

## **Featured Graduate Student, 2011-2012**

### **Summary:**

Eric has a bachelor degree in Psychology from Virginia Tech and is currently a M.S. candidate in Clinical Mental Health Counseling within the Department of Counselor Education. His clinical interests include crisis counseling, narrative therapy, and human resilience. Eric was recently appointed as the Clinical Mental Health Counseling representative for the Radford University chapter of Chi Sigma Iota, an international counseling honor society. He is currently employed as a case manager at New Horizons, a crisis stabilization program of the New River Valley Community Services Board, where he has worked for a year and a half. Outside of school, Eric enjoys golf, fishing, VT football, reading, and being with friends and family.

### **Interview:**

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

In general, I would want to convey the importance of the counseling profession. Counseling can be a powerful process in helping people move through, accept, and effect change in their lives. Counseling can be powerful emotionally can have a dramatic impact on both the counselor and client, and there is something extraordinary about that. Counselors do not work miracles or perform magic-tricks. They simply employ human compassion and empathy in a way that validates a person's existence, helps them utilize their strengths that may help them face their own unique challenges, and provides unconditional support throughout the process.

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

I have an inner drive to always be growing on a personal level. My academic and professional drives are a consequence of that, as well as a desire to become a competent useful to counselor.

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

Absolutely- having more resources and seeing multiple perspectives allows for more creativity in thinking and problem-solving.

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

Hands-down, being in, on, or around a river whether I am fishing or just enjoying the scenery.

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

In December I finished *Sway*, which is a pop-psychology book about how easy it is to make impulsive and irrational decisions. I am about to finish *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. I watched the movie

based on the book a really long time ago. My experiences since then, have given me a different lens to filter and understand the subtleties of story that the author was trying to convey.

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

I would have to give that to Becky Hubble. Her classes changed the direction my academic career was headed. She was able to bring the material and concepts to life and make them believable, by drawing on her work in the field. My psychology degree gave me the academic background that ultimately lead to me pursue a graduate degree, but Becky Hubble instilled the importance of having a humanistic and person-oriented approach that led me to the field of counseling.

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

How supportive and encouraging the faculty and my fellow students are.

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

Nope. I am content breathing oxygen from the air around me, not having to rely on a tank or a biosphere or something.

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

A hamburger topped with bacon, cheddar, and barbeque sauce. Bacon makes everything better and barbeque sauce adds a little sweetness to the saltiness of the bacon, it is a great combination of flavors. I have actually cut down, but I still eat it way more than I should.

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

I would still be working at New Horizons. I would apply to graduate school again and again if necessary, as I feel that being a counselor is my calling. I would have a lot more free time though, which would be nice!

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

Spring 2014