The MeRRIT Project....Mentoring, Recruitment, and Retention in Teaching

Funding Purpose:

Project Description:

North Carolina is facing a “chronic” and growing shortage of teachers. Currently, there are 86,000 teachers in North Carolina’s public schools. The state must hire about 10,000 teachers each year to staff existing classrooms. Public and private universities in North Carolina produce approximately 3,100 teachers each year and research indicates that nearly one in three teachers leave the profession within the first three years. Additionally, it is reported that about 40 percent leave after five years. Data from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction reveals that, based on responses from 112 North Carolina Local Educational Agencies, the top five areas of licensure in terms of “Most Difficult” to find licensed teachers in 2004-2005 were: (1) Mathematics (9-12), Special Education, (3) Science (9-12), Mathematics (6-9), and Science (6-9). According to the N.C. Center for Public Policy Research, “immediate action is necessary to increase the supply of new teachers and to retain more of the existing pool of teachers.”

The MeRRIT Project proposed by High Point University’s School of Education is designed to target key populations of individuals who are most integral to resolving the crisis currently impacting our North Carolina public schools. Partial funding for this project will be used to focus on the RECRUITMENT of traditional undergraduate students into teacher education from two distinct sources:

- **Traditional Undergraduates Currently Majoring in the fields of Mathematics and Science:**

  Students majoring in these areas would be recruited early on in their four year program of study to enroll in either EDU 325/224: Introduction to Middle Grades Education or EDU 235/224: Introduction to Secondary Education. Either of these courses and the related field experience could be selected by students in their sophomore year as four hours of elective credit. Financial compensation for the four credits would be awarded to any student majoring in Math or Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) who chose to register for these courses as elective credit. By recruiting students into introductory level teacher education courses, it would be possible to provide prospective education majors with knowledge and information needed to consider a major in Middle or Secondary Education. The EDU 225/224 and EDU 235/224 is typically offered each spring semester and is taught by a faculty member who is also a former science or mathematics middle school or secondary teacher. Weekly field experience in local middle and high schools is part of the course and increased enrollment in these classes could also serve to have a positive impact on
surrounding schools who benefit from having the assistance of college students in the classroom. Enrollment trends in these courses have typically been low with four students currently enrolled in EDU 225/224 and seven students in EDU 325/224 (Spring 2006 enrollment data). It is proposed through the MeRRIT Project that scholarship money be awarded each spring semester for sophomores majoring in Math or Science who choose these as their elective classes. It is expected that these early recruitment efforts would potentially result in more students choosing to go into Teacher Education.

**Traditional Undergraduates Currently Enrolled in non-SACS Accredited Institutions:**

The School of Education proposes establishing partnerships with non-SACS accredited schools such as Piedmont Baptist College and John Wesley College in order to facilitate the licensing of potential teachers who would normally not be eligible to teach in the public schools of North Carolina. Currently both of these institutions offer teacher education degrees. However, neither of these programs is SACS accredited, therefore, graduates from these colleges are currently ineligible to apply for a N.C. Teaching License. High Point University has an articulated agreement with Piedmont Baptist College which allows students from this institution to earn a degree and a teaching license from High Point University as well as a second degree from their original institution (currently 9 undergraduates from PBC are student teaching through High Point University and an additional 19 others are enrolled in the Teacher Education Program at HPU). There are often financial burdens placed on these students as they must meet core requirements and teacher education competencies at two different institutions. According to Dr. Beth Ashburn, Dean of Academics at Piedmont Baptist College, each student enrolled at High Point University will spend approximately $8,000.00 in order to complete the additional 31 hours of coursework needed to earn a degree from High Point University. Financial assistance would greatly enhance the recruitment of these prospective students and could conceivably allow the SOE to expand this program by adding an additional partnership with John Wesley College.

Additional funding for the High Point University MeRRIT project will be used to focus on the **RETENTION** of current teachers who have been in the classroom for less than three years. According to Director of the N.C. Center of Public Policy Research Mike McLaughlin, sharply increasing the supply of teachers is certainly a critical part of solving the teaching shortage, but just producing more teachers without doing a better job of retaining teachers is like “pouring water into a leaky bucket.” In recent years many school systems facing teacher shortages have been forced to hire individuals with four year college degrees but with little training in teacher education. The N.C. Center for Public Policy Research cautions that these “stopgap measures” have been largely unsuccessful in averting the impending crisis in North Carolina’s public schools. In fact, according to the 2005 Teacher Retention Task Force Committee, these are the very individuals who leave the profession within a few years of being hired. The high rate of teacher turnover in North Carolina has left the public schools facing a revolving door of untried novices who simply do not have the skills to help them reach higher academic standards. The Committee recommended in its report to the State Board of Education that beginning teachers must have an effective induction program which includes quality mentoring and time to collaborate and plan with a mentor. Furthermore, it is noted that lack of
support continues to be the single most compelling reason cited by beginning teachers (those with less than five years teaching experience) for leaving the teaching profession.

