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GWU School of Education Helps Student Connect with Local School System

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Communications

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Sarah Scoggins ('16) Develops Skills Through Classroom Experiences

After one visit to the Gardner-Webb University campus, Sarah C. Scoggins of Kings Mountain, N.C., knew where she would spend her college years.

“My older brother, Allen Scoggins, also attended Gardner-Webb. The first time I visited him was the time I determined this place would become home,” she explained. “I loved the small campus and the sense of family every time I visited. I actually did not apply to any other universities.”

She also wanted to go to Gardner-Webb because her goal was to teach school in Cleveland County (N.C.) Schools, and the University has a strong connection with the school system. Through the GWU program, she had opportunities to make contacts by volunteering, tutoring, assisting teachers and proctoring end-of-grade tests. “Every time I volunteered or observed at a school, I made myself and my name evident,” she observed. “I also had countless experiences in the classroom environment, which prepared me for reality.”

Through all of her experiences, she formed her own personal teaching philosophy: “If they are not learning the way we are teaching, then we should be teaching the way they learn.”

The GWU School of Education helped her achieve her goal of teaching in Cleveland County. She is an eighth-grade English teacher at the middle school where she did her student teaching. “I believe that getting a job at the same school speaks for the preparation Gardner-Webb provided,” Scoggins affirmed. “Gardner-Webb’s education program is the perfect amount of challenges combined with the perfect amount of preparation. The professors in this program are here to do three things: Help you determine if teaching is your calling; push you to learn everything you can about being an influential teacher; and watch you flourish into the teacher you desire to become.”

Two professors who influenced her the most were Dr. Jason Parker and Dr. Kelly Clark. Parker helped her create a four-year plan, and he is always available to answer questions and offer guidance. Clark is sensitive to students’ needs.

“I will never forget the day that I ran into her while bawling my eyes out about the horrible day I had experienced, and without words, she embraced me in a firm hug,” Scoggins said. “She may not remember this moment, but I do. It was that hug that pushed me through the day and let me know that I would be okay. I hope to be half of the teacher that these two people have been to me. I cannot put into words how much they have truly impacted my life.”