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### Gardner-Webb's Teacher Assistants to Teachers Program Helps Student Pursue Her Dream

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**GARDNER-WEBB ONLINE**

# Gardner-Webb's Teacher Assistants to Teachers Program Helps Student Pursue Her Dream

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON DECEMBER 2, 2021



## Tishauna Gillard, '23, Wants to Inspire Students to 'Strive for Greatness'

By Sarianna Miranda-Rosado, '24, Intern for Communications

Tishauna Gillard, a student in the Elementary Education for Teacher Assistants (TA) to Teachers program at Gardner-Webb University, became more involved in the world of education in 2016. She did what most concerned parents do when change is coming in their child's school. Her son was in the third grade, and his school was merging with another. To prepare for the transition, the school system held meetings with parents and stakeholders. Gillard, who lives in Concord, N.C., went to a meeting and voiced her concerns. Afterward, the teachers asked her to join the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Later, they asked her to apply for a TA position.



▲ Tishauna Gillard

“It wasn’t until I became a TA that I discovered what God created me to do,” Gillard reflected. “I had finally found my niche. After being a TA for a few years, I was asked to fill a long-term substitute teaching position. I fell in love with teaching. My love for teaching has pushed me to go back to school to pursue my degree so that I can teach full time.”

While serving as a long-term substitute teacher in 2019 and 2020, her school honored her both years as TA of the year. As she pursues her own goals, Gillard also wants to inspire young people to strive for greatness. “I want them to push beyond their current situation or circumstance to pursue their dream,” she stated. “I want them to know that they can do or be anything. The sky is truly the limit, and it is my dream to help them see that.”

Gardner-Webb offers online undergraduate programs to help students reach success from wherever they are. Gillard discovered GWU’s TA to Teacher program through her school. The accessibility of the program immediately appealed to her. “My husband is a musician, and we have three children who were all school-age at the time. I needed an online program,” she explained. “I needed something that would work for my family’s schedule and needs.”

Ironically, being a teacher was a childhood dream that Gillard left behind in adulthood. After spending many years working in administrative roles, she feels that she was guided back to education by God. When the course material becomes challenging, Gillard seeks the support of her teachers and family to push through and attain her goal.

“God knew exactly what I needed, and He created a space for me here, at GWU, with people who are truly in the business of pushing you to be the very best no matter your career field,” she affirmed. She especially appreciates the guidance and motivation she’s received from Dr. Prince Bull, dean of the College of Education, and Wendy Turbyfill, data and licensure manager.

Gillard trusts God to help her balance her job, family, and education. “I want to be a good wife and mother. I want to be a good teacher/TA, and I want to be a good student,” she shared. “I pray and ask God for his guidance and strength to get it all done, and I press through.”

She will earn her undergraduate degree in teaching in May 2023. “I want people to know that when you find the reason God created you when you find the thing He destined for you to do and you pursue it, you can’t help but win,” she concluded.

*Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*