

Eileen Alwang Interview:

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

The Master's of Education program at Radford is a great eye opening experience to what teaching is and where the profession will take me. Not only in this field of study will you learn about educational history, but you also learn about the different methods that will enhance your teaching skills. This program is a great way for people who weren't in the profession to learn about what teaching is and the difficulties and pleasures a teacher will face.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?

I really enjoy all of my classes, so it is not so much persevering through graduate school as loving graduate school. My classes can be intense, but they are so interesting that I don't want them to end at the end of the semester. I feel like my Master's program is preparing me to be the best teacher I can be. I also think it is giving me a realistic view of what teaching is in the public school systems and the difficulties I may face.

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

I have not done a lot of social networking with other graduate students that are not in my field. Most of my time is spent with fellow graduate assistants or people in my class. I love networking with all of these graduate students and have learned a lot from them, but I have not had the opportunity to really network with other graduate students. I do think it would be a good learning experience to meet other graduate students to really have a rounded experience.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?

I run and bike a lot, which helps with the stress. I think just going for a walk in the evenings also helps with relieving some of my stress.

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

I just finished Cartwheel by Jennifer Dubois. One of the things that I was most enjoying about the break this summer was to be able to have more time to pleasure read. In my free time I like to balance out my academic reading with quick and light-hearted reading.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.

One of the first aspects of Radford that I really loved was the initial person I spoke with -- Dr. Morrison. Dr. Morrison responded quickly to all of my questions and was so accessible. I could not wait until I had her for a professor in a classroom, because she just seemed like someone I could really learn from. I recently took her class, and wish I could take so many more classes with her. She makes the class interesting and keeps the whole class involved and engaged in the classroom. She really feels like more than just a teacher to me.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?

The thing that surprised me most was how much I enjoy it. My undergraduate experience was so different than my graduate experience. I enjoy going to class, and even look forward to it. When I was telling my friends about going back to school they all said graduate school is awful, but I have a total opposite opinion. I love being in the classroom, and feel so engaged in what I am learning about. I honestly would never have thought about going to get a Ph.D. if not for coming here for my Master's degree.

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 understand that it takes up to a year to reach Mars, and I can't imagine making such a long trip if not to stay for a while. It's hard to say I would want to go to Mars when we have to many issues to address here on Earth.

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

Candy, and lots of it. I always have some kind of candy in my bag, whether it be M and M's, Reese's, or gummy bears. I don't have a favorite, just a constant need for it. Whether I am having a good or bad day, I pretty much always need to have candy. My dentist loves me.

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

If I hadn't been admitted to graduate school I think I probably would still be working at my old job and trying to apply or thinking of going to graduate school. I loved my old job, but I knew it wasn't where I wanted to be. I wanted to go back to school and be able to get my licensure to teach, so I think I would be applying again.

**When do you expect to complete your degree?
Spring of 2015**