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CATAWBA COLLEGE

School of Education

SPRING 2026 NEWSLETTER



Celebrating the Class of 2026

The Goodman School of Education proudly congratulates our graduating seniors as they prepare to begin the next chapter of their journeys as educators. Through their hard work, leadership, and dedication to students, they have made a lasting impact on our community, and we look forward to all they will accomplish in classrooms and schools in the years ahead.

AAQEP Accreditation Visit

This spring, the Goodman School of Education welcomed representatives from the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) as part of the program's accreditation review process. Faculty, students, alumni, mentor teachers, and community partners shared how the School of Education prepares future educators through strong partnerships, clinical experiences, and a commitment to student success.

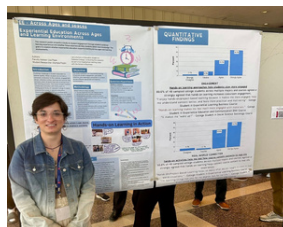
The visit reflected the collaborative spirit and dedication that continue to shape the Goodman School of Education and its impact across the region.

Growing Our Partnership with North Hills Christian School



This spring, students participated in hands-on learning experiences at North Hills Christian School, connecting classroom learning to real-world practice. Students observed classroom management strategies, explored school culture, and gained insight into the daily work of educators. Hosted in part by Catawba alumna and Lower School Principal Kristen Sabia, these visits continue to strengthen a valuable partnership that benefits future educators.

Celebrating Scholarship and Research



We proudly celebrated Hannah Koopmans and Olympia Poplin at Catawba College's Day of Scholarship this spring. Hannah presented her capstone research on Black women's political activism through literature, while Olympia shared her research on experiential education across learning environments. We are proud of their outstanding scholarship and dedication to academic excellence.

Spring 2026 Student Teachers

This semester's student teachers—Alana, Anthony, Kahlil, Michelle, and Sarah—successfully completed their student teaching placements, demonstrating professionalism, dedication, and a strong commitment to their students throughout the semester. Through their work in partner schools across the community, they made a meaningful impact in the classroom while continuing to grow into confident and compassionate future educators.

We cannot wait to see what our student teachers achieve next year!

Spring Awards Convocation Honors

Several Goodman School of Education students were honored during Catawba College's Spring Awards Convocation for their outstanding achievements in scholarship, leadership, creativity, and service. Congratulations to Alana Derringer, Anthony Vaccaro, Erica Graesslin, Molly Meyerhofer, Ava Stanza, Tatiana Delgado, and Izzy Bracken for receiving College awards that reflect Catawba's core values. We are proud of their accomplishments and the impact they continue to make on campus and beyond.



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SNCAE Builds Community On and Off Campus

Catawba College's SNCAE chapter enjoyed a busy and meaningful semester filled with professional growth, service, and student engagement. Members traveled to Raleigh for the 2026 SNCAE Spring Conference, where they attended sessions on job preparation, classroom management, and educator wellness while also completing community service at a local elementary school.

Back on campus, SNCAE spread encouragement through its Valentine's Day candy grams fundraiser and helped students unwind during finals season by hosting a Study Day film event. Through each activity, SNCAE continues to strengthen its community of future educators at Catawba College.



Exploring AI & Differentiation in Today's Classrooms



We recently hosted an engaging AI & Differentiation Workshop led by Katie Bogle. Students, faculty, and alumni explored innovative tools such as Google Gemini, NotebookLM, Diffit, and SchoolAI while learning how artificial intelligence can support personalized instruction and student engagement for diverse learners. Through hands-on exploration and discussion, participants considered how AI can be implemented thoughtfully and responsibly in today's classrooms as they prepare to meet the evolving needs of students.

Celebrating Phi Epsilon Honorees



This spring, the Goodman School of Education celebrated several students recognized through the Phi Epsilon Honor Society. Olivia was inducted into the society alongside the support of her faculty sponsor, Prof. Griggs, recognizing her leadership, character, and service. Graduating members Alana and Sarah were also honored with Phi Epsilon cords in recognition of their continued commitment to excellence.



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London 2026

Students in the Academy for Teaching recently returned from an unforgettable international experience in London, where they explored historic landmarks, world-renowned museums, and educational institutions while gaining valuable global perspectives as future educators.

Highlights included visits to Westminster Abbey, the British Museum, the Natural History Museum, and Christ's Hospital boarding school, as well as attending the West End musical Six.

The trip provided students with opportunities to connect classroom learning to real-world experiences, broaden their cultural awareness, and grow both personally and professionally.



