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Office of University
Communications

December 1, 2014

Market Research and Consumer Behavior Classes Attend Conference in Charlotte, N.C.

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – A national conference held in Charlotte, N.C., in October gave Gardner-Webb University business students a chance to witness marketing and sales techniques in action, and GWU Marketing Instructor Mischia Taylor is hoping the trip marks the beginning of many other similar opportunities to connect classroom discussion and real-world application.

When Taylor discovered that the 2014 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Annual Conference would be held in Charlotte, she immediately began working to make sure her students could experience business practices in action. The cost of attending the conference, at \$50 per student, was prohibitive. Drawing upon personal relationships through her past work with recreational outfitters, Taylor secured sponsorships from two conference vendors who agreed to provide conference tickets for 15 students, a majority of whom are marketing majors.

“I knew the event would give students in two of my classes a chance to see how businesses utilize marketing and sales principles,” Taylor explained. “I was so grateful when Greenfields Outdoor Fitness and Berliner Seilfabrik agreed to sponsor the conference tickets, and Playground Safety Services, Inc. funded our lunch.”

Taylor’s market research class joined forces with her consumer behavior class to attend the national event, which was held at the Charlotte Convention Center. Student Ellen Huneycutt believes the experience helped solidify concepts they had discussed in class.

“By going to the NRPA conference, we were able to see techniques used by the sales people for each company,” she shared. “They had chosen their target market and were there to sell their products. It was interesting to see the marketing strategies in play.”

Engaging with vendor representatives and talking with parks and recreation officials from all over the country were just a few of the benefits of attending the conference. “The purpose of the show was to give them the experience of attending a national trade show and seeing the business-to-business interactions as well as business to end-consumer

relationships,” Taylor explained. “The students also had the opportunity to network with industries from all over the nation, and a few of the students were given a chance to help in the Greenfields Outdoor Fitness booth.”

Student Craig Swaby found that associating the theories learned in class with what happens in the real world was extremely beneficial. “Helping Greenfields gave us a real-life perspective on what it is like to be in the field and be involved in sales,” he said. “Learning from those around the conference about how to integrate your personal skills with marketing knowledge was my biggest takeaway.”

Taylor hopes to provide additional experiential learning opportunities to students in her class. “The students benefited tremendously from seeing our classroom discussions come to life in a specific business setting,” she said. “Experiences like these are a perfect representation of the world-class education students receive at Gardner-Webb.”

Pictured left to right: Craig Swaby, Jonathan McPherson, Brycen Wells, Lydia Hill, April Niccolai, Candice Hayes, Will Canady, Ellen Huneycutt, Lydia Fuller, Scott Johnson, David McConnell, Adam Johnson, Benjamin Payne, Isaac Pearson, Brandon Knapp, and Prof. Mischia Taylor.

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.