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### **GWU Alumna Follows Outstanding Example Set by Professors in the School of Education**

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# GWU Alumna Follows Outstanding Example Set by Professors in the School of Education

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Office of University  
Communications

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## Julie Stanley '17 Aspires to Help Pre-Service Teachers Develop Skills

Julie Stanley of Winston-Salem, N.C., taught elementary students for nearly 10 years.

Now, she's preparing to stand in front of a classroom of adults. A 2017 graduate of Gardner-Webb University with a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, Stanley was recently hired as a full-time instructor in the College of Education at East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.

"I wanted to enter higher education so that I can help develop skills in pre-service teachers," Stanley shared. "I want to shape teacher preparation programs at the university level so that there is a better bridge between theory learned in the college classroom and application in a real 21st-century school classroom."

When she decided to earn her doctorate, her first choice was Gardner-Webb, because she completed her master's there in 2008. "GWU's professors have been consistently supportive, challenging, and they are leaders in the field," Stanley observed. "As I looked into the structure of the doctoral program, I was certain that GWU was for me. Weekend and evening classes made working a full-time job and caring for my family possible while pursuing my doctorate. The level of support built into the program at GWU is unique. Other programs do not build the dissertation component into the program to ensure success like Gardner-Webb."

As she prepares to teach college students, Stanley will follow the example of her professors. They encouraged her when she doubted her abilities and demonstrated best practices. "When I think of the kind of professor I want to be, I think of GWU professors, who are true life-long learners and leaders in education," she described. "They are connected and invested in public education. Every professor I had was knowledgeable about current, relevant issues and tackled these issues head on in class. In other settings, I have experienced a lot of lectures and 'sit and get' teaching. At GWU, classes prepared me to be the type of professor that genuinely motivates, engages, and supports students."

Stanley also appreciated how the courses in the program were designed to prepare her for the next phase of her career. “As a classroom teacher, I entered the program with a narrow ability to consider how policy and theory impact myself and others,” she advised. “Evidences (tasks assigned in the coursework) led me away from a confined way of thinking about education as it related to me, my students, and what happens in my own classroom. I began to see things in a much different light. To be a leader in education, my thinking had to shift to a wider picture, considering the district, state, and national implications.”