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Communications

June 10, 2020

Event will be Held on June 19, the Celebration of Juneteenth, the Ending of Slavery in the U.S.



The Gardner-Webb Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) is sponsoring a virtual 5K to end racism and raise awareness of racial inequality. The GWU Race to End Racism will be held on June 19, which is the celebration of Juneteenth, the oldest national commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19 that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free.

[Participants may register online here.](#) Then, walk or run the 5K at a place and time they choose, and share a photo with the hashtag, #GWURacetoEndRacism. Donations will also be accepted for the Gardner-Webb [Black Student Association](#).

The idea for the virtual event developed from a conversation among members of the GWU women's soccer team. According to Kylie Ameres, a soccer player and vice president of SAAC, they talked about sponsoring an event as a way for women athletes to show support

for their black teammates and the black community. Ameres graduated in May with a degree in exercise science, health sciences concentration and is enrolled in the GWU Master of Science in Strength and Conditioning Program.

“Gabby Berkes (junior women’s soccer player) initially presented the idea to show our support during these times,” Ameres shared. “This idea immediately caught the support of our entire team and eventually led to it being presented to SAAC. Our team is comprised of many ethnicities, races and nationalities, so it was a very cool experience to listen to everyone’s unique ideas and unite as one team to create this 5K for change.”

When Talen Francis, SAAC president and a member of the GWU women’s lacrosse team, heard about the event, she thought it was a great idea. She is also the president of the Black Student Association and the Pre-Law Society. A senior majoring in psychology and political science, Francis serves as a senator-at-large in the Student Government Association.

“I decided to support it personally, as a black woman, because of the initiative they had to raise awareness,” Francis affirmed. “I think the women’s soccer team’s activism is a great example for how to be of aid to the black community during these times. I urge everyone to take time to listen to their black athletes, get engaged, and be an active part of dismantling racism.”

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Talen Francis



Kylie Ameres