‘90 program grad William Turner helps create America’s first national healthcare program

‘00 grad Chris Habben new AAMFT President Elect

www.familytherapy.vt.edu
To apply to the program go to: https://gradapp.stl.vt.edu/pages/login.php

Fully completed applications must arrive by the first business day of January.

Assistantships & scholarships are available.

For more information, contact Scott Johnson, Ph.D., Director, Family Therapy Center, 840 University City Boulevard, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0515, 540-231-7201 (swj@vt.edu), or Anisa Zvonkovic, Ph.D., Department Head, Department of Human Development, 366 Wallace Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0416, 540-231-5434 (anisaz@vt.edu).
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the mission of your program?
Our aim is to graduate well rounded scholar-clinicians who will move the field ahead, either through research, teaching, practice, service, or aspects of all four. As a research and practice centered program, we believe graduates should be able to do all these things well, though they have a wide number of career choices once they have finished. No single choice is right for everyone.

What type of student are you looking for?
A wide range of types — students who are interested in developing their ideas in a variety of ways and who are motivated to explore new ideas about themselves, relationships, and psychotherapy with an equally wide range of other learners.

What are your philosophies about diversity?
Diversity, as Darwin noted, is the engine of the organic enterprise on earth; without it, life becomes unsustainable. But it is more than just skin color or gender, sexual orientation or age or disability, important as they are. In our program, we look for diversity of many different kinds, including diverse beliefs and values, life experiences and geography, along with ethnicity, nationality, culture, gender, sexual orientation, and age or ability. Ultimately, we are seeking a diversity that leads not only to social complexity and variety, but to diverse clinical and scholarly outcomes: new ideas and approaches that will help improve the way all human beings live their lives. A good part of the research conducted by our students and faculty over the years has been directed toward a variety of diversity related topics.

What is the ethnic diversity of your students and faculty?
For the past several years, our student body has fluctuated between 15 and 30 percent ethnic minorities, and included several students from other countries, as well as students from over 24 states with a wide variety of beliefs and values. (Our small numbers mean that very small changes in enrollment cause relatively large changes in percentages). Our faculty are half female, half male, and include African American and Native American heritage members.

What kind of students apply to your program?
We typically attract candidates from COAMFTE accredited MFT masters programs and other mental health curricula with high GPAs and above average GREs who are committed to their own growth as therapists and scholars, and to the growth of the field. Their GPAs have tended to average about 3.8 on a 4.0 scale; their GRE verbal and quantitative scores have been averaging about 1050. Many students are accepted, however, whose numbers are well above, or occasionally below these norms.

What master's courses and clinical experience should I have had?
6 hours of family therapy theory, 9 hours of additional clinical coursework (not including practica), 6 hours of family studies or human development courses, 3 hours of ethics, 3 hours of assessment/psychopathology, 3 hours of research methods or statistics, 3 hours of electives, and 500 hours of supervised clinical practice, preferably under a licensed family therapist or Approved Supervisor.

How many students do you usually accept, and what kind of support do you offer?
We typically accept about six students per year. Historically, all program students seeking assistantships have received at least half time (ten hours) support. For the past several years we have been able to support nearly all program students at the level they have requested. (Students have received the number of hours they asked for.) Assistantships remit all or part tuition, depending on the hours the assistantship carries. A ten hour assistantship remits half of the cost of tuition; a fifteen hour remits three-quarters; a twenty hour assistantship (full support) remits full tuition. Students receiving ten hour or greater assistantships pay in-state tuition.

Is there a standard date by which new students offered assistantships by any MFT doctoral program must accept them? Yes. For any MFT program in a university that belongs to of the Council of Graduate Schools, which is nearly all of them, a student offered financial support has until April 15th to decide whether to accept it.

How long does it take to complete the program?
Students have taken as few as 3 years and as long as 10 to complete the program. The advertised time is seven years.

What kinds of careers do your graduates have?
Our graduates have careers that span the range of teaching and the helping professions, and sometimes include a few in entirely different fields. They have chosen positions as far away as Australia and as close to home as Blacksburg. About half our graduates have gone into clinical academic positions, while the rest have gone into private practice, agency work, or medical clinics and hospitals.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the mission of your program?
The Virginia Tech Marriage and Family Therapy Ph.D. Program, in the Department of Human Development, is the oldest continuously accredited MFT doctoral program in the nation, attracting students from across the country and around the world. Students, faculty, and graduates have singular records of achievement, winning prestigious honors, holding important positions, and publishing some of the most respected articles in the field.

William Turner, Betts Chair of Counseling at Vanderbilt University, and Chris Habben, Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy at Friends University, featured on our cover, are just two of our program’s most accomplished alumni.

William worked as a senior health policy aide to then-Senator Barack Obama, helping lay the foundations for the Affordable Care Act while serving as a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow in Washington. Asked to stay on in the first Obama administration, he elected to return to academia.

Chris has been a professor of family therapy for many years, as well as serving in the Kansas AAMFT division, and previously serving on the AAMFT Board of Directors. Chris is the second program graduate and third program member to be voted to AAMFT’s presidency, following current program director Scott Johnson, AAMFT President 2007-2008, and former Clinical Training Director Anna Beth Benningfield, who held the AAMFT presidency – twice – in 1991-92, and 2000-2001.

Assistant Professor Erika Grafsky (right) with 2nd year student Jamie West
FACULTY

Our faculty have included distinguished figures in the profession, including two winners of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Outstanding Contribution to MFT Award and two former AAMFT Presidents.

