

MEET THE FELLOW

BRETT SMITH



WHAT DREW YOU TO VIRGINIA TECH? TO YOUR FIELD OF STUDY?

I applied early to VT and received acceptance before I even had the chance to consider another school. Montgomery County has always been home and I love the area.

This is a great school with a relevant major for my career interests. Sometime in middle school I figured out money is what drives the world. I thought I wanted to be some big-time investment banker on Wall Street. Come to find out, no matter how much money you make, you cannot spend it if you are working 100 hours a week!

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO ABOUT THIS FELLOWSHIP?

I hope to gain a broad understanding of what it takes to operate a university from a financial standpoint. It's intriguing to see the different intricate parts that help VT operate. And I like the idea of helping support the institution that helped me become the finance professional I am today.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR HOBBIES?

On any given weekend, there is an 80% chance you'll find me on a lake with my fishing pole. Generally, I enjoy catfishing at night, though I'd consider myself a multispecies fisherman. I also have built my own PC and enjoy playing games with friends online. I also enjoy hiking with my fiancée and our dog during the spring and fall.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES OR STRENGTHS YOU BRING?

I would say my desire to do well and my ability to adapt. Anytime I go about doing anything, I try to make sure that I do it to the best of my abilities. I double check my work and ensure that I follow directions. If there is something I am not sure about, I always am sure to ask. My ability to adapt ensures that I am never close minded about the way I do things. If someone shows me a better way to do something, I am willing and able to change my practices. I always enjoy finding the most efficient and accurate way of performing tasks.



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THREE OF THE GO-TO APPS ON YOUR PHONE?

Google, TikTok, & Youtube

ANY PETS?

My fiancée and I have a dog and cat. Aspen is a husky and is definitely spoiled rotten. Luna is a fluffy, cream-colored cat that thinks she needs to eat eight times a day.

WHEN YOU WERE A KID, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP?

An architect.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE REMEMBERED?

Someone who is kind and level-headed.

FIRST JOB?

Cashier at Wade's in Christiansburg. It definitely made me take a different perspective on customer service. In any given day you can meet the nicest or most hateful person in the same hour.

SOMETHING OUTSIDE WORK YOU ARE REALLY PASSIONATE ABOUT?

The environment. I love the outdoors and hate to see people abusing it. I try my best to leave no trace and always try to pick up trash as I am outdoors.

WHAT IS ONE...

CHORE YOU ENJOY?

I enjoy mowing grass early in the morning while it is still cool. The smell of fresh-cut grass is something that is hard to beat. It is relaxing to zone out and focus on just making your yard look nice.

OF YOUR PHOBIAS?

Needles—I don't know what it is about them that gets me so worked up. I tell myself again and again that it's an irrational fear, but I always get queasy.

PLACE YOU'D LIKE TO TRAVEL?

I'd love to visit Europe one day. I have always imagined doing a month or so long tour around all the different countries.

GOOD PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE RECEIVED?

I'm very big on not getting stuck on things. Whether you are sad or mad, it doesn't help to sit around and not do anything. It's better to let it go and move on to more productive things.

PET PEEVE?

When someone does not use their turn signal.

THING YOU'D LIKE TO LEARN?

How to fly a plane. I have always joked and said that I would get my pilot license one day. I think it stems from my desire to travel. Who knows, maybe I will one day.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE...

SPOT ON CAMPUS?

I am sure it's a common theme but I have to say the Duck Pond. I was a commuter student and enjoyed walking by the pond every day. It was nice to watch the wildlife and take a moment to clear your mind when walking to class.

BREAKFAST CEREAL?

Honey Bunches of Oats

FLAVOR OF ICE CREAM?

I'm not too picky—maybe cookies and cream or chocolate.

HOLIDAY?

New Year's. It is nice to celebrate the close of a year and reminisce about all that happened. Also—it is my birthday.

MOVIE OR BOOK?

It's stereotypical but I have to say *Harry Potter*. The series is the last set of books I remember reading and not being able to stop.

MUSIC?

I don't really have a favorite type of music. I am really bad at remembering song titles and artists. When I do listen, it is typically whatever I come across first on the radio that isn't an ad.

FOOD OR BEVERAGE YOU CANNOT GO WITHOUT?

Sweet tea.

PLACE YOU'VE VISITED?

A group of friends and I visited Montreal for our senior trip after graduating high school. It seemed just close enough to home that I didn't feel in a completely different world, but far enough away that it felt like I was exploring something different than what I was used to. My favorite place was called Café Conca d'Oro—I am yet to find a cold brew that tastes as good as theirs.