Sarah Harig Interview:

How would you describe your area of study to a novice?
Counselor Education prepares students to work with a wide variety of people and populations in a therapeutic community setting. Many people see counseling as a way to deal with negative issues and while this often comes up in counseling, counselors also work with their clients on better ways of living. As counselors, our hope is that clients, through counseling, find a greater understanding of themselves as well as how they interact with the world around them so that they may lead healthier, more complete lives.

What is your primary motivation for persevering through graduate school?
My primary motivation for persevering is my current and future clients. When I am sitting in a session with a client and I see that light bulb go on in their heads as a result of our work together, I get that energy and drive necessary to continue with my graduate school education. If a few years of hard work means that I get to spend the rest of my life loving my work and working with clients on finding better ways of living, that is absolutely worth it to me.

Do you think there is any value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields?
I absolutely think there is a value in social networking with other graduate students in non-related fields. Our commonalities as graduate students aside, as a counseling student, my education stresses the importance of integrating myself into my entire community. You never know who is going to be a resource for you in the future and as such, you should always leave the door open to opportunities to meet and get to know other graduate students.

What is your favorite stress-reduction technique?
When I am feeling particularly stressed, I have learned that the best way to deal with it is to take a pause and do something just for me in that moment. Whether that is watching 30 minutes of Netflix or taking a walk with my dog or simply taking some time to breathe, I find that pause opens up the room I need to continue working on whatever it is that was causing stress for me.

What is the last book you read strictly for pleasure and how long ago was it?
I absolutely love to get lost in a book. The last book I read strictly for pleasure was The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt and I finished that a week ago. I am currently perusing bookstores for my next fun read.

Please describe your most meaningful academic relationship.
I have been lucky to have some absolutely wonderful professors throughout my years in school so it is difficult to pick just one to describe. However, at Radford University, I have found working with Dr. Sharon Jones to be invigorating. She was my practicum supervisor for the spring semester. Dr Jones was able to challenge me while still supporting my growth as a counselor and I am extremely grateful that I was able to work with her. As a result of her supervision, I am more confident in my counseling abilities and have been able to hone in on what career opportunities I want to pursue after I completely my master’s degree. I look forward to continuing to work with her throughout my career.

What surprised you the most about graduate school?
The amount of support I have been given by my department, both by the faculty and my cohort. It makes all the stress and hard work manageable.

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 absolutely want to go to Mars—but not as one of the scientists on board. I would just want to explore the planet because I find the solar system fascinating! I would leave the science part to the professionals.
What is your favorite comfort food and why? How often do you consume it?
My favorite comfort food would be my Nana’s macaroni and cheese because I relive so many good memories when I eat it. I probably have it at least once a month.

If you hadn’t been admitted to graduate school, what do you think you would be doing right now?
I really have no idea. Probably traveling and coming up with a plan to reapply to graduate school for the following year. For my field, a post bachelor’s degree is a must.

When do you expect to complete your degree?
I will be hooded and walk in May of 2015. I will officially finish my degree program in August of 2015.