Alumni Profile – Zach Cooper

GREENVILLE, N.C. (Feb. 3, 2016) — Zach Cooper, a 2011 and ‘14 alumnus of East Carolina University said his favorite memories of his time at ECU were exploring a new campus, meeting others and experiencing the feeling of having the whole world ahead of him.

Cooper received two degrees from the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in political science in 2011, and his Master of Arts degree in international studies in 2014. In addition, he received a graduate certificate in security studies. He credits ECU faculty for helping prepare him for his current career.

“The professors are often not career educators and bring ‘real-life’ experiences to the classroom to better prepare students for what to expect,” said Cooper.

Currently a resident of Peshawar, Pakistan, Cooper serves as a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. In this position, Cooper implements and coordinates U.S. foreign policy objectives abroad concerning policy and military interests of the U.S. government. He liaises with local governments to ensure treaty and agreement standards are met, and he negotiates terms of government deals concerning military cooperatives.

In hopes of providing some sage advise to current ECU students, Cooper said that students should “meet with professor in office hours to get the scoop on what the field or industry you’re interested in is really like, and take a break from studying to interact with people and develop your people skills. Beyond being capable, employers look for people that work well with the people in the office.”

In his free time, Cooper likes to travel as much as possible, even if only to nearby towns.

“Getting out of my comfort zone has become my adrenaline rush and what I seek out,” said Cooper. “On a more daily basis, [I] try to stay in shape and cook more.”

Traveling overseas, literally exploring the world ahead of him, is one accomplishment Cooper said he most values from his life.

“I learned more about myself and what I want in life during my time struggling to navigate cities in foreign languages, staying in hostels and making last minute plans to go to a new city on a moments notice, with people I didn’t know, than in any classroom,” said Cooper. “The lows and highs of this travel are invaluable to me and redefined my perspective.”

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