



MEDIA RELEASE

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Nathan Cook gains full-time employment in QLD before graduation

GUC student Nathan Cook, who will graduate in April with a CQUniversity Bachelor of Learning Management (Primary), has been snapped up by Burpengary State School in sunny Queensland to start his professional career as an educator teaching in a Year 6 classroom. Having just returned from his first school camp on the Gold Coast we caught up with Nathan and asked him about his GUC experience and his new adventure.

What was your experience at GUC and how do you think it has benefitted you?

"Studying at GUC was unlike any other university experience. The small class sizes coupled with the local experts really creates a sense of family and trust, both academic and personal, which is integral in a country town environment. You really get a sense that the staff at GUC care about you and your classmates are all in the same boat as you. You bond very quickly and I feel like many of the people I have shared my university experience with either in my class, in a different year, or in a different course entirely, shall remain my friends and colleagues for years to come. This trust in each other and the staff really works in GUC's favour, creating a wonderful learning environment where students feel valued - which any teacher will tell you helps to maximise learning, engagement and achievement."

You are soon to graduate, how does this make you feel and think about this achievement and were there any obstacles along the way?

"Completing my degree has felt like one massive journey, and now that I've climbed that mountain I can look up past the clouds into the sky and see that there is so much more to explore and experience. And just like climbing a mountain, there were many hardships along the way. I remember after my first year I just wanted to throw in the towel and give up. After my second year, I felt like I had the potential to do this, but that I was nowhere near the level of any of my classmates. It was only during my final year that I really began to feel like I can actually do this. A big part of that was relying on the people around me and communicating my thoughts. It turns out, quite a few other people were feeling that way as well. Here we all are though, at the end of our degree!"

You've been snaffled up by a QLD state school! Did you have plans to work in another state when you were studying and how did this come about? What other ambitions might you have for your professional career as an educator?

"If someone had told me that I would be in a completely different state when I graduated, I wouldn't have believed them! It's not uncommon for graduate teachers to have to move out to remote locations for their first year of teaching, it's almost expected when you enter your degree. But to move to a completely different state was never a consideration for me at the beginning. It all came about during my last year of study. I had made many friends in Brisbane through various means and decided that it was time to spread my wings and experience more of what the world has to offer. I applied to various Queensland teaching bodies for all kinds of schools, had a few interviews, and was lucky enough to get the job at Burpengary. The staff have been really supportive of my move and I couldn't ask for a better team of teachers to be with."



Later on in my career I want to spread my wings even further and apply for the Commonwealth Teacher Exchange Programme, potentially moving to Canada or the UK to teach."

What advice would you give to current students at GUC or students in the mid-west who are thinking about doing university studies?

"Studying can feel impossible at times, but the trick is to be resilient and to always keep moving forward, no matter how small the steps may seem. Life will always get in the way in some capacity, whether it's a random event or you've just overcommitted yourself. Just keep moving forward and realise there's always more than one way to do things. I know people who have repeated units, switched to part-time, changed courses or straight up deferred. There are many different paths someone can travel to get to where they want to be, the trick is to just take that first step and continue stepping onwards after that. Even if sometimes it feels like you're stepping backward, you'll be all the wiser for it."

Anything else you would like to add?

"Never feel like your options are limited or you are bound to one path. There is always some backstreet, hidden path or dark alleyway you can take and there are always more destinations you can reach if you just go looking for them. I never expected to be working in a metropolitan area, let alone in another state when I graduated, yet here I am. The trick is to focus on what you want, but not neglect what's in your peripherals - you may miss out on something awesome that you never even knew was there."

Ends ...

Photo Credit: Tamara Haynes (GUC Education Administrator), Jenny Kessell (GUC Education Coordinator), Nathan Cook and Natalie Nelmes (GUC Director) – the day before Nathan set-off to QLD.