

Caitlin Morrill Interview

Caitlin Morrill, a third-year graduate student, School of Psychology, recently sat down with us to share her experiences attending NDNU. She is currently completing a clinical internship at Star Vista Counseling Center in San Mateo, and graduates in May with a master's degree in Clinical Psychology.

Please share with us a little bit about your background.

I'm a local girl, born and raised here in San Carlos. In fact, the little house that my husband and I share in Redwood City is just five minutes away from my parents' home ... and a five-minute commute to NDNU. I've actually had a long association with Notre Dame as a performer in the university's "A Christmas Carol" play for eight years while I was growing up.

I love my animals – we have two French bulldogs - being in the outdoors, hiking, camping and other pastimes. Zumba, dancing, singing and karaoke are also high on my list of things I like to do.

When did you decide to pursue a master's degree in psychology?

I always wanted to be a teacher – that was my dream - but I also fell in love with psychology when I was an undergraduate at Cal Poly at San Luis Obispo and stayed an extra quarter to get my prerequisites out of the way. I taught first grade at one of the public schools in Burlingame for six years, the last two years teaching full-time and attending graduate school in NDNU's School of Psychology.

Why NDNU – what made you choose to apply to this program?

The biggest reason was that NDNU offers classes at night. The flexible scheduling was exactly what I needed in order to continue to teach and work toward a graduate degree, and the aforementioned five-minute commute was especially convenient!

I also have personal reasons for pursuing a clinical psychology degree – a therapist changed my life - and I hope to be able to do the same for the people I work with.

What has been your experience at NDNU? What have you liked best? Any experiences that stand out?

I have enjoyed the close-knit community. All the faculty and students have been encouraging and inviting; it's a very supportive community. I really appreciate how everyone seems to come from a different background – cultural, professional, geographical etc. – and brings with them a wealth of knowledge. You learn from your classmates as well as the teachers.

Something that stands out for me was early on when one of my professors told us that "we regard you as one of our future colleagues." Hearing that was such an awesome feeling. Another experience that stands out was when I didn't understand a particular concept in a course that Dr. Helen Marlo was teaching. During the class, I asked if we could do a role play so I could see how the therapist would respond to the patient in this particular situation. Dr. Marlo took the time to do the role play so I could see it play out in real time, and she was so informative and inspiring. That was a great example of how NDNU faculty differentiates instruction to meet the needs of each student.

Do you have any advice for people considering applying for graduate school at NDNU?

First off, what you put into your program is what you'll get out of it. Really get to know your classmates – they'll be the people you'll be working with in your professional career. Also, don't rush through your program – it's not a race to finish quickly so enjoy the time you spend here.

What's next for you after you graduate this year?

I'll be joining a small private practice in San Carlos where I'll be working with patients of all ages. By the way, every single staff member that I'll be working with is an NDNU graduate!