The following data is provided to highlight the significance of the Teacher Turnover Rate for these systems in 2007-2008:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School System</th>
<th>Turnover Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asheboro City Schools</td>
<td>10.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davidson County Schools</td>
<td>14.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forsyth County Schools</td>
<td>16.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County Schools</td>
<td>11.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexington City Schools</td>
<td>16.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>13.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through funding provided by the High Point University MeRRIT Project, the School of Education proposes two unique services which could be provided to area school systems as a means of supporting alternatively licensed teachers.

**Student Teaching Internship for Alternatively Licensed Classroom Teachers:**

- To allow alternatively licensed teachers with less than three years of teaching experience the financial assistance to enroll at High Point University in a **traditional student teaching internship**. The semester experience will afford these individuals the same type of consistent support and feedback from an experienced faculty member from the SOE. The student teaching internship is often the most important defining experience in a teacher education program. It is during this semester that traditional students enrolled in an undergraduate teacher education program receive “on the job training” in a highly structured environment with constant support, feedback, and encouragement. Faculty members spend time in the intern’s classroom, observe teaching, critiquing lessons, suggesting discipline strategies, and evaluating progress in areas needing improvement. There is no substitute for this type of mentoring and those individuals who are placed in today’s public school classrooms without this prior support are missing one of the most significant predictors of future success. The School of Education proposes partnering with area school systems to offer scholarship money for beginning “alternatively licensed” teachers to enroll in EDU 480 (Lateral Entry Internship). The university supervisor for the internship experience would be faculty from the SOE or adjunct retired teachers on a contractual basis each semester to supervise student teaching. Typically each university supervisor is responsible for mentoring up to five individuals in a traditional student teaching internship.

**PRAXIS-II Training and Support for Prospective Hires:**

Effective 6/30/06, no individual may be hired as a classroom teacher at any grade level or content area unless he/she meets the requirements as “Highly Qualified” based on the mandates of No Child Left Behind. In North Carolina, the individual must have passed the required Praxis II Teacher Examination in the content area in order to be designated as “Highly Qualified.” Unfortunately any individual considering a teaching position must take the examination **prior** to being hired. Potentially this will create an additional burden on
school systems in that they will likely need to offer some preparation and support for prospective applicants even before the individual is an employee. Partnerships with Higher Education Teacher Training Programs will be critical in assisting school systems to locate prospective employees who have received support in Praxis II training and preparation.

- Through the MeRRIT Project the SOE hopes to provide Praxis II training and preparation for individuals in the areas of special education, mathematics, science, elementary education, and . Individuals will be able to register for preparation sessions in content, pedagogy, theory, and essay writing. Consultants providing training will all hold a current N.C. teaching license and will have successfully passed the most recent version of the Praxis II exam for that respective licensure area. Test taking strategies, practice assessments, and assistance in registering for the examinations will be provided in the May Mini, Summer and Fall terms at High Point University. This service will be available for prospective hires (through referrals from area school systems) and these individuals will be eligible to enroll in these preparation sessions through the financial assistance provided by the MeRRIT Project

**Project Start Date:** August 2009  
**Project End Date:** May 2011

**Funding:**

$263.00/per credit hour @ 4 credit hours= $1,000.00 financial award

20 students each Spring: $20,000/Year

Non-Accredited Partners
Piedmont Baptist/John Wesley College
Financial Scholarships (Competitive)
30 students/year: $2000.00/ $60,000/Year
## Wachovia Scholars Application

- **Eligibility Criteria:** In order to be considered for the Wachovia Scholarship, applicants must meet the following criteria: (1) Applicants must have demonstrated financial need; (2) Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 or its equivalent during the freshman, sophomore, and junior year and a 3.25 GPA in the senior year; (3) One professional letter of recommendation from a previous teacher or employer who can attest to the character, commitment, and academic merit of the applicant should accompany the application packet (this letter should be in a sealed envelope); and (4) Applicants must complete a mandatory 500-700 word essay to a designated prompt (included in the application).

- Applicants must demonstrate successful progression in the teacher education program in order to continue as a Wachovia Scholar. In order to be eligible for the senior scholarship, applicants must complete the full-time (8 credit) student teaching internship.

