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### **Gardner-Webb Offers CrossFit to Students, Faculty and Staff**

Office of University Communications

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# Gardner-Webb Offers CrossFit to Students, Faculty and Staff

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Office of University  
Communications

August 22, 2019

## *Community-Driven Program Aligns With GWU Values*



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—After becoming an officially licensed CrossFit affiliate last year, Gardner-Webb University is expanding its program this year. Recent renovations to Suttle Wellness Center have increased the space for CrossFit workouts, adding new flooring, equipment, rigs and weights. A full-time CrossFit Coach, 2011 alumna Melissa Battista, will teach free CrossFit classes for students, faculty and staff.

CrossFit, a workout that consists of varied functional movements performed at high intensity, gained popularity on the GWU campus through the efforts of Brian Arnold, director of Student Activities, Campus Recreation, and New Student Orientation. He began doing the program and thought it was a good fit for Gardner-Webb.

“CrossFit is community-driven,” Arnold described. “We can all be in the same class at different fitness levels doing the same thing. We connect with each other. That’s exactly what we have at Gardner-Webb.”

Sarah Currie, vice president of Student Development and dean of students, saw the excitement surrounding CrossFit and supported the expansion. “In many ways, CrossFit aligns with the values that Gardner-Webb already promotes or cares about, such as the overall wellness of our students, including physical health and the essence of community,”

Currie observed. “We saw an opportunity to use the foundation that was laid this past year and expand. The renovated space allows us to grow this fitness option on campus and attract new students who are already active members in the larger CrossFit community.”

The new design was approved by the administration, which included input from President Dr. William M. Downs and Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Ben Leslie. Several cardio machines were added along with other lifting equipment and weights. While geared for CrossFit, the equipment can be used for any fitness program.

Battista, originally from Florida, played soccer at Gardner-Webb. The team was like a family, and they motivated each other to work out. After graduation, she taught elementary school in Shelby, N.C. Going to the gym wasn’t the same, because she didn’t have teammates to encourage her. A friend introduced her to CrossFit, and it provided the community atmosphere she missed.

“You become good friends with the people you work out with,” explained Battista. “I’m excited to be able to build a community with students at GWU who maybe aren’t as lucky as I was to be a member of a team and have that immediate family when coming to college.”

[Learn more about CrossFit at Gardner-Webb.](#)

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at [Gardner-Webb.edu](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).*



CrossFit Coach Melissa Battista works with a student in the new CrossFit space in Gardner-Webb’s Suttle Wellness Center.