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Office of University
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Heather Walker White ('02, '19) Gains Professional Direction for her Future



Heather Walker White, second from right, poses with other English teachers from her school, Gaffney (S.C.) High. From left are, Alice Austin, Mollie Vassey, Kristie Camp (English Department Chairperson), White, and Leslie Kaczmarczyk.

While completing her Master of Arts in Executive Leadership Studies (MELS) from Gardner-Webb University, Heather Walker White was recognized as a leader by her school district and the South Carolina Department of Education. The Mooresboro, N.C., resident was chosen to serve on the state's Performance Level Descriptor Committee for the End of Course assessment for English II.

White, a 2019 and 2002 GWU graduate, was recommended for the position by the Cherokee County (S.C.) School District. One of eight people asked to serve on the committee, White worked with other educators to develop performance levels to describe student mastery and command of English knowledge and skills in conjunction with the state's college and career ready ELA Standards.

An English teacher at Gaffney (S.C.) High School, White obtained her degree in English and secondary education from GWU and has been teaching in Cherokee County for 17 years. “I have been offered so many wonderful opportunities to learn, grow, and share my passion for literature, writing, reading and communication with so many students,” she affirmed.

She believes her years in the classroom were beneficial to the learning process in the master’s program. “I had the opportunity to share professional experiences with my peers and professors, offer solutions to problems where experience proved critical, and explore various facets of education that I had yet to experience,” White observed. “The MELS program and professors have opened my eyes to see a clearer perspective of today’s educational leaders and their roles. This experience has ignited a flame of passion for my own future leadership positions. I have never been so proud of myself, my accomplishments, and my professional direction as I am because of this experience.”

In her high school classroom, White strives to intertwine the art of language, writing, reading and communication with open discussions. She tells students about her accomplishments, as well as her failures. “I share with my students the power of words,” White asserted. “I share with them what make us human. I thrive for ‘teachable moments,’ and without them my heart would break. Life’s experiences are the most definable source of education and sharing those only further endorses my professional quest to make a positive educational impact on today’s youth.”

She’s grateful to her GWU undergraduate and graduate professors who taught her that every student has the ability to accomplish greatness, but hard work, dedication, and commitment will make dreams a reality. “As an undergraduate student, I was amazed by the small classes and the direct attention provided by the professors,” White reflected. “My memories of Gardner-Webb and its professors are ones of hard work, dedication, integrity and ownership. I am the proud product of the teaching of Dr. Gayle Bolt Price (dean of the graduate school who passed away in 2016). She taught several of my undergraduate classes. She was my university supervisor when I began my clinical experience, and most of all, one of my greatest teaching inspirations. Dr. Price often said, ‘don’t give me good, give me your best’ and 17 years later, I’m giving my own children and students those same words.”

[Learn more about the GWU School of Education’s Undergraduate and Graduate Programs.](#)



Heather Walker White, right, gave a presentation at South Carolina's Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) New Teacher Symposium with, from left, Marc Camp (Physical Education Teacher at Limestone-Central Elementary School in Gaffney, S.C.), and Kristie Camp (English Department Chairperson at Gaffney High School).