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Office of University
Communications

August 15, 2016

Katrissa Fisher ('17) Uses Knowledge to Encourage High School Students to Graduate

Urged by her principal to pursue an administrative degree, Katrissa Fisher ('17) of Winterville, N.C., decided to attend an information session about Gardner-Webb University.

“After a discussion with the Gardner-Webb rep, I knew I wanted to attend,” Fisher reflected. “I chose the Master of Arts in Executive Leadership Studies program, because I was executing administrative duties as part of my job responsibilities, but I did not have the credentials. After completing the Master of Arts, I chose the Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, because I felt it was the missing component of my educational knowledge.”

Fisher has been a graduation coach at South Central High School in the Pitt County (N.C.) School System for seven years. Before that, she taught middle school students for 15 years. She believes the requirements of the GWU master’s and doctoral programs have helped her grow into an effective leader. “The readings and assignments allow candidates to become familiar with current research and then to actually put that research into practice,” she asserted. “I have strengthened my leadership capabilities from a plethora of newly obtained knowledge about implementing change, adult learning theory, instructional practices, and assessments, just to name a few topics. Most importantly, I have developed the confidence to pose questions about my concerns as a graduation coach to administrators, district level staff, and even people at the state level.”

She also feels comfortable collecting and analyzing data and using it to identify strengths and gaps. “I know how to conduct research to determine which best practices can address the gaps,” Fisher affirmed. “I have also learned how to devise action plans, implement them, and evaluate them for effectiveness. My studies helped me understand how to analyze student data and address student needs. My job focuses a lot on building relationships with families and students, and my studies showed me how those relationships promote overall student improvement.”