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Giorgie Graves – female swimmer to graduates Bachelor of Science in Nursing



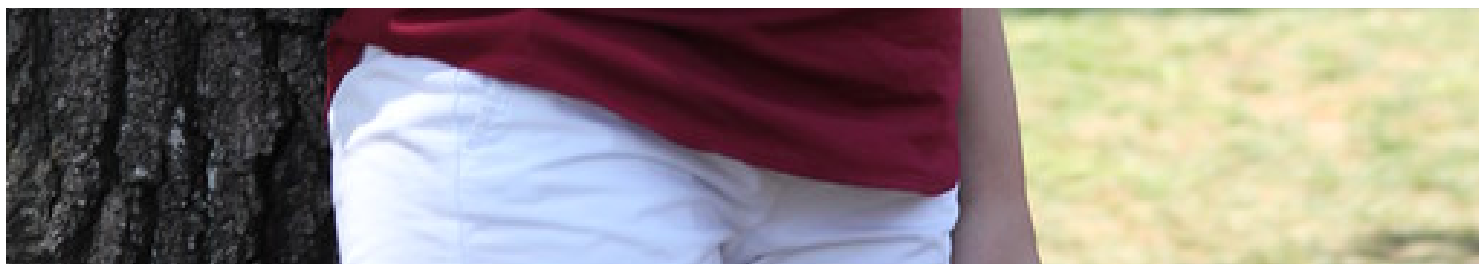


Photo by Tessa Walsh

By: Tessa Walsh

Graduating senior, Giorgie Graves will be the first woman to ever complete the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Gardner-Webb while competing at the highest level of swimming as a Division One athlete. After four years of rigorous training and academia, Graves has swam her last lap as a Runnin' Bulldog and will graduate on May 7, 2016.

At the 2016 CCSA Conference meet, Graves finished third in her final individual career race, the 100 butterfly. She holds numerous school records both individually and as part of relay teams.

Much of her time in college has been spent prioritizing nursing because her main goal was to earn a degree. However, Graves managed to find time to commit to both academics and athletics, learning valuable lessons in discipline and time management.

While discipline is something that athletes learn from their sport, pairing it with a “physically and mentally demanding and time-consuming major, learning the value of discipline [was] paramount,” said Graves.



Graves at the Feb. 2016 Swim Conference.
Photo by Tessa Walsh

Now that she is retired from swimming, Graves said she finds it “more difficult to accomplish tasks as quickly and efficiently as she used to.” To manage her time, the soon-to-be nurse makes lists and prioritizes the coming week and day which makes her planner her “best friend.”

Graves said her largest sacrifices have been social life and sleep. While classes and swimming consumed her day, studies consumed her nights which left little time for friends. Making that sacrifice has “been one of the greatest challenges that [she] has faced over the past four years,” said Graves.

To future student athletes pursuing a nursing degree, she suggested that they need to be “all in” and to set goals and commit to them – keeping God first. “He gave you these talents and passions, and He’s the one who gives you value,” said Graves.

“Being in pursuit of a nursing degree while completing four years of college athletics, can seem like a pretty impossible goal to accomplish,” she said. “If you put your complete trust in the Lord, you will see that He is faithful to give you His peace and endurance to push on.”

Graves is a role model to other teammates, both in the BSN program and in other areas of study. With four current students swimmers pursuing a degree in nursing, she has paved the way for many more successful student-athletes.

Editor's Note: Giorgie Graves is the first swimmer to graduate with the current BSN program established in 2010.