

**Dr. Derick Strode**  
**B.A. English, Literature, 2003**  
**M.A. English, 2012**

*By Sarah K. Miller & Madelyn Chambers*

**Assistant Director of Academic  
Services,  
The Gatton Academy**

*"Our direction upon graduation is not clear,  
but we land in great places."*



Dr. Derick Strode graduated from Western Kentucky University in 2003 with his bachelor's degree in Literature, and he obtained his master's degree in English from WKU in 2012. He also completed his Doctor of Education degree at WKU in 2016. Currently, Strode is the Assistant Director of Academic Services at [The Gatton Academy](#), a two-year residential STEM school for gifted high school juniors and seniors located in WKU's Florence Schneider Hall.

Since obtaining his first degree, Strode has held three different positions on WKU's campus. Working for the university, Strode toured Kentucky as an Admissions Counselor, then worked as an International Student Advisor from 2007-2008. "I worked to orient international students to WKU and American academic life, put on international themed programs on campus, and handled necessary immigration documents for the students," said Strode.

Since 2008, Strode has worked at The Gatton Academy as Assistant Director of Academic Services. "My role here involves working with students above and beyond their curriculum in academic pursuits," said Strode. "We have robust programs in student research, study abroad, summer internships, cultural language study, and scholarships. I work with our students on all of these fronts. Among the fun things I do, I plan a literature study abroad program each summer with WKU English faculty."

Strode's time in the English department helped him develop the skills he needed for his position leading academics at The Gatton Academy. "My English degrees shaped me to think differently," said Strode. "I use my English degrees every day as I work with students, teaching them how best to communicate their ideas and experiences in

writing as they apply for scholarships and internships. I help students articulate their experiences in ways that tell micro-stories, are informative, and interesting.”

Strode is married to fellow WKU English department alum Cameron Carr-Calvert, who graduated with an MA in English in 2013. “We have one dog, one cat, and a happy home,” said Strode.

Strode’s advice to current students is to appreciate every experience in their undergraduate years. “Enjoy the days in Cherry Hall,” said Strode. “How fun it is to be an English major! Our direction upon graduation is not clear, but we land in great places. English majors must understand that we can tackle many, many jobs, and we are great fits to create and lead an array of interesting organizations.”

