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### Gardner-Webb Student Exemplifies Success Through Involvement

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# Gardner-Webb Student Exemplifies Success Through Involvement

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Office of University Communications

November 29, 2012

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University senior Sara Phillips wears many hats and now, she's added a crown to her list of impressive achievements. Recently named GWU's 2012 Homecoming Queen, she is now preparing for her final semester at GWU, which will take her prioritizing skills to a new level as she balances student teaching, multiple volunteer roles, and service to 24 women who share an address at Decker Hall.

For the last several semesters, Phillips has served as a resident advisor (RA) at Decker, an all-female residence hall in the center of the Gardner-Webb campus. In addition to her recent accolade at Homecoming, she was also featured in the November issue of *RA Magazine*, a publication dedicated to offering information and ideas to resident assistants on campuses all over the nation.

"I love to be the person people come to with their problems," Phillips shared in the magazine. "Students should have someone they can go to so they feel like they are being cared for. This helps them to feel more at home."

For Phillips, the feeling of home and family was one of the reasons she settled at Gardner-Webb in the first place. "I really just felt a sense of belonging," she shared. "It felt like I was already a part of GWU and I hadn't ever been here before. It just felt right when I came here."

Raised in Hickory, N.C., she loves that she is still within relatively close proximity to her loved ones, but is far enough away from home that she can fully enjoy all of the amenities of on-campus living. "I liked how it felt smaller," she recalled. "I don't feel like a number. I feel like part of a family."

Establishing a feeling of family and a sense of belonging for her residents is a top priority for Phillips as an RA at Decker. She encourages students to get involved in as many activities and opportunities that are appealing. "My advice is to just go ahead and get involved in everything," she said. "Even if you're not sure, just try it. This is your college experience and you need to make the most of it."

An elementary education major, Phillips is preparing for what will likely be her busiest semester yet, when she will begin her student teaching at an area elementary school. She points to being organized and committed as one of the best ways to stay on top of all of the demands on her time. "I've learned that if I have a two hour window, it is better for me to

tackle something on my to-do-list instead of taking a nap, even if I really, really want a nap,” Phillips said with a grin. “I’ve found that when I’m determined to get things finished, I finish more.”

Her service as an RA at Gardner-Webb has also given her practical experience that she believes will help her tremendously as she begins a career in teaching. “I’ve learned how to work on a staff with my peers, and how to work with my residents,” she said. “So the benefits have been on two levels.

As she streamlined her activities in preparation for the upcoming semester, one item she did not take off her plate was her volunteer service at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church. “I’ve been working with the youth at Pleasant Ridge since my sophomore year and that is probably my favorite thing I’m involved in,” she said.

As her college experience wraps up over the next few months, Phillips is reflecting on the memories she has made, the fun she has had, and the things she has learned. “You really need to make what you can of college, because you’re not going to get this time back,” she advises. “And it goes by so quickly.”