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Kaitlynn Watts Smith '15 Valued Guidance and Support of Nursing Professors



Kaitlynn Watts Smith, a 2015 alumnus, speaks to Gardner-Webb students at a program sponsored by the Center for Personal and Professional Development. Photo by Lisa Martinat

Motivated by her earnest desire to help people, Kaitlynn Watts Smith '15, of Kannapolis, N.C., chose a career in nursing. When she visited Gardner-Webb University, she experienced a campus that integrated education and Christian values. The school's motto, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity) aligned with her own ideals.

"Being a nurse allows me to serve and care for others, which is something that gives me great joy," Smith affirmed. "I feel that by serving my community and making a difference in the lives of others, I am able to grow closer to God and live out what he has called me to do."

She also knew Gardner-Webb's intimate and supportive classroom setting would be valuable during her studies in a rigorous nursing program. Besides academics, Smith was also looking for an opportunity to cheer in college. "When I got my acceptance letter to the

Bachelor of Science in Nursing program and made the cheerleading squad, I knew Gardner-Webb would become my ‘home away from home,’” Smith shared, “a place that would allow me to grow in my faith and my education.”

The hands-on simulation nursing lab and the clinicals offered at various hospital and healthcare settings prepared her to competently care for patients. “I learned interpersonal skills, team-work, assessment skills, critical-thinking skills, how to interact and communicate with patients and other professionals, and so much more,” she reflected. “My nursing professors truly cared about my success in the program. It meant a lot to me that my professors knew me by name, and that we had a relationship that involved both my studies and things that were going on in my everyday life. Their guidance and support were critical to my success.”

She was also grateful for the anatomy classes she took. “They allowed me to learn, in depth, about the human body,” she asserted. “I also learned the value of time management and the importance of having a strong work ethic to succeed in these challenging courses.”

While preparing to become a nurse, Smith developed friendships and gained experiences to remember. “I went to Gardner-Webb to further my education to prepare me for the professional world,” she observed. “After four years quickly flew by, I realized I got so much more during my time spent as a Runnin’ Bulldog. The memories I made at Gardner-Webb are some that I will forever hold close to my heart.”