

CAMPUS NEWS

GWU Summer Leadership Experience Gives First-Year Students Preview of Campus Life

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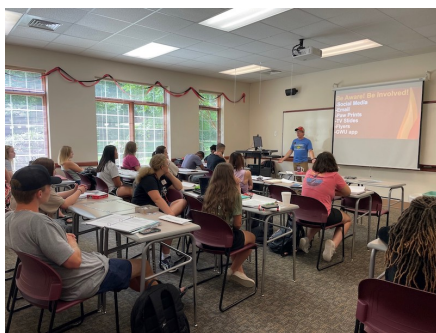


Workshops and Activities Help Students Set Goals for College Years and Beyond

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University Center for Personal and Professional Development welcomed 17 future leaders to campus recently for its Summer Leadership Experience. The three-day event for incoming first-year students is coordinated by Micah T. Martin, Center director, and Shea Mattingly, associate director.

“This is an opportunity for incoming freshmen who intend to be active in leadership on our campus to get a step ahead of their classmates to hit the ground running when they arrive in August,” Martin shared. “This year’s theme was ‘Aspire to Inspire.’”

During the day, students participated in workshops on such topics as time management and goal setting, and collaborative relationships and effective teams. Most importantly, they designed a plan for their first year to use as a guide for making the most of their transitional time, allowing them to capitalize on the opportunities that align well with their individual talents. The students stayed overnight in residence halls and enjoyed some meals on campus. Supervised entertainment helped them discover fun things to do in the local area.



One of the most helpful activities for Kennedy Nix, of Spartanburg, S.C., was discovering her strengths and weaknesses and learning about extracurricular opportunities on campus. “We discussed activities outside of academics and how to join and/or start our own, and how we can do so,” Nix offered. “I believe this experience will help me be a better student by starting on the things I believe in. Learning my strengths plays into this, because if you know how you function in specific settings you can work together with others to succeed in your goals.”

Nix plans to major in education and minor in American Sign Language. She said that everyone in the group “clicked,” and “We all got along and worked and learned together. I found some lifelong friends within this camp, and I am very grateful for that and the knowledge I obtained.”

Another student in the group, Sorelle Werner, of Cornelius, N.C., plans to major in biology to prepare for a career in the nutrition field. She chose to attend Gardner-Webb because it was close to home, and she liked its welcoming community. “The Summer Leadership Experience taught me valuable ways to use my strengths going into school, as well as helped me form meaningful social bonds with people like me,” she observed. “I feel as though I am very well prepared to take on the change that college brings and that I have been taught useful ways to navigate my stresses. I loved being able to engage with faculty and students, and I was ecstatic to learn about the many involvement opportunities that I could become invested in while at GWU!”



In addition to the workshops, the students also completed a service project at Miracle Hill in Gaffney, S.C., a mission that provides safe shelter and comprehensive services for a variety of people experiencing homelessness, including men, women, and mothers with children.

Natalie Coffing, of Oxford, N.C., said she feels that her participation in the Summer Leadership Experience will help her be a better student. She plans to double major in sociology and missiology. “I chose GWU, because it felt like home as soon as I stepped on campus, and it felt like that’s where God wanted me to go,” she affirmed. “I have goals to get involved on campus and steps to achieve them. I also love the friendships that I made during Summer Leaders. Now when I move in, I will already have a group of friends.”

The students also learned time management tips, said Madison Dyer, of Landrum, S.C., who plans to major in English Education and double minor in theater and missiology with plans to become a teacher on the mission field. “Micah (Martin) said that leaders don’t necessarily have to do everything alone,” she shared. “You can and should rely on your team. That really resonated with me. I think the experience will encourage me to get involved more and to try new things.”

Learn more about the GWU Center for Personal and Professional Development.

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