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Ilari Pass ('18) Aspires to Teach English at a Community College

When she was looking for master's programs, Ilari Pass ('18) of Greensboro, N.C., stumbled across the Master of Arts in English online program at Gardner-Webb University.

On Academic Awards Day, online student Ilari Pass ('18) and her son, Ben, met her professors for the first time. "I was greeted with open arms by my professors – Dr. Janet Land, Dr. Jennifer Buckner, and Dr. Cheryl Duffus."

"I'm so glad that I did. A challenging new chapter in my life began when I decided to attend Gardner-Webb," she assessed. "I was elated to find an English graduate program that is offered completely online. I like the flexibility of getting my assignments done at home, which allows me to focus on important things in my life—family and work."

She further appreciates the quick responses from professors and the ability to collaborate with other students in the class. "My instructors have been wonderful in responding to my questions and have been very supportive," she affirmed. "The whole experience has been great. Interacting with my fellow cohort has been a vital aspect of this program. Not only is this a great way of getting to know one another's goals and dreams, but we work as a team to help and support each other in the process of successfully completing a course."

Pass, who is employed by the U.S. Postal Service, has a bachelor's degree from Guilford College in Greensboro. With a master's degree, she hopes to teach English at a community college. Her inspiration is a former professor who went the extra mile for his students and taught them critical-thinking skills.

Her GWU professors have also encouraged and fostered her goals. "I have learned so much from all of my classes and professors, but two of the most memorable classes are Literary Theory taught by Dr. Janet Land, and The Teaching of Writing taught by Dr. Shana Hartman. "In Dr. Land's class, thinking analytically and critically took on a whole new meaning to 'thinking outside the box,'" she praised. "I had a moment during the semester where I faltered, but she never gave up on me, and my confidence has been growing ever since."

Pass believes that through Dr. Hartman's teaching, she has become a better writer and also learned strategies to teach writing. Three of her poems were chosen for publication in a Greensboro literary magazine. "I had to closely examine what writing truly means and why we write by exploring several topics through multimodal composition," she observed. "The experience I've gained with the use of different modalities is something I certainly wish to implement in my future writing classroom. I have learned a lot about the competitiveness of different disciplines within English studies in colleges and universities. I am forever grateful for these experiences."