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### Members of Gardner-Webb Alpha Chi Participate in Virtual National Convention

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## ACADEMICS

# Members of Gardner-Webb Alpha Chi Participate in Virtual National Convention


BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON MAY 24, 2021

## Reproductive Health Care Injustices Against African American Women in the United States

Grace Burgin, Ysabela Cable, Jasmine Dee, and Haley Pierce  
Sponsors: June Hobbs and Bruce Moser  
Gardner-Webb University, Boiling Springs, NC

### Introduction

- Jennifer Carrol Foy nearly died from a fatal postpartum condition after her pains were dismissed by nurses and doctors.
- Foy is adamant that her mistreatment was due to her being African American.



**Figure 1:**  
Portrait of Jennifer Carrol Foy

- Unfortunately, this is a common occurrence in the United States today.
- We hypothesize that this occurs due to implicit biases held by practicing physicians, stemming from a long legislative history that consistently neglected African American women.

### The Psychology of Discrimination

- Racism and discrimination are associated with

### Clinical Outcome Discrepancies

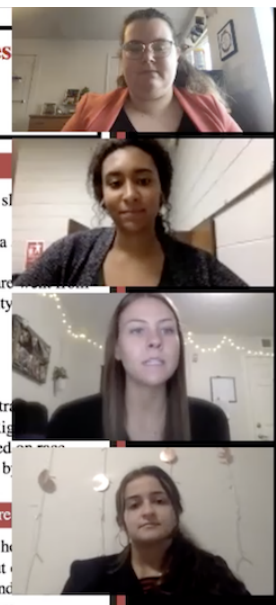
- When compared to white women, African American women are:
  - Two to three times more likely to experience pregnancy related deaths with over half of these being preventable
  - Three times more likely to experience preterm births
  - Twice as likely to experience infant mortality
  - Significantly more likely to experience severe maternal morbidity
  - More likely to experience postpartum complications
  - 80% more likely to be readmitted to the hospital
  - Two times more likely to experience open surgery
  - 20% less likely to undergo tube-conserving surgery
  - More likely to experience higher rates of sexually transmitted infections

### Racism Made Legal

- African Americans endured chattel slavery with no legal protection.
- Sterilization laws in the US: Indiana, California
- Civil Rights Act of 1964: Health care access is inhumane to limited and poor-quality
- Significant cases:
  - Relf v. Weinberger*
  - Fannie Lou Hamer
  - Loving v. Virginia*
- President Barack Obama's administration strengthened Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, color, and national origin by facilities receiving federal funding.

### Implicit Bias in Health Care

- Implicit bias is the phenomenon of holding negative unconscious feelings about a group that differ from one's conscious ideas and actions.
- Studies suggest that more health care providers are aware of implicit bias, but few are trained to recognize it.



## Rising Senior Grace Burgin Awarded Region III Scholarship

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University Alpha Chi members recently participated in the National Convention, which was held virtually this year. Rising senior Grace Burgin, of Iron Station, N.C., was awarded a Region III scholarship. A biology major, Burgin presented a paper that examined how fetal nutrition and development are affected by a mother's participation in fad diets. She conducted her research through the GWU Summer Undergraduate Research Scholar program.

Also participating in the online event were:



- ▲ Grace Burgin won an Alpha Chi Region III scholarship for the paper she presented that examined how a mother's diet affects fetal nutrition and development.
- 

- Samantha Wilkie, of Hendersonville, a senior English major, who presented a paper.
- Ysabela Cable, of Nebo, N.C., a senior criminal justice administration major with a minor in business administration.
- Jasmine Dee, of Dallas, N.C., a May 2021 graduate with degrees in psychology and sociology.
- Haley Pierce, of Jamestown, N.C., a senior biology major.

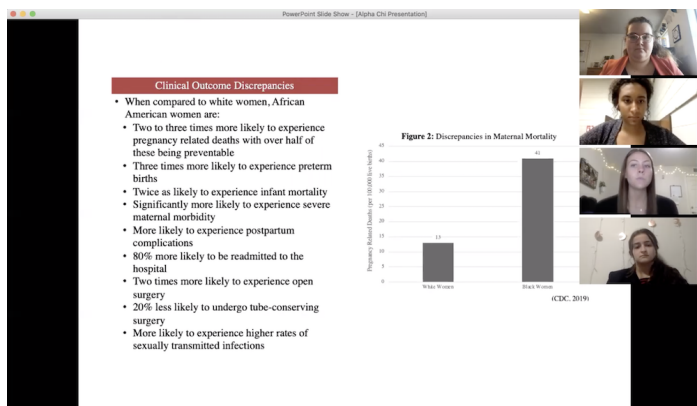
The convention theme was "... And Justice for All." For the virtual format, presenters pre-recorded their speeches. Burgin noted that while it was less pressure than presenting live, there was still a learning curve. "I could—and I did—record my presentation multiple times to get it right," she said. "Through those several takes, however, I learned not to be so hard on myself and that it's OK not to be perfect."

Burgin, Cable, Dee and Pierce also researched and prepared a collaborative project with Burgin serving as team leader. The title was "Reproductive Health Care Injustices Against African American Women in the United States: Legal History and the Modern Effects on Clinical Outcomes and Mental Health."



- ▲ Samantha Wilkie presented a paper at the National Alpha Chi Convention held on Zoom.

Cable said the topic appealed to her and the group because of the many issues of racial injustice in 2020 and 2021. “I felt like it would be a good topic to write about and inform not only others, but myself as well,” she observed. “In my section (of the research), I found there have been many laws made to discriminate against African American women’s rights to health care. There are also cases to show this as well, such as the Fannie Lou Hamer (<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/fannie-lou-hamer>) case.”



- ▲ Gardner-Webb students who presented the collaborative research project at the Alpha Chi convention were from top to bottom in the screenshot above, Grace Burgin, Jasmie Dee, Haley Pierce and Ysabela Cable.

Fannie Lou Townsend Hamer, who grew up in the Mississippi Delta, was a powerful voice in the civil and voting rights movements and a leader in the efforts for greater economic opportunities for African Americans. In 1961, Hamer received a hysterectomy by a white doctor without her consent while undergoing surgery to remove a uterine tumor.

The group worked on their project for three months, and both Cable and Burgin said the experience improved their skills in collaboration, organization, research, and team management. “I think it’s good

practice for the real world, where each of us will have to be part of a team in our respective careers,” Burgin elaborated.

### *About Alpha Chi*

*Alpha Chi (<https://alphachihonor.org/>) is a national collegiate honor society that recognizes and promotes academic excellence among college and university students of all disciplines. Region III encompasses more than 85 chapters in Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.*

### *About Gardner-Webb University*

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*