

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

11-5-2015

Degree Completion Program Helped Alumna Realize Her Dream

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Degree Completion Program Helped Alumna Realize Her Dream

webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/degree-completion-program-helped-alumna-realize-her-dream/

Office of University
Communications

November 5, 2015

Amber Parsons ('14) Receives Promotion, Now Enrolled in Online Master's Program

Amber Parsons ('14) decided to earn her bachelor's degree from Gardner-Webb University when she realized she was bumping up against a professional paper ceiling.

A self-proclaimed "Excel nerd" with a passion for crunching numbers, Parsons was thriving in her role as a staff accountant for Carolina Handling, a Raymond forklift dealership in Charlotte, N.C., when she applied for a promotion to supervisor.

"My controller basically said, 'Amber, I know you love this company, and you would be great in this role. But without your bachelor's degree, the people at corporate are never going to allow us to promote you to supervisor,'" Parsons shared. "That was the gut-check I needed to finally get this done."

She enrolled in the Degree Completion Program (DCP) at Gardner-Webb and found that the coursework applied to her work. "My studies and the daily responsibilities of my job complemented each other well, enhancing my understanding of the accounting concepts," she recalled.

After graduation—where she was honored to be a speaker—she received a job promotion. She is also working on her master's degree through the [GWU online program](#). She's used to the juggling act of balancing work and school responsibilities while caring for her husband and two children.

"It can get overwhelming at times, but I'm blessed with an amazing support system made up of co-workers and the management team at the office and my family at home, who all embrace my desire to continue my education," Parsons reflected. "Personally, I put a heavy emphasis on organization and time management."

The balancing act is easier because of the flexible programs offered by GWU. She took most of her courses online for the undergraduate degree and occasionally took a seated class at the Gaston Campus.

“For anything to work in my life, it has to be flexible,” Parsons assessed. “I looked at several other colleges, but none of them offered the kind of flexibility and support that Gardner-Webb’s Degree Completion Program does.”

She shares these words of encouragement to someone who is considering the DCP program: “Small steps. You don’t have to take a full course load, one class at a time is better than nothing at all,” Parsons advised. “The professors are great at organizing course work that can fit into a busy schedule. Patience. It took me a while to finish my bachelor’s degree due to significant life changes, but your education doesn’t have an expiration date. You don’t have to rush it.”

More than just flexible course schedules, what stands out most to Parsons are the faculty and staff who helped her achieve her dream of earning a degree.

“It’s people like Dr. Bobbie Cox and her team, people who pour so much time and energy into helping us succeed — that’s what I have appreciated most about Gardner-Webb,” she observed. “The staff at Gardner-Webb are very supportive and understanding in terms of work-life-school balance. They have helped me many times, when I felt like I just needed to give up the idea of finishing my education. Five years ago, I would have never imagined I would have been standing on stage giving a commencement speech at my graduation ceremony and then working on my master’s. I wouldn’t have made it where I am now without the Gardner-Webb DCP program.”

Founded in 1978 as the Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL) Program, the Degree Completion Program (DCP) meets the education and career needs of working adults by offering traditional undergraduate courses at convenient times. Evening classes are available at sites across North Carolina, and several programs are offered completely online. For more information, call 704-406-4484 or visit gardner-webb.edu/DCP.

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.