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Communications

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Through Teaching, Kara M. Finch, '05, Shares Her Passion for Helping Others

Kara M. Finch, '05, entered the human services field, because she saw the toll caregiving took on her grandmother. “My grandfather suffered with dementia for about 10 years before he passed,” she related. “I watched my grandmother care for him for years, and I also saw the difficulties that she experienced as an aging caregiver herself. I realized the lack of services available to our older adults and not only wanted to be able to help my grandmother, but also those in my community.”

Upon earning her associate’s degree in 2003, Finch began looking for a bachelor’s program. Her instructors at Stanly Community College (SCC) in Albemarle, N.C., suggested she look into Gardner-Webb University’s GOAL—The Degree Completion Program.

“I decided to go to GWU because of the flexibility of night classes and the ability to continue working full time while also going to school,” recalled Finch, who lives in Locust, N.C.. “Additionally, the human services program at Gardner Webb was highly recommended by my instructors at SCC.”

She valued the support and connection she received from her GWU professors. “It was encouraging to be taught by caring and compassionate individuals who truly wanted to see me succeed. Also, the ability to take classes close to home and continue to work was valuable to me.”



Kara Finch, seated left, poses with the Human Services Club and students at a fall festival event at Stanly Community College.

While work experience in the human services field is a valuable teacher, her Gardner-Webb professors provided the instruction she needed to become a better human services professional and ultimately to teach others. “Through hands-on opportunities, I learned how to effectively lead group sessions, how to manage crisis situations, and how to support individuals even when their beliefs and values are different from my own,” Finch noted.



Kara Finch, third from left, poses with leaders of the Human Services Club at Stanly Community College (SCC) when the group hosted the 2016 North Carolina Organization for Human Services (NCOHS) Conference on the SCC campus.

Above all, Gardner-Webb is a caring community, Finch added. “The connections I was able to build with my professors and fellow peers were very valuable to my success at GWU,” she affirmed. “I know that I succeeded at GWU because of the support and encouragement I received from the faculty, staff, and peers.”

Now, Finch is head of the Human Services program at SCC. “I manage the day-to-day operations of this program, supervise faculty and adjuncts, and provide instruction to our students,” she described. “What I really enjoy most is sharing my knowledge of the human services field and helping my students understand the importance of being compassionate human service professionals who are able to effectively assist and advocate for their clients.”

In 2019, Finch was named SCC Faculty of the Year. She is working towards a doctorate degree at Wingate University and earned her Master’s Degree in Gerontology from the University of North Carolina-Charlotte (UNCC). Finch serves as Board President for the North Carolina Organization for Human Services and is a member of the Local Interagency Children’s Council. She holds credentials for Human Services Board Certified Practitioner (HSBCP), Certified Crisis Prevention Institute Instructor, and Certified QPR (Suicide Prevention) Program Instructor.

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