house, gardening, spending time with my wife or my kids, especially now that my kids are back. They're all out of college and they're visiting during the summer, so I like that. Then, like I said, gardening. I spent a lot of time actually moving Maine rocks and digging and getting into that. And then, I spent a lot of time with my wife either hiking or we do canoeing as well.

And so, this position, when it came open, I was very excited. I know the area. I've been in Maine 7 years. I came up here because my brothers live here. And then I find that there's just so much potential and it's a great opportunity to tap into a lot of the things that I've already done.

Research looks different for every discipline. If you're in the liberal arts or if you're in humanity, like a specific humanity, it may look different than another humanity. And so, what I started to do is branch out and then using my background of getting, of attracting, funding and building research and infrastructure to help non-STEM.

And so, although I originally started as STEM, I guess over the last six years, it's kind of broadened out to all the other disciplines. One of the key things is to maintain the current strong bonds that Thomas College has with the Waterville area and my role will be helping

to evaluate what skills and curriculum we provide and make sure that it's aligned with the needs of the community and for industry. It also means me being very proactive, knowing what's coming up next and what are the opportunities. And then, not only knowing what the opportunities are, but to work within the greater Maine community to try to develop opportunities for our students. Hopefully we can increase enrollment and then see what other resources we can bring in.

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