

Recent Alumni Recognition Award Interviews

[Brandon Mason, 2009]

Q: How did you choose to attend CIU?

A: I was first introduced to CIU through the influence of my youth pastor, Brent Metcalf, '02 and his wife Amanda, '02. They introduced me to several alumni, as well as professors, who made an impact in my life while still in high school. After graduating high school, I chose to attend Mars Hill College in North Carolina where I played football, however I always knew deep down that CIU was where I wanted to be. I ended up transferring in my junior year, and I never regretted the decision to walk away from football to pursue the Lord's plan for me at CIU.

Q: What did you study at CIU?

A: I transferred into CIU during my junior year and studied Youth Ministry.

Q: What did you most enjoy about your time at CIU?

A: One of the greatest things I enjoyed while at CIU was the relationships I was able to cultivate with my peers. I am still in contact with many of them even now, almost a decade later. The friendships formed during my undergraduate years have had a direct influence on who I am as a person today. I also appreciated the opportunity to gain exposure to classes that focused on administration and leadership, as they proved foundational to me as I began my professional career.

Q: What did you do after you graduated from CIU?

A: Upon graduation, my wife and I were married in September of 2009. We moved to Pennsylvania and I began working for Milton Hershey School located in Hershey. Milton Hershey School (MHS) is a cost-free, private, coeducational home serving more than 2,000 students from low-income families. Milton S. Hershey (inventor of Hershey's milk chocolate) and his wife, Catherine Hershey, established the school in 1909 to provide a positive, structured home life year-round so that children could gain the skills necessary to be successful in all aspects of life. For my first five years at MHS, I worked within the Transitional Living program teaching 20-25 high school males independent living skills during their senior year as an Assistant and then Coordinator in a dormitory residence. In 2014, I was promoted to the position of Senior Division Home-Life Administrator and have been serving in that role for the past five years.

Q: What do you do now?

A: I am currently a Senior Division Home-Life Administrator. I am responsible for overseeing eight student homes, twenty houseparents and over 100 students in the 9th-11th grade. I enjoy the work that I am able to accomplish, the relationships that I am able to form with staff, and the opportunity to provide necessary guidance as our students navigate high school and ultimately life after graduation.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family.

A: My wife, (Liz [Roth] Mason, '09) is also a graduate of CIU. We will be married nine years on September 6th of this year, and our marriage has been an exciting journey through the various stages of life. Liz is currently a stay-at-home mom, and she is my biggest supporter. We have been blessed with two amazing children. Our daughter, Sadie, is 3 years old and she loves to be active, whether that be running with my wife or lifting weights at the gym with her dad. Our son, Adler is 18 months old and loves to make people laugh with his ever-present smile and infectious giggles.

Q: What advice/encouragement would you give to CURRENT STUDENTS?

A: In an effort to be an effective steward of your financial resources after graduation, I believe that all students should be intentional about considering their personal finances in relation to prospective jobs and their student loans. Learn how to create a budget, and stick to it. This was not something I was familiar with upon completing my undergraduate degree, and I have benefitted greatly from focused time and attention with my wife on becoming debt-free. Also understanding that although you may have aspirations to attain employment directly in the field for which you have studied, remember that ultimately God might have others plan and may guide your steps in a different direction. I personally expected that my professional career would be in church ministry, I never thought I would be working fulltime for an educational institution. Your undergraduate education has prepared you for more than just an occupation, you have been given the skills necessary to thrive no matter your vocation or profession. One of the greatest benefits I have seen from my time at CIU is the importance of fostering and continuing to foster quality relationships with peers and faculty. Life after graduation will be challenging and as you navigate transitions in life, it is vital to stay connected to a support system of mentors, peers, and a church community.

Q: What advice/encouragement would you give to ALUMNI serving around the world?

A: Keep yourself rooted in prayer and scripture. I have found that it can be easy to go through the motions and lose your motivation to pray and read the scriptures. I would also encourage all alumni that no matter where you are serving, and what you are doing...don't forget about your neighbors or those who live right next door.

Q: Prayer Requests?

A: My wife and I are expecting our third baby in January of 2019, so we would appreciate prayers for a safe and healthy pregnancy. I would also appreciate prayer for me as I finish my master's degree in Family Studies & Human Services: Youth Development from Kansas State University this fall.