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As an assistant professor of psychology, [Dr. Ben Beirmeier-Hanson](#) started teaching at Radford University in 2015. Now that he has been at the institution for nearly four years, Dr. Biermeier continues to educate students on the fundamentals of [Industrial-Organizational Psychology](#).

Additionally, he aims to help students understand the correlations between employee behavior and workplace productivity.

Radford University offers a master's degree in I/O Psychology. According to the [American Psychological Association](#), I/O Psychologists study behavior in workplace settings. [Radford's website](#) says graduates of this program find jobs as consultants, human resource personnel, or managers.

## **The Interview**

***[Listen to the audio version of the interview here: [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)]***

The Tartan had the opportunity to interview Dr. Biermeier Sept. 6 in the College of Humanities & Behavioral Sciences.

**Tartan: Throughout your childhood, what intrigued you about school? Where did you grow up? What was your favorite/least favorite subject in school?**



Dr. Ben Beirmeier-Hanson who educates students on the fundamentals of Industrial-Organizational Psychology.

**Dr. Biermeier:** I grew up right outside Madison, Wisconsin. It was a decent size town with lakes, but it was also very midwestern.

Growing up, I liked learning about English and history. Learning at a young age allowed me to get in touch with my imagination and discover new things about different people and places.

My least favorite subject would definitely be math. During elementary and high school, I hated math because I couldn't see where it was applicable to things. But now that I use statistics within my profession, it's more exciting than learning about it when I was a kid.

**Tartan: What has been the best advice you ever received? Who gave you that advice?**

**Dr. Biermeier:** I think the best advice I ever got was from my mother. I don't know whether she told me this as advice or was simply making an observation, but she said "Everyone reaches a point in their life where it seems like they're in competition to see who's the busiest and who's doing the most stuff. Don't engage in that competition".

I think the important part of that is to take time to enjoy what you're doing. Between adults my age and your generation, we're doing a better job at recognizing the importance of mental health and why we shouldn't be in competition to outwork each other.

**Tartan: Why did you decide to choose a career in Industrial-Organizational Psychology?**

**Dr. Biermeier:** I was just having a conversation with some of our first-year graduate students who just came into the department. Although it wasn't funny, we joked that no one grows up wanting to be an I/O psychologist because it's not on anyone's radar. And it definitely wasn't something that I initially wanted to do.

When I was in my senior year of high school, leading into my freshman year of college, I worked at a summer camp working with youth that were referred to us by Social Services. Working at that camp made me interested in psychology and its ability to help other people.

Towards the end of my employment there, my role shifted, and I started doing more outdoor adventure work which allowed me to acquire a leadership position.

During the fall, I took a class in I/O Psychology at the University of Minnesota. This course led me to my main research interests which primarily deal with leadership development and cross-cultural issues. Now that I'm a professor at Radford, I've been able to explore multiple leadership avenues.

**Tartan: Why did you decide to become an assistant psychology professor at Radford University? What's your favorite thing about teaching college students? What's your teaching style?**

**Dr. Biermeier:** After graduating with my Ph.D. from Wayne State University, I had the opportunity to teach as an adjunct psychology instructor for a few years. Teaching at Wayne State allowed me to become a visiting assistant psychology professor at Albion College, which is a liberal arts college in Albion, Michigan.

During my first few years of teaching in Michigan, I decided it was time for me to make a change in my professional career. When I researched potential schools that I could teach at, I immediately fell in love with Radford. The rural area, community atmosphere, and college as a whole were things that intrigued me about the university.

My favorite thing about teaching college students is listening to the various classroom

banter. It's interesting to hear what students are thinking. On a more serious note, I enjoy teaching students new things and opening them up to new possibilities.

As for my teaching style, it mostly depends on the type class that I'm teaching. Some classes are mostly lecture-based, and other classes require the use of technology as students present PowerPoints, watch Youtube videos, or use their phones for classroom assignments. I try to be approachable with all my students and make the classroom a safe environment where students can engage in an open-ended discussion.

**Tartan: What do you hope to achieve during the school year?**

**Dr. Biermeier:** That's a really good question, to be honest, I haven't put that much thought into what I want to accomplish during the school year. I guess I want to continue helping students become successful within Radford's I/O program, do more research in leadership culture and maybe publish a few papers.

**Photo Credit: (Jordan Bennett | The Tartan)**

**Featured:** (Dr. Ben Beirmeier-Hanson)