### Application Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elementary Education</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Education.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle Grades Education</td>
<td>Student ID:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Education</td>
<td>Major:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Subjects Education</td>
<td>Major:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Classification:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>Junior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>Senior</td>
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<tr>
<th>Full Legal Name</th>
<th>Last</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Maiden/Former</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Street/PO Box</td>
<td>County</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Permanent Address</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>Zip Code</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Address (if applicable)</td>
<td>Residence Hall or Other</td>
<td>Campus Box</td>
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<td>Academic Advisor</td>
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<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPU</td>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
In the space below, provide a description of any current or recent activities/organizations you are involved with that are related to the field of education, working with children, or teaching:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Description (Be as specific as possible)</th>
<th>Date of Involvement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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</table>

Employment History: (Begin with the most recent):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer/LEA</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Length of Employment</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Essay: In the space below please respond with a **one page double-spaced essay (not to exceed 500-700 words in length)** to the following prompt:

You have been asked to write an editorial on the teacher shortage in our country. What would you say to inspire more college students to go into teacher education?
Signature: ___________________________________________________

☐ I hereby attest that all information is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Please send your completed application packet to:
Dr. Mariann Tillery
Dean, School of Education
High Point University
833 Montlieu Avenue
High Point, N.C. 27262

Have you included the following in your application packet?
✓ Application
✓ Signature at the end of the application
✓ Letter of Recommendation in a sealed envelope

Application deadline is Friday, October 12th 2010.

Transcript: __________
Activities/Honors: __________
Essay: __________
Wachovia Scholars Program

Description:

In an effort to address the teacher shortage in our area, the School of Education at High Point University has teamed up with Wachovia in creating the inaugural Wachovia Scholars Program. Currently, there are 86,000 teachers in North Carolina's public schools. The state must hire about 10,000 teachers each year to staff existing classrooms. Public and private universities in the state are producing approximately 3,100 teachers each year and research indicates that nearly one in three teachers are leaving the profession within the first three years. In addition, the State Data Center estimates that North Carolina’s school-age population will increase from 1.4 million in 2000 to 1.6 million in 2010, adding demand for an additional 1,000 teachers a year. An acute shortage of teachers in particular subjects is evident with greatest needs being reported in math, science, special education, and foreign languages.

Through the program, High Point University will receive $250,000 from Wachovia over a three-year period for scholarships for traditional day students in the School of Education.

The Wachovia Scholars at High Point University will be selected based on financial need, academic merit, and an interest in middle or secondary education in math or science -- areas in which teachers are in the highest demand.

Faculty in the School of Education, as well as math and science faculty will identify freshmen, who will receive $1,000 toward tuition; sophomores, who will receive $2,000; juniors, who receive $4,000; and senior, who will receive a $5,000 scholarship if they complete the 11-credit student teaching internship. And in an effort to address retention in teacher education, those scholars who remain and progress in the School of Education are eligible to renew their scholarship each year for more money - $1,000, $2,000, $4,000 and $5,000 respectively.

Created in 2004, the Wachovia Teachers and Teaching Initiative provides funding through the Wachovia Foundation to organizations that enhance teacher recruitment, development, support and retention with the goal of increasing student achievement.

The goals of the program are to: provide high-quality professional development opportunities and support for educators; create world-class learning environments that are responsive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds; and strengthen the infrastructure of the teaching profession through leadership and best practices by hiring and securing high-performing educators.

The following includes the criteria for determining freshman, sophomore, and junior eligibility:

Freshman Year: Eligibility Criteria:
- Minimum GPA: 3.0
- Advisor/H.S. Counselor or teacher recommendation
- Registration in EDU 101
- Preference given to students majoring in MGE, Secondary Math, Secondary Biology
- Demonstrated Financial Need

Sophomore Year: Eligibility Criteria:
- Minimum GPA of 3.0
- Advisor/Faculty Recommendation
- Preference given to students majoring in MGE, Secondary Math, Secondary Biology
- Holds membership in Teachers of Tomorrow or equivalent
- Demonstrated Financial Need
Junior Year: Eligibility Criteria:
- Minimum GPA of 3.0
- Holds leadership role in Teachers of Tomorrow, Kappa Delta Pi or equivalent
- Advisor/Faculty Recommendation
- Preference given to students majoring in MGE, Secondary Math, Secondary Biology
- Demonstrated Financial Need
- Successful Admission into Teacher Ed by time of application deadline

Senior Year: Eligibility Criteria:
- Minimum GPA of 3.25
- Advisor Recommendation
- Preference given to students majoring in MGE, Secondary Math, Secondary Biology

Special Note:
Any student who fails to meet the eligibility requirements will be unable to renew the scholarship and the money will be returned for possible identification of other students in the program.

