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GWU Alumna Travels the State Promoting N.C. Ports in Wilmington and Morehead City

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Office of University
Communications

April 20, 2018

Bethany Welch '13 Manages Communications for Ports Authority

By Alice Byrd, '18, GWU Communications Intern

Photo of Bethany Welch

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Bethany Welch of Wilmington, N.C., used to tell other people's stories as a news producer for Spectrum News in Raleigh, N.C. Now, in pursuit of a different challenge, she focuses her energy on sharing many facets of just one story. A 2013 alumna of Gardner-Webb University, Welch is the communications manager for North Carolina State Ports Authority (N.C. Ports). The organization is the managing body for the ports in Wilmington and Morehead City, and promotes economic development across the state through the ports.

Over her five years working for Spectrum News, Welch dedicated most of her time in the studio producing, pitching, writing, and editing to create content for daily on-air programming. At N.C. Ports, she manages the internal and external affairs. She is responsible for local, state, and international media relations; online and social media communications; and relations with stakeholders and advocacy programs. "I love being able to share the story of North Carolina Ports to businesses and communities across the state," she says.

Welch frequently travels to speak at community events aimed to provide updates on N.C. Ports. This entails working with local, state, and international media partners to promote the latest developments at the Ports of Wilmington and Morehead City. "I'm constantly encountering situations I've never experienced before," she reflects. "Some might consider that a challenge, but I like to view it as a learning opportunity."

Welch's experience at Gardner-Webb provided her with a strong foundation in writing and communication that has allowed her to grow professionally and personally. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in broadcast journalism with a minor in public relations. "My English and literature courses improved my writing skills tremendously and encouraged me creatively to think outside the box," she asserts.

She chose to attend GWU, because she wanted a college where she could successfully pursue academics and athletics. “I visited Gardner-Webb and met with the Track and Field coaches, fellow student-athletes, professors and faculty members,” Welch relates. “I truly felt at home and could see myself blossoming at GWU.”

She originally intended to pursue a major in chemistry. However, during her sophomore year, she felt God was calling her down a different path. After taking a broadcast journalism class with some friends, Welch changed her major. “I am so thankful I had the courage to make that change – a tough decision made easier being surrounded by such supportive friends, teammates, coaches, professors and faculty members,” says Welch.

Actively involved on campus, Welch competed as a pole vaulter and a sprinter for the track and field team. She was a peer leader for First Year Programs, and she was a dedicated student who remembers an 8 a.m. Communication Law class with Dr. Joseph Webb among her favorites. “What stood out the most about this class was Dr. Webb’s unconventional approach to teaching,” she observes. “Dr. Webb was able to take a challenging course and make it fun and relatable to issues those working in communications face today.”

Looking back, Welch believes all the professors she had at GWU played a critical role in helping her to become the young professional she is today. “As a student, I enjoyed the connections I could make with my coaches, classmates, professors and faculty members,” she affirms. “You’re not going to receive that level of connection just anywhere. During my time at Gardner-Webb, I felt as if I really grew into who I was meant to be.”

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.

Two neo-Panamax cranes arrived recently at The Port of Wilmington. They are taller, have longer booms, and accommodate the loading and unloading needs of ultra-Panamax container vessels reaching the United States East Coast. The cranes’ arrival allows the Port of Wilmington to simultaneously service two ultra-Panamax vessels, creating new opportunities for both Port customers and the community at large.