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Office of University
Communications

December 16, 2018

Abbey Smith '18 Wants to Help People Get Back to Activities of Daily Living

Recruited to play soccer at Gardner-Webb University, Abbey Smith of Oxford, N.C., chose to major in exercise science. She had a general idea that she wanted to help people and work with athletes, but wasn't exactly sure of her career path.

"My sophomore year, I was introduced to occupational therapy and it was a field that I didn't know much about, but really intrigued me," she reflected. "As I learned more about the profession, I knew I wanted to be an occupational therapist so I could help individuals get back to their activities of daily living."

After graduating in December 2018, she will be pursuing her doctorate at Spalding University in Louisville, Ky. "I believe the courses at Gardner-Webb, specifically my Exercise Science courses, have truly prepared me for my graduate school program," Smith observed. "I have had many professors outside the exercise science program to inform me that the coursework we are required to do is graduate level work."

She added that the professors in the Department of Exercise Science, Dr. Jeff Hartman and Dr. David Granniss, don't allow their students to settle for mediocrity. "Without their support and preparation, I would not have gotten into graduate school," Smith stated.

Hartman and Granniss also require students to take career development courses, and she now understands why. "The closer I got to applying for grad school, I realized that most of the work for applications were complete or at least started because of the work I was required to do," Smith assessed. "Gardner-Webb has an amazing career development program and staff who are extremely willing to help you with your applications and job search. The career development mock interviews and etiquette dinner allowed me to learn appropriate ways to answer interview questions and conduct myself in a professional setting."

Smith cherishes all the friendships she's made at Gardner-Webb and the support of a Christian community. "I have never been on a team where we were allowed to pray before games and pray with the other team after our

match,” she affirmed. “During these moments, I felt the closest to the Lord and it was really cool to see the impact it had on the other teams. The people at Gardner-Webb are what makes this campus and the four-year experience so amazing.”

She concluded, “I am extremely thankful for the opportunities I have received at GWU. I know that the connections I have made with my professors and classmates will last for years to come.”