Total Year 1 Cost: $53,000.00

Money Available in Year 1:
($+83,333.00)

Surplus of $30,333.00 to be applied to Year 2.

Spring 2009:

NO Freshmen
Sophomore:
- 12 Sophomores to receive $2000.00 scholarship for Spring 2009 $24,000.00
  (continuing from freshman year)
- 12 Juniors to receive $4,000.00 scholarship for Spring 2009 $48,000.00
  (continuing from sophomore year)
- 3 Seniors to receive $5000.00 scholarship for Spring 2009 $15,000.00
  (continuing from junior year)
Total Year 2 Cost: $87,000.00

Money Available in Year 2:
(+$83,333.00)

Surplus of $26,666.00 to be applied to Year 3.

**Spring 2010:**

NO Freshmen
NO Sophomores
➢ 12 juniors to receive $4,000.00 scholarship for Spring 2010 $48,000.00 (continuing from sophomore year)
➢ Up to 12 seniors to receive $5,000.00 scholarship for Spring 2010 $60,000.00

Total Year 3 Cost: $108,000.00

Money Available in Year 3:
(+ $26,666.00)
(+$ 83,333.00)
(+109,999.00)

At end of the three year scholarship program $1,999.00 will be in surplus.

**Special Note:**

- Any student who fails to meet the eligibility requirements will be unable to renew the scholarship and the money will be returned for possible identification of other students in the program.
January 5, 2010

Ms. Candace ---
Kernersville, NC

Dear Candace,

It is with great pleasure that I am writing to congratulate you on being selected as one of this year’s recipients of the Wachovia Scholarship. As a Wachovia Scholar you are eligible to receive up to a $1,000.00 award during the spring 2009 semester. Please note that in accordance to the Wachovia Scholarship criteria you must maintain a GPA of 3.0 and continue to seek licensure in a high need area (Mathematics) in teacher education.

We have notified Ms. Julie Setzer, Director of Financial Planning and she can assist you in securing your scholarship award for tuition purposes. Please feel free to call her at (336) 841-9128 or e-mail her at jsetzer@highpoint.edu.

Again, congratulations and we look forward to sharing in your many accomplishments in the years ahead. Thank you for choosing to be a part of our teacher education program at High Point University.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mariann W. Tillery, Ph.D.
Dean, School of Education

Cc: Ms. Julie Setzer, Director of Financial Planning
July 10, 2009

Mr. Juan Austin  
Community Affairs Manager  
100 N. Main Street  
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27150  

Reference #: 1376425

Dear Mr. Austin:

On behalf of the School of Education faculty and students at High Point University I’d like to express our deepest gratitude for the very generous donation the Wachovia Foundation has made during the last three years. In total, the $250,000.00 grant has been used to recruit and retain academically talented math and science majors into teacher education. To date, I am most pleased to inform you that we have seen our enrollment in Secondary Math and Biology (9-12) and Middle Grades Science and Mathematics (6-9) increase by over 50%. The Wachovia Scholars grant has been a true testament, I believe, to the kind of dramatic change we can effect through the collaborative partnerships between agencies of higher education and the business community.

Please know that with the current economic crisis, many of our most deserving students have experienced increasingly greater financial need than ever before. Several Wachovia Scholars would have been unable to return to High Point University this fall without the generosity of the Wachovia Foundation grant. The School of Education is most interested in continuing the initiatives which have been made possible through the Wachovia Scholars Program. This summer we expanded the scholars program to include our graduate program in Educational Leadership. Sixty talented teachers have been selected by school district leaders in three surrounding systems to participate in this program. These teachers, through the development of an on-sire cohort, will have the opportunity for career advancement by completing the Master’s Degree Program in Educational Leadership. With a commitment from our university administration and the generosity of the Wachovia Scholars Program, these teachers have an extraordinary opportunity to advance into the roles of school administrators within their own districts. As local school districts in North Carolina continue to face deep budget cuts and significant uncertainty, this initiative has allowed High Point University to make a positive impact on the retention of teachers already employed in high need public schools.

