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### Graphic Designer Gained Knowledge and Experience at GWU

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# Graphic Designer Gained Knowledge and Experience at GWU

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Office of University  
Communications

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## *Allison Drennan '13 Attributes Success to Support and Guidance of her Professors*

Allison Drennan '13 had no interest in taking art classes, but discovered her passion for graphic design as an editor

photo of Allison Drennan

for her high school yearbook. She enrolled at Gardner-Webb University to develop her talent and learn about the public relations field. “Coming in as a freshman at GWU, making wallpapers for my computer was about the extent of what I knew,” she revealed. “Through the communications department, I learned that graphic design is so much more than just making images look pretty together. It’s about creating a brand and a unique product for your audience. It’s about visual appeal—colors, fonts, photography and design. The designer that I am today was shaped by my experience at GWU.”

A native of Gastonia, N.C., Drennan recently accepted a position as communications coordinator with Gaston (N.C.) County Schools. “I am responsible for the student news that comes into the office and formatting it for web, social media and TV,” Drennan shared. “I am also serving as a graphic designer for school publications, which I’m very excited to be doing. In my free time, I serve as an executive assistant to a creative consultant in Hollywood, and I also do freelance graphic design.”

She attributes her success to the professors in the GWU Department of Communication & New Media. “I learned so much from Dr. Amanda Bridges, Dr. Joe Webb, Dr. Lisa Luedeman and Dr. Bob Carey,” Drennan reflected. “I am so thankful for the public relations professional and graphic designer they helped me become. I was fully prepared for an internship and a full-time job. I credit a lot of my copy editing skills to the PR classes I took with Dr. Luedeman. Also, I remember sitting in Dr. Bridges’ office, weighing important decisions about portfolios and jobs and other grown-up things I didn’t think I was ready to handle. But she believed in me and told me I could. And that was good enough for me.”

Because of the small class sizes at GWU, professors have the time to mentor students and answer questions. Students also develop lasting friendships. “When it comes to classes and to friends, you’re spending a lot of time with the same people,” Drennan explained. “The

friends that I made at Gardner-Webb continue to be lifelong friends as we go through the seasons and changes of life—job changes, weddings, babies, etc. Gardner-Webb is a place to learn, to love, to laugh and to grow.”

Drennan also appreciated opportunities to explore topics outside of her major, like Death and Dying in American Culture with Professor of English Dr. June Hobbs and acting with Kyrin Billinsky. “I learned so much in the death and dying class,” Drennan assessed. “We toured cemeteries, funeral homes and explored what death means to different cultures. I still get funny looks when I tell people about it, but I learned more about life in this class than I ever expected. The acting class with Kyrin Billinsky was an elective my sophomore year. While I had no plans to become an actor, the class was a lot of fun, and I learned some really great things from Kyrin.”

While she was at GWU, Drennan took her first international trip, traveling to Florence, Assisi and Rome, Italy, with the Department of Visual Arts. “The trip opened my eyes to the world in a way I had never seen it before,” she described. “Being in these cities steeped in history and seeing how people lived their lives was an amazing experience. We were in Rome the night Pope Francis was elected and we got to watch history in the making. I’ll never forget that feeling for the rest of my life.”