

Alumni Profile

Christopher Cummiskey MPH Class of 2008

Survey Statistician, RTI International

MPH, Biostatistics, UNC-Chapel Hill, 2008

BS, Chemistry, UNC-Chapel Hill, 2002

Career Highlights

- Mozambique Data Capacity Gap Study
- South Sudan Military (SPLA) HIV/AIDS Surveillance Study
- Nigerian Education Data Survey
- Ghana National Education Assessment



Describe your current position.

I work for RTI International in the Washington, DC office as a lead statistician for international health and education surveys. I am part of a wonderful team of experts who bring their own expertise to the project (their passion for their work is contagious). I plan the study's sample methodology, draw the sample, conduct data quality checks during data collection, process and analyze the data, and coauthor the final report. I travel to Africa about 5-6 times a year to meet with stakeholders, conduct short courses in various statistical topics, and to disseminate the project results.

Discuss your relationship with the faculty during the program or after.

The UNC-Bios faculty and staff carry an intangible quality that ranking systems cannot quantify. Professors like Gary Koch and Amy Herring would drop everything and help me out whenever I needed it. I did not even take their classes. Mike Hudgens tore it up on the soccer pitch with us every year. Woody Chambless was like a statistical father to me. Lisa LaVange was like a statistical mother and got me my current job. Then you add Melissa and Veronica into the mix; you kidding me? The number of faculty and staff who care about their students more than their own research is the number one selling point of the BIOS programs.

What has UNC meant to your career?

UNC equipped me with the theoretical (via course work) and practical (via GRA) tools which have allowed me to do what I enjoy: travel, teach, learn, and most of all, work with interesting people and data; and I get paid for it.

Why did you choose UNC?

I was going to attend UCLA for graduate school but Melissa called me and offered me a GRA position so how could I say no? Again, if I knew the UNC faculty, staff and classmates had that intangible quality; I would have never considered another school.



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