Department Spotlight: Makinzie Clark

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"I want to be a game-changer, an ally, a cheerleader for the underdog, a safe space, and someone who empowers students to start their own life journey with confidence." - Makinzie Clark

Makinzie Clark is a graduate of the Utah State University Professional School Counselor Program with a master’s degree in education in psychology. Makinzie received her bachelor’s degree from USU in communication studies in 2017. She knew early as an undergraduate that she was interested in pursuing a career as a school counselor and found the program at Utah State to be a natural next step. Makinzie now works at Logan High School as the college and career specialist.

Why did you decide to pursue a degree in school counseling?

My transition from high school to college was such an exciting time in my life. I became passionate about the idea that higher education is a gateway to personal and professional growth. I knew that I wanted to be in a profession where I was working with people and making a difference in their lives. I also wanted to ensure I had a work-life balance that could protect me from compassion fatigue or burn out.

What were your future goals when you started the program? How do those compare to your current aspirations?

When I started the program, I wanted to be a high school counselor. That is still my goal, but I feel like that has been deepened. I want to be a game-changer, an ally, a cheerleader for the underdog, a safe space, and someone who empowers students to start their life journey with confidence. I have also been fortunate to have had TA experiences in this program. Perhaps, years down the road, I will be able to pass the torch through counselor education.

What advice do you have for other students in the professional school counseling program?

First, I would advise students in the program to prioritize learning and personal application over worrying about grades. If you truly focus on your growth and learning as a future counselor, your grade is going to be a natural reflection of that. Intention can impact everything!

Second, I would advise you to transition to working in a school as soon as you possibly can. Being in a school gives a framework to connect all of your learning into.

What is the most important thing you learned in the professional school counseling program?

I have learned that the most important thing is who I am becoming. I can have expertise up to my ears, but students will only remember how they felt around me, that I really listened and was there for them, that I encouraged them and helped them feel hopeful for their future. I subscribe to Carl Rogers’ school of thought, that my unconditional positive regard for the student helps create the environment needed for their growth. That means I’ve got a lifelong process ahead of me: becoming my best self for my students.