Scott Johnson, PhD, Associate Professor and Program Director; Senior Instructor, Virginia Tech-Carilion School of Medicine. Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor, AAMFT. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Former Treasurer and former President, AAMFT. Humor & Politics Editor, Journal of Feminist Family Therapy. Led international MFT delegation to universities and clinics in Beijing and Guizhou, China. Many articles in, among others, Family Process, Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, Contemporary Family Therapy, the Boston Globe, & the New York Times.

Megan Dolbin-MacNab, PhD, Clinical Training Director and Associate Professor. Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor, AAMFT. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Certificate of Teaching Excellence & CLAHS Graduate Advising awards. National Institute on Aging Summer Research Fellow. Reviews Editor, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. Numerous articles and chapters in Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, Family Relations, and many others.

Erika Grafsky, PhD, Internship Coordinator and Assistant Professor. Pre-clinical Fellow, AAMFT. Over twenty refereed articles in top-flight journals such as Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, AIDS Education & Prevention, and Children & Youth Services Review. $54,000 dissertation grant from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. 2010 NCFR New Professional Award.

Scott Johnson, PhD, Associate Professor and Program Director; Senior Instructor, Virginia Tech-Carilion School of Medicine. Clinical Fellow and Approved Supervisor, AAMFT. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. Former Treasurer and former President, AAMFT. Humor & Politics Editor, Journal of Feminist Family Therapy. Led international MFT delegation to universities and clinics in Beijing and Guizhou, China. Many articles in, among others, Family Process, Journal of Marital & Family Therapy, Contemporary Family Therapy, the Boston Globe, & the New York Times.

Fred Piercy, PhD, Professor. Clinical Fellow, Approved Supervisor, and Fellow, AAMFT. Editor, Journal of Marital & Family Therapy; numerous editorial boards. Former Board Member, AAMFT. Former Chair, Commission on Accreditation for Marriage & Family Therapy Education. AAMFT Training Award, Outstanding Contribution to Marriage & Family Therapy Award, and AFTA Lifetime Achievement Award. Over two hundred articles in scholarly journals and popular periodicals, and many books and chapters.

MILESTONES

To date, we have over 135 graduates. Since 1982, our graduation rate is 80%. In addition, 90% of our minority students have graduated.

We have consistently recruited students from across the U.S. and from other countries, including India, Iran, Columbia, Russia, and China. U.S. students have come from at least 24 different states.

We offer excellent facilities in our off-campus clinic and training center, with practicum student office, therapy, and classroom space, and a digital video system.

www.familytherapy.vt.edu
Assistantships & Fellowships

For the last two decades, every student who has sought an assistantship has received one.

Currently, all active students have received the number of assistantship hours they requested.

Program students have also won prestigious University scholarships and fellowships.

Students have assistantship duties in a variety of settings, including classroom teaching and support, research, and administration.

Cunningham Scholar and '09 graduate Reece Nielson

Clockwise from upper left: Ryan Earl, Cunningham Fellow, Sarah Steelman, Dean’s Diversity Fellow, Jamie West, AAMFT SAMHSA Minority Fellow, Ruoxi Chen, ‘13, AAMFT Dissertation Award Winner

A Lifetime of Achievement

Fred Piercy, American Family Therapy Academy Lifetime Achievement Award, AAMFT Outstanding Contribution to Marriage and Family Therapy Award, National Council on Family Relations Kathleen Briggs Mentoring Award, and Editor, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy

Fred with 1st year student Ruvi Tsokodayi
**OUR STUDENTS**

Our students have ranged from new master’s graduates to practitioners with decades of experience, and have also included people embarking on new careers. They have come from all cultures, creeds and backgrounds, and worked together in support and harmony.

Their interests have ranged from spirituality in therapy to ethnic identity, art and family therapy, gender issues, medical family therapy, sports and adventure based interventions, marital enrichment, business consultation, working with children, sexual orientation, and the therapist’s use of self, to name only a very few.

Our task has been to help bring their ideas to life, develop their lives to the fullest, and help them influence the larger world.

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**URSE & CLINICAL WORK**

**Curriculum**

- Advanced Systems Theory
- Advanced Traditional Models
- Advanced Experiential Models
- Advanced Contemporary Models
- Advanced Professional Seminar
- Advanced Diagnosis & Assessment
- Marriage & Family Therapy Research
- Qualitative & Quantitative Research
- Research & Dissertation
- Clinical Practicum (200 hours)
- Clinical Internship (500 Hours; 9-12 months off campus)

Students receive regular group and individual supervision in accordance with AAMFT standards. They work with clients from a wide variety of cultures, incomes, sexual orientations, and constellations, drawn in a radius from eastern West Virginia to the North Carolina border. In their third year, students serve a 9 to 12 month internship. Past interns have worked at the Houston-Galveston Institute with Harlene Anderson, Ottawa Civic Hospital with Susan Johnson, the University of Chicago under John Rolland, the University of Oregon under Deanna Linville, and numerous other important agencies across the U.S. and Canada.

Students need a total of 1,000 clinical hours and 200 hours of supervision to graduate. Up to half of these hours may be transferred from their master’s programs if they meet certain criteria. Students from non-AAMFT accredited master’s programs may need some additional classes.

Depending on their master’s work, students may qualify to take the MFT licensure exam in some states on or shortly after graduation. Students seeking Virginia licensure may need limited additional coursework.