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### Online Classes Prepare Student for Career in Education

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# Online Classes Prepare Student for Career in Education

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Office of University  
Communications

January 6, 2016

## *Through DCP, Nathan Swaim ('16) Has Made Connections to Professionals in his County*

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Nathan Swaim ('16) of Traphill, N.C., attends classes at Gardner-Webb University without having to leave home.

A member of the first fully online elementary education Degree Completion Program (DCP) class, Swaim is confident he is ready to begin student teaching. Not only has he learned teaching methods through the online program, he has also acquired self-discipline and a better appreciation of history.

“To be able to complete these online classes you have to work ahead as much as you can. Don’t take free time for granted. Your professors expect just as much from you as their seated classes,” he offered. “They have really been great at letting us explore all methods of teaching and helping us expand those in any way possible. Dr. Jason Parker has also inspired me with the social studies methods class to go out and experience history more. Because of that I have been traveling to historic sites pretty much weekly since the start of the semester.”

The online instruction is complemented with visits to area schools.

“Gardner-Webb has connected me to multiple teachers and principals across the county where I want to work someday. When I enter a school to observe for my classes or I’m just watching the kids in my family, my thoughts go to the lessons that I have learned in my class,” he observed. “I am constantly thinking about ways to create a safe learning environment for kids so that they can learn to the best of their ability.”

His immediate goal is to teach, but graduate school is a possibility.

“I may decide to move up into administration at some point,” he said. “I have also tossed around the idea of getting my master’s in instructional technology. I have heard that GWU is offering this degree soon, and I’m thinking about being one of the first to sign up.”

Swaim was familiar with GWU, because a family member is an alum. He also heard about the University from teachers who had received their degrees from GWU, and they were emphatic about how GWU prepared them as educators. When he decided to go back to school after obtaining an associate’s degree in database management, he didn’t think of applying anywhere else.

Although he is more than two hours away from the GWU campus, he has visited twice and is a member of two campus groups, Student North Carolina Association of Educators and Kappa Delta Pi, the international honor society in the field of education.

He recommends the online DCP program, because the teachers are readily accessible and have a desire for students to succeed.

“All of these teachers deserve special rewards for the amount of emails, texts, and calls they receive daily from students like me,” he said. “My professors have done a great job letting us know what is expected of teachers and what is expected of us.”