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Gardner-Webb Professors Equip Alumna with Skills to be a Lifelong Learner

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Communications

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Hailey Spearman '09 Teaches High School English

By Chelsea Sydnor, '18, Intern for Communications

Hailey Spearman '09 knew from a young age that she wanted to be a teacher, even from playing school with her younger cousins as a child.

Gardner-Webb University's Department of English Language and Literature and the School of Education helped Spearman prepare for her career. "Dr. Shana Hartman, Dr. Jennifer Buckner, Dr. June Hobbs, Dr. Janet Land and the entire faculty led by example and provided opportunities for learning and reflection," Spearman assessed.

She said her professors taught her skills that have helped her become an effective educator and lifelong learner. "I learned the importance of professional development and networking, which ensure the incorporation of researched-based strategies in the classroom," she said. "I also learned the value of reflection and self-evaluation, which have helped me improve with each year of experience."

Meanwhile, Spearman viewed other professors as role models in educational techniques as well. She remembers American Century with Dr. Tony Eastman, professor emeritus of history, as her most difficult course, which taught her how to study properly. "He was a seasoned professor, with nearly 40 years of experience, and he knew how to handle a classroom," she said. "I have tried to adopt elements of his teaching style by sharpening my quick wit."

She was also inspired by her high school teacher, Amber Nichols, who obtained her Master of Arts in Education from GWU. Spearman believes Nichols provided a sense of family and community to students who had never experienced it. Following Nichols' example, Spearman tries to remind her students that someone cares about them and their accomplishments inside and outside of the classroom.



Gardner-Webb Alumna Hailey Spearman, left, believes it is important to support her students outside of the classroom. She stays in touch after they graduate. She attended this former student's graduation from Army Basic Combat Training.

Hailey Spearman often participates in school spirit days at Kings Mountain High School.

Spearman currently teaches English III, which emphasizes American Literature and Research Writing, at Kings Mountain (N.C.) High School. She has worked there since her student teaching term in 2009, and has also taught English II and IV. She is the head coach of the women's track and field team and the assistant coach of the indoor track and field team. She holds a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership, as well as one in Curriculum and Instruction from the American College of Education.

In the future, Spearman hopes to transition into an administrative position. "I currently hold my principal license, but haven't had the opportunity to put it to use yet," she said. Spearman also plans to pursue a doctorate in education.

Spearman recommends GWU wholeheartedly. "[The University] employs professors who are knowledgeable, experienced, and truly want what is best for their students," she said. "GWU takes pride in providing quality education with opportunities for further learning experiences, community involvement, and personal growth."