

Derick Strode, B.A. English, Literature, 2003

By Sarah K. Miller

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Derick Strode graduated from WKU in 2003 with his bachelor's degree and again in 2012 with his Master of Arts in English. After he obtained his first degree, he held three different positions here on campus. "I spent three years visiting high schools around the state as an Admissions Counselor," Strode said. "I met students interested in attending WKU and assisted them and their families through the enrollment process. From 2007-2008, I worked as an International Student Advisor for WKU. I worked with orienting international students to WKU and American academic life, put on internationally-themed programs on campus, and handled necessary immigration documents for the students." Since 2008, he has worked at [The Gatton Academy](#) as Assistant Director of Academic Services. "My role here involves working with students above-and-beyond their curriculum in academic pursuits. We have robust programs in student research, study abroad, summer internships, and scholarships. I work with our students on all of these fronts. Among the fun things I do, I plan a literature study abroad program each summer with Professor Walker Rutledge."

During his 11 years working on campus, he has also continued to be a part-time student to obtain his Master of Arts in Education degree in Student Affairs in 2007. "I recommend this degree for students who want to work in higher education in non-teaching roles," Strode said. "I also came back to the dear old WKU Department of English to do the Master of Arts in English degree. I wrote a creative non-fiction thesis and graduated in 2012." Currently, Strode is completing the educational leadership doctorate program here at WKU. He finishes classes in December 2015, and hopes to defend his dissertation by December 2016. Strode's time in the English department helped him develop the skills he needed for his position at Gatton Academy. "My English degrees help me think differently than my peers and more creatively," he explained. "I also feel like a strong communicator. I use my English degrees every day

as I work with students, helping them communicate their ideas and experiences in writing to apply for scholarships and internships in ways that are both informative and interesting.” Strode is married to a fellow English alum Cameron Carr-Calvert, who graduated with an MA in English in 2013. “We have one dog, one cat, and a happy home.”

His advice to current students is to enjoy the undergraduate years. “Enjoy the days in Cherry Hall. How fun it is to be an English major. Our direction upon graduation is not clear, but we land in great places. Understand that there are not jobs designed for us, like some degrees (nursing, education), but rather that we can tackle many, many jobs, and we are great fits for them.”

