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### **Gardner-Webb Alumna Brings Paris to Western North Carolina**

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# Gardner-Webb Alumna Brings Paris to Western North Carolina

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Office of University  
Communications

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## *Emily M. Burrus '06 Shares Her Love of French Culture with High School Students*

Emily Burrus

Emily Burrus goes all out for spirit days at her high school.

Growing up in Haywood County, N.C., home to Folkmoot USA, North Carolina's International Folk Festival, Emily M. Burrus was introduced to cultures from around the world. From that early exposure, the 2006 alumna of Gardner-Webb University became connected to the French culture. Through a language program in the school system, she learned French from kindergarten through 11<sup>th</sup> grade. She also served as an official Folkmoot guide for a folk group from Dax, France, and they are still good friends.

"Thanks to my (almost) lifelong education in French, we communicated well in the beginning and much better after my French classes at Gardner-Webb," observed Burrus, a native of Waynesville, N.C. "In high school I was able to participate in an exchange program with a school in Nantes, France, and that started my travel bug and cemented my love of French culture."

When she graduated from GWU, she decided to take a break from education and moved to Winter Park, Colo. "After three years of working winter seasons and getting to travel the smaller towns in western France during the summers, I moved back home," she related. "I turned my career search over to prayer, and the job opportunity of French teacher became available."

She began as a substitute teacher in 2012, but on her second day was hired as a lateral entry teacher. "My French degree from Gardner-Webb was my starting point, and I took classes online to earn my teaching certificate," she explained. "It was a three-year process, and by the grace of God, I completed it. God's plan is always perfect, and I cannot praise Him enough for this profession I love."

In 2015, she was selected by the faculty of Pisgah High School in Canton, N.C., as the school's Teacher of the Year. She earned her Global Educator's Digital Badge by completing over 100 hours of professional development in global education and submitting a capstone project that was reviewed and approved by

Emily Burrus shows her GWU pride at her high school in Western North Carolina.

the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

She also works on the Global Connections planning committee that offers professional development and cross-curricular work sessions for Haywood County teachers. She has been a co-presenter for the Foreign Language Association of North Carolina and received the NCDPI sponsorship to attend the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages conference.

Her experiences at Gardner-Webb help her to bring the French culture to life for her students. “I was part of the Graduates in Executive Management (GEM) program and studied abroad at the University of Québec at Trois Rivières (UQTR),” she shared. “With GEM, we went to job fairs, had mentors in various fields of business and we witnessed the ins and outs of international businesses in Switzerland. Participating in UQTR’s immersive language program pushed me to use my skills beyond the classrooms at Gardner-Webb. I have used materials and mementos from both trips to enrich my lesson plans. I try to help my students see the connections I have made between all the background knowledge my professors gave me.”