Scholars of the second millennium – Part seven

Seventh in a 10-part series profiling recent Principia graduates and how they have benefited from their Principia experience. Greg Bruland graduated from Principia College in 1997.

Greg was first drawn to Principia College through counselors at a summer camp who became role models for him and were enthusiastic about Principia.

At the College, he played varsity soccer, ran track, was all-campus intramural coordinator, served as an usher for the Christian Science Organization (CSO), and participated in the annual student-run Public Affairs Conference.

Greg also took part in a Principia Abroad to New Zealand that enabled him to interact with professionals in the conservation community, broaden his perspectives on the world, and get new insights as to how conservation could be accomplished.

And from his soccer experience at Principia he learned many valuable lessons about communication, trust, teamwork, commitment, perseverance, and responsibility that he says helped him in graduate school and continue to help him today.

Greg adds, “The liberal arts background I gained at Prin helped me to move beyond the quantitative, analytical, and fact-based focus of the sciences to think more broadly in terms of the qualitative, the human dimensions, and to value the arts and humanities. My professors demanded excellence in writing, oral communication, and understanding course concepts.”

Greg’s graduate studies at Duke University focused on wetlands in the southeastern coastal plain. His Ph.D. was in environmental science with a focus on wetland ecology and management.

“When things were tough, I contacted some of my Prin professors for advice and remember the inspiring answers they provided to me about how they made it through difficult times.”

“I also remember thinking I wouldn’t have traded my time at Prin as an undergrad for an experience at a more elite university. I gained so much from the extracurricular activities, being a part of the Christian Science community, and taking part in the Christian Science-related events, such as moral reasoning, pub talks, lectures, discussions, and CSO testimony meetings.”

Dr. Curtis Richardson was Greg’s advisor at Duke. “Greg was my teaching assistant for several years,” he says. “In fact, he helped revise the course. He was outstanding, and the students really loved him.”

“Greg is a really hard worker and did extremely well at Duke. He was also a great researcher who developed his own project, and he published four or five papers from it.

“Greg has the highest integrity and gets along well with other people. Rain or shine, Greg really excelled and showed that he has a true interest in ecology and the outdoors and a love in improving the environment.

“He received high merits for his superb presentations, both at Duke and at national meetings. His talks were always very interesting and always very well attended. I think he’s going to be a great mentor and a great teacher. If we had more Gregs in this world, we’d be in a lot better shape.”

Two years ago, Greg joined the faculty at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in the Natural Resource and Environmental Management Department to teach and conduct research in the areas of soil and water conservation and coastal management. Dr. Carl Evensen is chairman of the Department.

“Greg,” he says, “is an exceptional faculty member, combining competence, diverse skills, and knowledge with a very easy-going and approachable manner that makes him quite popular with students.

“In his two years at UH, Greg has chaired thesis committees for 10 graduate students, which is truly impressive for anyone, and especially so for a new faculty member. He is greatly in demand to serve as a member of other graduate committees as well. Greg teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses which are regularly filled. His research is well supported by diverse grant funding and his publication record is likewise excellent.

“What impresses me most about Greg,” Dr. Evensen adds, “is his willingness to take on new challenges and to successfully manage his many obligations. Greg Bruland is well on his way toward achieving a highly successful career as an educator and scholar.”

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