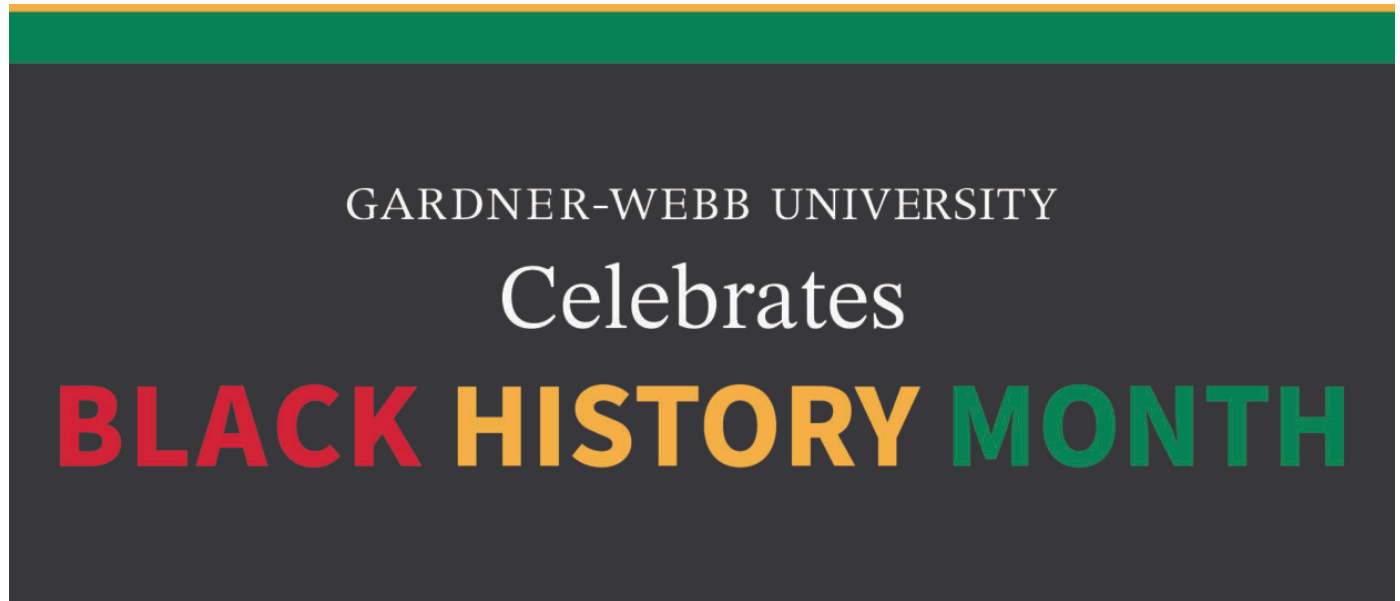


**BLACK HISTORY MONTH PROFILE**

# Gardner-Webb Alumna Aliah Price Turned Internship at Starbucks Headquarters into a Job Offer

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## Black History Month Inspires Her to Keep Striving for Excellence

Aliah Price graduated from Gardner-Webb University in 2019 prepared for her next step: graduate school at N.C. State University. Through this opportunity, she was invited to attend the National Black MBA (Master of Business Administration) Conference. Many high-profile companies offered internship opportunities, but only one would develop her skills and satisfy her caffeine cravings. She applied and was accepted for an internship at Starbucks Headquarters in Seattle, Wash.



- ▲ Aliah Price presented her internship project in front of over 150 people at Starbucks and later received a job offer.
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“It was the perfect time and opportunity, and the Starbucks internship was exactly what I wanted to do post MBA,” Price asserted. “I was a product manager intern at Starbucks, and I was working on the core beverage team. The core beverage team is responsible for basically all the drinks that you see on the Starbucks menu.”

Her friends and family—including her sister, GWU’s Head Women’s Basketball Coach Alex Simmons—also said it was a perfect fit for her because of her affinity for Starbucks. “I tell my friends that if that Starbucks was on campus when I was there, I would have had no money,” she offered. “My Starbucks order on a regular basis is pretty complicated: a triple-iced blonde espresso with oat milk, extra caramel drizzle topped with vanilla sweet cream cold foam.”

As part of the internship, Price completed a summer project and presented it to over 150 people. Her work was so impressive that Starbucks’ management offered her a job as a project manager when she graduates in May.

As Price reflects on her success and the celebration of Black History Month, she appreciates the African Americans who paved the way for her and others. “The things they went through and the things they were able to do and accomplish helped me to get to where I am,” she acknowledged. “Now, essentially it’s up to me and my generation to do the same thing for future generations.”

One of her favorite trailblazers is Maya Angelou. “I’m a firm believer that words are very powerful and I think that her words during that time meant so much to the times that they were going through,” Price affirmed. “I think it’s very telling that people are still using her poems today. Your words are so important, and it matters how you use them. She had a really unique way of expressing herself and the things that were going on in a way that really resonated with people.”



Price also noted that knowing the history and what African Americans did to challenge barriers is worth repeating. “We celebrate this month so that some of the things our heroes did can repeat,” she explained. “It’s really important to highlight and celebrate and continue to study the history, so we can continue the excellence they started.”

She believes that her Gardner-Webb classes and extracurricular activities provided the foundation that allowed her to advance in her studies and be noticed by Starbucks management. She is thankful for Micah Martin, the director for the GWU Center for Personal and Professional Development, and Dean Mischia Taylor of the Godbold College of Business for pushing her to excel.

“Being Student Body President my senior year at Gardner-Webb prepared me for so much, because that last year I spoke at all kinds of things, but the biggest was speaking in front of the Board of Trustees,” Price related. “It’s helped me in interviews and to be in rooms with C-level people and have a conversation.”

She continued, “Micah really helped me with that too, especially at the beginning of my term as president. I wasn’t the most comfortable with speaking in front of people. Dean Taylor always had grad school in my ear. She was proud of me and knew it was something that I could do. She still keeps in touch. She was a big part of my story at GWU and my career, not only her classes but just her as a person. I really felt invested in and like she really cared about where I went after I left.”