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Gardner-Webb Student Pursues Passion for Justice

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Office of University
Communications

October 16, 2017

Lauren Mahoney ('18) Served as Intern for the State Bureau of Investigation

By Mallory Moore '18, Intern for Communications

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— It started with a passion for justice. Gardner-Webb senior Lauren Mahoney from Rosman, N.C., always knew that she wanted to help people. “If someone has been victimized, I want to be able to do something about it,” she shared. Recently, Mahoney had the opportunity to pursue her interests through an internship with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) at its Western District Office. As an intern, Mahoney got to perform investigative work in various cases, from embezzlement and abuse to arson and homicide.

photo of Lauren Mahoney

The SBI is an assisting agency. While they have original jurisdiction over a few matters, they are usually called on by other agencies to help investigate specific cases. Each day, Mahoney would accompany various agents and actively help with the investigation process. She observed polygraph tests and autopsies, collected evidence at crime scenes, and aided in interviews. “They let me be right there in the middle of it,” Mahoney added. “I got to drive around with them all day like we were really on the job. It was very hands-on. I didn’t just stand there and watch.”

Mahoney found out about the SBI through her dad, David Mahoney, the current Sherriff of Transylvania County, N.C. As the daughter of a law enforcement officer, she was inspired to pursue a career in criminal justice but did not know which job she wanted specifically. She talked with a

As the daughter of a law enforcement officer, Lauren Mahoney was inspired to pursue a career in criminal justice. Her father, David Mahoney, is the current Sheriff of Transylvania County, N.C.

local SBI agent and a former intern to find out more about the program and grew confident that this would be a good fit for her. Mahoney was accepted after a competitive application process and knew that this was something she could see herself doing in the future. “I finally got that reassurance that this is what I want to do,” she asserted. “Having this internship was awesome because I got to see every aspect of it, from paperwork to interviewing suspects and everything in between.”

Mahoney is very active on the GWU campus with leadership roles in the Student Government Association, College Republicans, and Women's Ministry. She plans to double major in sociology and criminal justice administration, which was just added as a traditional undergraduate major this year. Mahoney had planned to minor in criminal justice and never imagined that it would be offered as a major during her time at GWU. One of her favorite things about GWU is the friendly and caring atmosphere. "The environment here is phenomenal," she stated. "The faculty and staff are involved in my life. They care about me and hold me accountable. Here, I matter and I can make a difference. That's the kind of school I want to be a part of." One way that she plans to make a difference before graduating is starting a criminal justice club for GWU students.

TV screenshot

Media coverage from WLOS TV of agents from the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation working a homicide case. Lauren Mahoney is in the red shirt.

After graduation, Mahoney plans on getting basic law enforcement training and then applying for a job with the SBI. Specifically, she hopes to investigate local human trafficking, an interest she discovered through GWU's student club, Release the Captives. Mahoney is very grateful for the internship and recommends similar programs to other students who are unsure if they are on the right career path. "This opportunity made a world of difference," she affirmed. "Because I went through this program, I know exactly what I'm walking into. I feel so confident that I'm making the right decision about my career."