



GALAXINA WRIGHT

Pronouns: she/her

Personal Identity: Black Cisgender Female

Program/Major: Counselor Education and Supervision, 22

Hometown: Chesapeake, Virginia

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Why did you decide to pursue a graduate degree? Why your particular program?

While the counseling profession drew my initial interest to uncover narratives that have been historically silenced, the decision to pursue my doctoral education emerged from my passion to disseminate those narratives in such a way that they are heard, understood, and continuously advocated. My professional counseling experience developed into a passion for supporting children and their families with marginalized backgrounds, while becoming actively engaged in community service and paving a path for those that resemble me. I chose my particular program because of its faculty's reputation for scholarship and intervention-based research within the

surrounding community, and most importantly because there were people that looked like me doing the very things that I wanted to do.

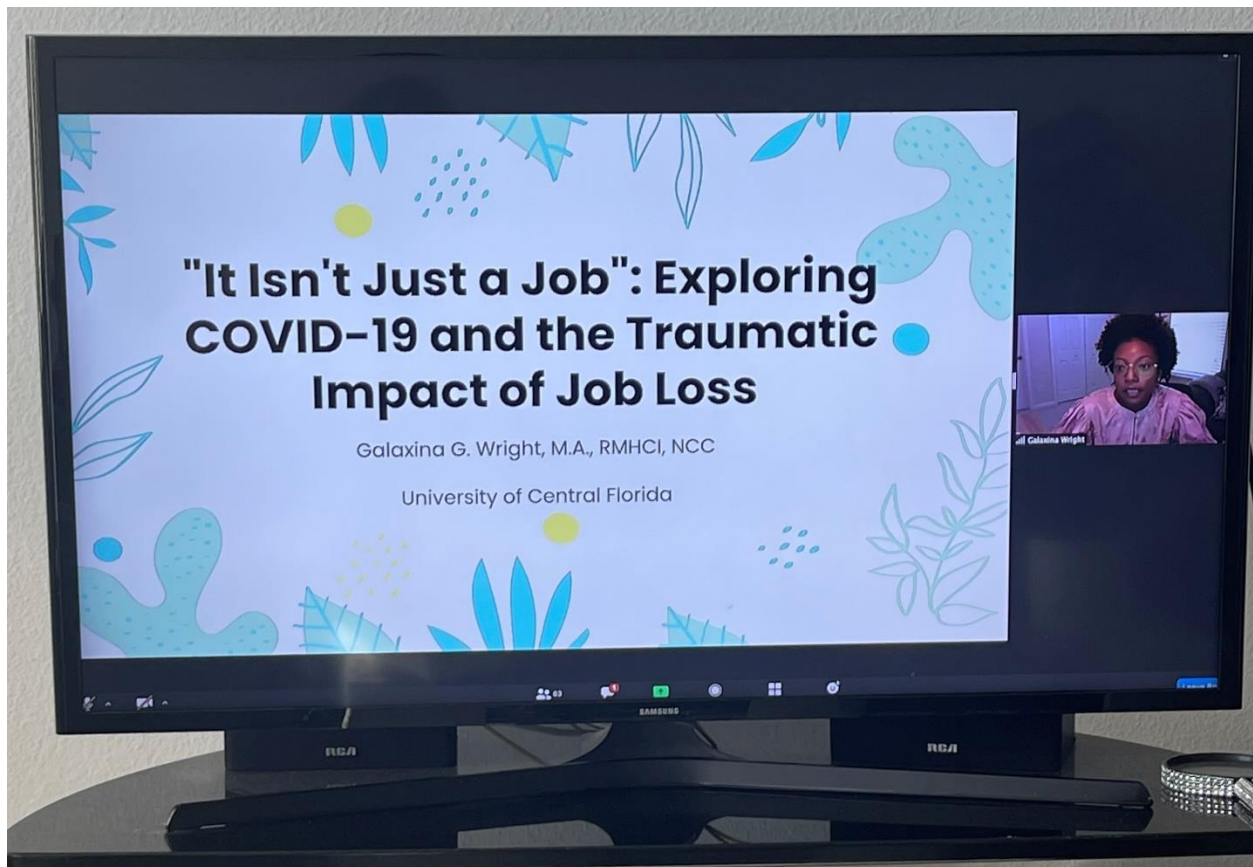
Tell us about something you have learned/discovered during your program that surprised you. How do you think you will apply it professionally?

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of my program and overall experience is the bond that my cohort members and I have developed throughout our doctoral journey. During my masters program, I started school part time and worked full time, and I always felt disconnected from others. I anticipated my doctoral experience to be similar, however, I've come to a point where I can't see myself not having my cohort apart of my life, let alone finishing without them. In an intense program where friends and family can't truly understand what you're going through, on top of experiencing it during a pandemic, it's been such a breath of fresh air to be surrounded by a select few who are right by your side. We write together; we vent together; we laugh together; and even though it's not as often as we would like, we hang out together. My cohort was the best surprise that ever happened to me.

What are you most proud of and why? Accomplishments?

I was the proudest when I obtained my first publication last December in the Career Development Quarterly. Looking at the finished product after dedicated time and effort with my research team, was a feeling of joy I can't truly describe. As a first-generation student for every degree, it can be hard imagining yourself at the finish line, let alone what your role would look like in the next "marathon". Though I knew the impact I wanted to make on the community and the counseling profession, I still struggled visualizing it at times. Since that publication, I have since earned two additional publications in press and have several that I'm waiting for a decision. These accomplishments provide me affirmation that the work I'm doing matters, and they allow me to see myself as a researcher, as a future counselor educator, and as a voice for my community.

See Galaxina in Action:



Do you have any advice for others who may be interested in a similar graduate program?

You can't have a dream without chasing it, that's what makes it a dream. I was turned down from four other schools before I started my doctoral program, and my current program was the only one that invited me for a campus interview. Those are the parts of a dream that people don't like to talk about, but it's necessary to provide hope to others that may have a similar dream. If you're applying to programs, early in your journey find a mentor who is a faculty member and can walk you through the process of what programs look for in doctoral students, especially if you're a first-generation student. Once you get accepted and you start putting your dream into action, don't forget your "why", the part of your dream that not everyone will understand. Not everyone that comes with you at the start of your doctoral journey, makes it with you on the other side with you; that includes some you didn't anticipate such as family, friends, loved ones. But whatever you do, keeping chasing your dream, remember your "why", and keep the people that do support you close in your corner.

What are you currently up to? Research, projects, publications, work, etc.

Currently, I'm working on finishing data collection for my dissertation entitled, "Project PATH: A Career Psychoeducation Intervention". My dissertation entails providing a 3-module job search

workshop to groups of individuals that are struggling with unemployment and measures their change over time in job search knowledge, job search self-efficacy, employment hope, and group therapeutic factors. This initiative not only provides a much-needed service to the surrounding community during a difficult time for our workforce, but it also provides professional development for counselors-in-training who are facilitating the workshops. In addition, I'm also in the middle of job search and pursuing a faculty position, which has been an exciting process. Though both of these priorities have been a lot of hard work and many long days, I'm enjoying the process of learning a lot from my chairs and advisors and looking forward to both outcomes.