Lauren Pierce – Outstanding Graduate Student

Lauren Pierce is graduating this semester with a Ph.D. in educational psychology. A true Wildcat for life, Pierce demonstrated her dedication to excellence through both her undergraduate work in teacher education and now again throughout her graduate coursework in the Department of Educational Psychology. Throughout her academic career, she has served as one of the "go-to" graduate assistants in the department. She consistently proved her ability to time manage and adapt to teaching both large lecture halls and smaller weekly discussions on top of grading student papers and meeting with students outside of class. Her continued appointments to these various roles reflect the trust in and appreciation for her skills by the faculty of the department.

A dynamic teacher, she finds ways to integrate theories and experiences in engaging ways in the classroom. Moreover, there is a clear understanding of mutual respect between Pierce and her students. Her natural enthusiasm for learning -- and life in general -- are contagious and result in students enrolling in her classes specifically because they want to continue working with her.

In addition to her coursework and teaching assistantship, her research contributions to student-athlete groups have made her an in-demand commodity in youth sports. Importantly, her dissertation research, which focuses on the journey youth sports players undergo as they craft a team culture, earned her a Graduate Student Completion Fellowship Award to complete this vital work.

Described as intelligent, hardworking, friendly, and outgoing, Pierce is someone willing to do the work necessary to be successful and make significant contributions to the field of educational psychology. It has been exciting and awe-inspiring to witness Pierce's journey of connecting her background in teaching with research. We are grateful for her contributions to both the department and community and know she will represent the college well in the world.