

Interview:

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

Counseling is the fostering of a healing relationship and environment to explore possibilities, uncover solutions, and empower individuals, groups, and families to achieve personal growth.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I see graduate school as an experience that adds layers to my personal and professional foundation. By adding layers, I believe that I am opening doors for currently unknown, future possibilities. There are different challenges and obstacles along the journey through graduate school, but knowing that these experiences are shaping me, in some way, provides motivation. I have learned through working and being a full-time graduate student that I am capable of much more than I think.

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

Absolutely! There is something to learn from everyone. Relationships with students of other disciplines seem to create a space in which diverse ideas can be shared with the possibility of informing your program of study.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

Running and being outside. The university, along with the City of Radford, has a wealth of opportunities for outdoor adventure and relaxation.

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

"Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl. I squeezed this book in during the break between the spring and summer semesters. A book written by an existential psychotherapist, but it's much more than a counseling text.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

I do not know if I can identify a single academic relationship as being the most meaningful. I have been fortunate over the years to have developed relationships with professors, advisors, and supervisors who have instilled hope and believed in me along my professional and academic journey. I believe it is very important to find people who are all-in-one like coaches, mentors, and champions. This has been true for me since I entered the Counselor Education program. In the course of a single academic year, I have been able to develop relationships with professors who share their wisdom and are genuinely concerned with your holistic development as a person. The funny thing is: Those meaningful relationships seem to just find you.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

The personal impact that graduate training has on my life has been most surprising. I knew graduate school was going to influence my professional preparation, but I underestimated the personal impact that graduate school was going to have on my life. Along with obtaining advanced knowledge of professional counseling, I have grown personally since beginning the Counselor Education program. I have learned more about myself and have seen changes in my relationships and interactions with others. Graduate school is much more than preparation for a vocation. Through the Counselor Education program, I have been able to find a learning environment located at the intersection of professional development and personal growth.

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?

I would not want to be a scientist on a mission to Mars. There is so much left on Earth for me to explore. More precisely, I believe there is so much more to be explored even in my own backyard. If there were to be a colony developed on Mars, I would be interested in visiting Mars as a social scientist. It would be interesting to observe how people on Mars would create community and find meaning on the planet. I would also be interested in opening the first intergalactic counseling practice.

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

Barbeque. If I could, I would eat barbeque every day. However, I usually eat this food about once a month. The adventure to find locations that serve barbeque is definitely part of the fun and there is no standard for preparation. Everyone seems to have their own recipe. Barbeque is edible culture.

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

I would have likely continued my employment as a Therapeutic Day Treatment provider at Monticello High School for Region Ten Community Services Board in Charlottesville, VA.

When do you expect to complete your degree?

May 2015