

## **Kevin Simonson Interview:**

### **How would you describe your area of study to your grandmother?**

I enjoy hearing folks tell their story. I believe there is power in allowing folks who are marginalized the opportunity to be heard. As a counseling psychologist in training, I have come to appreciate, above all, the therapeutic relationship. That is, the genuine connection between the therapist and the client.

### **What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?**

I enjoy challenges. Higher education has given me the opportunity to grow as a scholar and a practitioner. In addition, higher education has allowed me to grow personally. That is, I believe I know how I want to live my life. Prior to my doctoral work at RU, I knew part of what I wanted to do in life. Now, I have a clearer course to navigate. The options which my degree will afford will open new doors of possibility.

### **Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?**

Absolutely. Counseling Psychology as a discipline works hand in hand with many other professionals (e.g., researchers, social workers) in order to provide holistic care. In addition, social networking is often a stepping stone toward employment. The world in which we live is a combination of who you know, as well as what you know.

### **What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?**

For the past 10 years, I have been studying the craft of violin making. I have found the process of building violins to be therapeutic and restorative. In 2004, I apprenticed under a violin maker in the Canadian Maritimes. Working side by side with this master influenced my life profoundly. Violin making is a lifelong learning experience. The journey requires years of training, study and long days and nights exploring the depths of the creation process. I look forward to engaging in this process throughout my life.

### **What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?**

Over winter break, I re-read my favorite book. It's a biographical novel by Irving Stone titled *The Agony and the Ecstasy*. This novel tells the story of Michelangelo's life as a sculptor, painter, and architect. As an artist, this book is inspiring.

### **Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.**

This past year while counseling at Radford University Student Counseling Services, under the supervision of Dr. Hamilton, I enjoyed getting to know him as a mentor, colleague, and supervisor. As a result of working with him, I feel confident and empowered to do well when I attend internship in September.

### **What surprised you the most about graduate school?**

What surprised me the most about graduate school were the relationships I formed with my peers. While in the trenches of daily doctoral work, only your peers know and truly understand the agony and turmoil one endures. I have no doubt these friendships will last a lifetime.

### **If travel to Mars happens in your lifetime, would you want to be one of the scientists on board?**

No. I have a fear of heights.

### **What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?**

Oh this is an easy one, cheese. In my fridge right now, alphabetically listed, I have blue cheese, brie, feta, goat cheese (but unfortunately not from my goats), gruyere, parmesan, mozzarella, and sharp cheddar.

**If you hadn't been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?**

Nestled in the woods somewhere in Vermont, building fiddles.

**When do you expect to complete your degree?**

Summer 2012