

ACADEMICS

Gardner-Webb Begins New Bachelor's Degree in Homeland Security Administration

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Program will Prepare Students for Multi-Faceted Role of Law Enforcement Officers in the 21st Century

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University will offer a new undergraduate degree in Homeland Security Administration, beginning this fall. Graduates of this Bachelor of Science program will be aware of the emerging, multi-faceted role of law enforcement officers today and the daily challenges they face in society. They will be prepared academically to respond to social, political, and legal problems with solutions provided through their coursework.

Dr. Bobbie Cox, associate professor of criminal justice and chair of the Department of Public Service, helped to devise the curriculum from her over three decades of experience in the criminal justice field and more than 25 years of teaching experience. “The mission of the program is to provide students with courses that support a liberal arts, Christ-centered interdisciplinary education,” Cox noted. “The curriculum will instill critical thinking, writing skills, social interaction, personal reflection, compassion, empathy, political knowledge, and career readiness, for addressing domestic terrorism, legal challenges, political violence and societal problems.”



▲ Dr. Bobbie Cox, left, poses with Kurt Everett at the 2021 Commencement Ceremonies.

The new homeland security administration major is welcome news to Kurt Everett of Medina, Ohio, a May 2021 graduate of the criminal justice program. “I had always wanted to pursue a career in law enforcement, and after talking with Dr. Cox, I felt that GWU was the right place for me to prepare for my future endeavors,” Everett shared. “Throughout my time as a student, I learned under various professors who were actually once within the field of law enforcement that they were teaching us about. This is very important because their individual experiences can be used as examples in the classroom. I am training to be contracted with the U.S. Marshals Service. No doubt my time learning under the professors at Gardner-Webb has helped prepare me for that. If I actually was starting my freshman year now, I’d probably major in homeland security because that is what I am specifically trying to go into.”

In her research, Cox discovered that only one other private school in North Carolina offers a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in homeland security. Nationally, another private university in Virginia offers only a degree with a specialization in homeland security. Cox found that several community colleges offer an associate’s degree in homeland security, and no state universities were identified that offer a Bachelor of Science Degree in homeland security.

The Gardner-Webb Homeland Security Administration Degree is designed to produce graduates who have a passion for service and learning in the context of a Christian environment. While developing knowledge in homeland security, criminal justice, and legal areas, graduates will be prepared to address 21st century domestic and global homeland security issues. They will find employment in specialized careers in local, state, and federal criminal justice systems.

The new major requires 36-37 hours, with an overall requirement of 120 hours to complete the Bachelor of Science degree. The program includes an internship/field experience in an approved agency.

Examples of career opportunities include police and detectives. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), jobs for detectives and investigators will grow 8 percent between 2018 and 2028. Individuals with legal training and education may also find work with a variety of government and nonprofit agencies. The BLS projects a 12 percent increase in employment for this field. Lastly, the BLS projects 5 percent growth in traditional homeland security jobs such as emergency management directors who prepare for emergencies, storms, pandemics or recovery following a terrorist act. More than 180,000 federal workers are employed by the Department of Homeland Security alone. Moving forward, the U.S. Bureau of Statistics projects that employment of public service occupations will grow 5 percent from 2016 to 2026, resulting in about 158,200 new jobs.

For more information about the Homeland Security Administration major, email Dr. Bobbie Cox at bcox@gardner-webb.edu or call 704-406-4627.

Learn more about the Department of Public Service.



▲ Kurt Everett participated in several activities at Gardner-Webb, including Oktoberfest, left, Shop with a Cop, center, and crime scene investigation scenarios in the criminal justice administration program.