As the original date for this grant has now expired, we would request consideration for re-application beginning in the 2010-2011 academic year. A continued annual gift of $83,333.34
by the Wachovia Foundation would allow us to provide ongoing and significant opportunities for so many talented current and prospective educators.
I again express by deepest appreciation for the generosity of the Wachovia Foundation. You have our commitment that we will continue to invest any additional funds received with the utmost prudence and diligence in meeting the mission of building vibrant and strong communities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Mariann W. Tillery, Dean
School of Education
High Point University
833 Montlieu Avenue
High Point, N.C. 27262
(336) 841-9286
mtillery@highpoint.edu
I am writing to express my eternal gratitude for the Wachovia Scholarship that was graciously bestowed upon me during my four years at High Point University. This scholarship was established to specifically address the enormously growing need for quality math and science teachers in 21st century education in America. While the need for math and science teachers is growing, so is the cost of a quality education. Assisting many college students in the past years, this scholarship has helped alleviate the challenge posed by paying for a worthwhile education.

I sincerely believe High Point University has allowed me to excel in my social, academic, professional, and personal growth. I came to High Point in the fall of 2007 from Philadelphia with the dream of becoming a teacher, and the hope that I would graduate with a degree. However, I did not just leave with a degree – I left with much more than that. I had the amazing experience of serving in many leadership roles such as the President of “Teachers of Tomorrow”, President of Pi Kappa Phi Fraternity, and Treasurer of the Student Government Association. The superior faculty in the math and science departments challenged me to rise to new academic heights and learn the importance of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) innovations in the 21st century. I was able to establish a solid foundation in chemistry, physics, mathematics, and natural sciences that even allowed me to conduct my own research many fields. Beginning at High Point as a shy inter-city student, I graduated in May 2011 as a confident young man, member of a variety of Honors Societies, was presented by Dr. Nido R. Qubein with the University Award for Leadership, recipient of the Senior of the Year Award, and granted a Bachelor’s of Arts summa cum laude degree in Middle Grades Education (Math and Science Specialization).

The final, and perhaps most important, point I want to express is the extraordinary education I received from the High Point University School of Education. Not only was the faculty supportive and caring, but they also exemplified what it really means to be teacher. Students in the School of Education learn the best practices in education in terms of special education, instructional strategies, classroom management, technology, and a variety of other education facets. I felt prepared and well equipped to enter into the teaching world and with my background at HPU, confident in my ability to gain employment. I did not have to look far. My student teaching experience in middle school math and science at Immaculate Heart of Mary School was the right fit and I was offered contract during my term as a student teacher – I had achieved my dream, and continue to live that dream everyday. I have High Point University to thank, in addition to those who financially supported me, such as the Wachovia Teacher Education Scholarship. Without the financial support from gracious scholarship benefactors, it simply would not be possible to attend extra-ordinary universities and fulfill one’s dream.

Sincerely,

David J. Rad
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Catherine Hammond, I am a recent graduate of High Point University where I majored in Biology and earned my teaching certificate also in Biology. I was a Presidential Scholar and a recipient of the Wachovia Scholarship for my four years in college. Since closing the schooling chapter of my life, I have been fortunate enough to secure a job very quickly and in my preferred field. I am a science teacher at Randleman High School, about thirty minutes from High Point University’s campus. The Wachovia Scholarship along with the entire School of Education helped my development as an educator immensely, I am sure I would not be the professional, or person, I am today without the assistance that was given to me.

The School of Education faculty and staff at High Point University have created a program that became my lifeline in college. Academically, I was challenged constantly and gained knowledge that I would be lost without almost constantly. The programs of study are tailored to the needs of students in each of the educational field so perfectly that I have had the edge on many of my peers. There are many changes happening at once within the North Carolina education system; this includes a new teacher evaluation and a new curriculum for every subject. I was far more prepared for these changes because our professors incorporated these changes whenever possible. I am incredibly thankful for this, my background knowledge allowed me to be adequately prepared to handle these changes with confidence.

Another reason why the School of Education was important to me was because of the support the members of the department readily gave to students. There were many instances where I wanted to give up and change my major but the positivity and foresight of my professors helped me see that no problem is too large to overcome. I always knew that any problems I was having, in a practicum or at High Point, I could come to one of my professors and they would help me figure out the best plan of action. I gained so much perspective and confidence that I still rely on almost everyday.

Even though I graduated in May, I still return to High Point to ask my professors for help or to catch up. I value and rely on the professional relationships that I forged with the faculty and staff of the High Point School of Education more now than ever. I believe this sets High Point University apart from other colleges because even though I have moved on, I am still cared about by my professors.

All of this would not be possible if it were not for the Wachovia Scholarship. I do not come from a family of outstanding wealth, we struggle and work for everything we own. The extra monetary assistance helped my parents afford my education at High Point University. This scholarship was critical in my ability to stay at High Point and finish my degree; I believe that this program, if continued, will be a vital part of the education career of future High Point University Education majors.

Thank you,

Catherine Hammond