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Office of University
Communications

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Kevin Clary ('15) Directing Bands at Lincolnton Middle School

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – As a music education major, Kevin Clary ('15) of Gaffney, S.C., has had ample opportunities to perform and refine his own talent while learning how to teach future musicians.

“I was in the GWU Symphonic Band and then joined the orchestra,” Clary said. “I was a member of the GWU trumpet ensemble, and during my time with that group we advanced to the semi-final round of the National Trumpet Competition twice. I was a member of the GWU Marching Band and served as the drum major. I was also a member of the GWU Jazz Collective, which was my favorite group.”

He knew about GWU because his mother worked in admissions, but his reason for choosing the University was more for the outstanding faculty.

“I was planning on being a trumpet major, and GWU’s trumpet professor, Tim Hudson, is truly world class,” he explained. “The combination of those two factors made the decision relatively easy.”

As he began taking all the classes required as part of the liberal arts core, Clary discovered his education was providing him a foundation to become a lifelong learner.

“Gardner-Webb students are exposed to professors with a broad range of personalities, teaching styles as well as personal beliefs, and I think this is a very good thing,” he observed. “True knowledge and the power to shape one’s own ideas and opinions comes from the willingness to expose one’s self to the ideas and opinions of others, and that opportunity is prevalent at Gardner-Webb.”

One professor who has influenced him the most has been Assistant Professor of History Dr. Joseph Moore.

“He was the first history teacher I ever had who made history feel like a relevant chain of events that shaped the global culture in which we live today, rather than just a random collection of dates and battles listed in a dusty textbook,” Clary said. “He was the first professor who encouraged me to question my own ideas about the world, and to constantly leave my opinions open to revision in the face of new facts. His class was hard, but I left it with a true hunger for knowledge that I still carry with me today.”

He feels prepared for his next step as director of bands at Lincoln Middle School in Lincoln, N.C.

“The education faculty, and the music education faculty specifically, are very intentional in ensuring that students leave GWU as responsible, capable and compassionate educators,” Clary affirmed. “Personally, I am extremely grateful for the time that I’ve spent here, and I am greatly enthused about the opportunity that GWU has given me to go out into the world and create positive change in the lives of others.”

His advice to aspiring teacher candidates is “don’t give up” when course work gets challenging or current events related to the teaching profession are discouraging.

“Don’t let those moments overpower your passion,” he offered. “When your student teaching semester finally arrives, and you stand in front of real kids in a real classroom and begin to see the potential that you have for helping other people rise to their potential, you will immediately remember why you chose to enter the profession in the first place.”

Long term, his goal is to attend graduate school to teach music on the college level. As a freelance jazz musician, someday he would like to start his own band and perform his own compositions.

“The music faculty at Gardner-Webb played a large role in shaping my aspirations as well as giving me the tools to realize them,” he noted. “But, I was also hugely inspired by the musicianship and sheer creativity of my peers.”

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 60 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.