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Communications

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Sam Vining of Tryon is Only North Carolina Recipient of James Madison Fellowship

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—An alumnus of Gardner-Webb University recently received a national honor given to one outstanding high school American

photo of Sam Vining

history teacher from each state. Sam Vining, a 2016 GWU graduate from Tryon, N.C., has been awarded the James Madison Fellowship. He will attend a summer institute at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and also receives a \$24,000 scholarship toward a master's degree.

“I am most excited about being able to network with educators across the nation who were also selected as fellow recipients,” Vining observed. “I’ve never been to Washington either, which will be a fun. This opportunity will help make me a better educator, because it will give me deeper insight into the craft of teaching while further cultivating my love for the discipline of history.”

Vining learned about the James Madison Fellowship from Donna Schronce, GWU instructor of geography and program coordinator for Secondary Social Studies Licensure. “As I was finishing up my student teaching, she encouraged me to apply,” Vining shared. “I wanted to go to the fellowship, because I felt like it was an incredible way for me to grow as a professional and to help improve my knowledge of content associated with American history. To be selected is a tremendous honor, and all credit is due to my professors, Dr. David Yelton, Dr. Joseph Moore, Ms. Schronce, and Dr. Timothy Vanderburg, my mentors, and my friends who helped to shape who I am today.”

Sam Vining in his classroom

Vining teaches ninth grade at Polk County High School in Columbus, N.C. His favorite part of being a teacher is connecting with his students and helping them understand why studying history is important. “I hope to give my students an appreciation for other people, regardless of their background,” Vining asserted. “I hope that students can begin to learn how complicated history is, and thus find appreciation for other people and their own historical backgrounds.”

The James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation was established by Congress in 1986 to enhance teaching about the U.S. Constitution in secondary schools. The Madison Fellowships were created to honor Madison's legacy and Madisonian principles by providing support for graduate study that focuses on the Constitution—its history and contemporary relevance to the practices and policies of democratic government. For more information, visit jamesmadison.gov.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.