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Communications

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Josh McKoy '18 Wants to Make a Positive Impact on Patients' Lives



When he was 10, Joshua McKoy wanted to be like his brother and become a dentist. Looking back, the 2018 alumnus of Gardner-Webb University realizes his reasons were superficial. “It wasn’t until 11th or 12th grade that dentistry became a passion for me,” McKoy reflected. “My best friend got braces.”

His friend had always been self-conscious about his teeth and covered his mouth when he laughed. “When my friend got braces, I noticed there was a drastic change in his demeanor,” asserted McKoy, who lives in Richmond, Va. “He smiled and laughed. He talked to attractive girls. He became a new person. So, it occurred to me that if a dentist, an orthodontist in his case, can impact someone’s life to that extent for the better, I wanted to do the same.”

To prepare for dental school, McKoy majored in biology and minored in chemistry at GWU. He was recruited to play football, but at the end of the first season, he realized his priorities had changed. “I wanted to be involved in a lot more in college, but knew I wasn’t going to have time to do all of those things and play football,” McKoy shared.

He worked as a Student Development Officer for Alumni Relations, Student Recruitment Ambassador for Undergraduate Admissions, and a Teaching Assistant for the Department of Natural Sciences. He was founder and president of the Pre-Health Society, a participant in the Honors Program and member of Tri-Beta, Sigma Zeta and Gamma Sigma Epsilon.

McKoy helped facilitate a program at GWU to celebrate diversity and promote intercultural understanding, awareness and collaboration. He and the other students worked with GWU officials to develop the Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives and also helped interview the new director of the office, Jackie Leach.

“This wouldn’t have been possible if it weren’t for the relationships that I was able to build with the people at GWU,” McKoy observed. “I and a few other students met with Dr. (Frank) Bonner, Dean (Sarah) Currie, and others of GWU’s administration about improving diversity at the University. At that meeting, I proposed the development of some sort of multi-cultural center.”

McKoy also worked with Dr. Meredith Rowe, assistant professor of biology, and Micah Martin, director of the Center for Personal and Professional Development, to create the Pre-Health Society for students who are preparing for medical school or dental school.

After graduating from GWU, McKoy was accepted into dental school at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. He is confident his science professors, Dr. Rowe, Dr. Tom Jones and Dr. Joseph Oyugi, equipped him with the knowledge to succeed. “The science courses I took helped me look at and understand concepts from different perspectives within science,” he asserted. “In dentistry, I must be able to approach and treat issues from different perspectives. I learned to be methodical and deliberate in all that I do and this will also be required of me in dentistry.”

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