Music Education Students Take Center Stage

Music education students at Catawba College enjoyed a busy and exciting Spring 2026 semester filled with performances across campus and the community. Students participated in the Wind Ensemble's Visions on Past concert in March, a program honoring tradition while embracing new voices and shared experiences through music. In April, students performed in Love & Nature, a concert exploring the connection between human emotion, community, and the natural world.

Beyond the concert hall, music education students also performed at CatawbaPaloosa, played as part of the orchestra for the theatre production of The Wizard of Oz, and brought school spirit and energy to campus through performances with the Catawba Pep Band during basketball season.



Alumni Updates

Presenting Student-Led IEPs at NCSIP



Catawba alumna Haley Sloop '23 recently presented at the NCSIP Spring Conference alongside fellow EC educators from Davie County. Their presentation focused on Student-Led IEPs and explored ways to empower students to become active participants in their educational journey. Haley's participation reflects the growing leadership of Goodman School of Education alumni within their schools and professional communities.

Alumni Return to Inspire Future Educators

One of the highlights of the Goodman School of Education's End of Year Celebration was welcoming back several outstanding alumni who continue to make an impact in education and beyond. Education alumna Brittany Arroyo '20 joined an inspiring alumnae panel alongside Abby Hilton '25, Bridgette Pearson '25, Haley Sloop '23, Migdy Gonzalez '23, and Paige Carter '23, sharing advice, experiences, and encouragement with current students preparing to enter the profession.

The evening also featured the return of proud Catawba alumnae Eleanor Link '62, Flo Peck '62, and Joann Stang '62. Joann's generosity made the Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Education possible, while all three alumnae have supported a scholarship that continues to provide meaningful opportunities for future educators.



Have news to share? We'd love to hear from you!

Send your updates to Mr. Fleming at rfleming@catawba.edu so we can celebrate your accomplishments in our next newsletter.

An Interview with Emma Kiger '25



Tell us about your current teaching position?

First Grade at Fall Creek Elementary in Yadkin County, NC.

What has surprised you most about your first year in the classroom?

How much you truly get to know the students you teach, and how knowing them plays into your teaching. Teaching is truly so much more than just curriculum and standards. It is forming relationships and bonds with the kids you teach, and truly making an impact on them not just as students, but as individuals who will hopefully change the world one day

How did your experiences in the Goodman School of Education help you feel ready for this role?

My experiences in the Goodman School of Education at Catawba not only shaped who I am as a teacher, but who I am as a person. Throughout my time at Catawba, the amazing professors within the education department helped to mentor me and guide me through my college experience. I was able to go into the field and observe teachers within their classrooms at various schools. Being able to see various styles of teaching in a range of grade levels was truly so important in my development as a teacher. These experiences greatly helped me to start to envision how I might want my classroom to look.

What has been the most rewarding moment so far as a new teacher?

I would say the most rewarding moment so far as a new teacher is being able to see "light-bulb moments" happen within your students! When a concept finally clicks for a student after weeks of working on it in class, it is truly such an amazing feeling as a teacher! Seeing their faces light up, and seeing them be so proud of themselves is something that is truly so amazing. As we are reaching the end of First Grade, a lot of my students are starting to be able to read more cohesively and fluently. Each day they bring me books in class and say "Look Ms. Kiger, I can read this now!" Moments like this are why I chose to be a teacher

What challenges have you faced, and how have you worked through them?

One major challenge I have faced as a first-year teacher is learning to multitask. I knew as a teacher I would have to multitask, but I had no idea how much. As a First Grade teacher, you have to teach every subject. I absolutely love being able to teach every subject, and staying with my kiddos all day! However, it can be hard to feel like each subject is planned well and executed to the best of your ability each and every day. Luckily, I teach in an amazing district where we are provided with a curriculum, which greatly helps in the planning process. However, this has still been a huge adjustment as a first-year teacher. Throughout the year I feel I have definitely improved at multitasking and getting everything done. One thing I have found that helps me with this is planning as far in advance as possible. This helps me stay ahead and on top of things.

What advice would you give to current education students preparing to student teach or begin their careers?

My best piece of advice would be to be the one who asks the questions! If you are new, make a list of questions that you need answers to. Don't be afraid or ashamed as you are learning. Just like you will encourage your future students to ask questions, you need to take that same advice! You want to make sure you are doing things in the correct way, so just ask!

How does it feel to represent Catawba College as an educator in your community?

Being able to represent Catawba College as an educator in my community is something I am immensely proud of! I have a Catawba flag displayed in my classroom, and I brag about being an alumni any chance I get! Catawba is truly such a special place. It shaped me in ways I couldn't have even imagined. The Goodman School of Education is truly one of a kind, and I feel so lucky to have been able to be a part of such an amazing program!



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