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Experiences at GWU Helped Alumna Gain Admission to Physician Assistant (PA) Program

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Catherine White '17 Valued Academic Preparation and Support of Community

Two factors affected Catherine White's decision to attend Gardner-Webb University.

photo of Catherine White

She wanted to play tennis for a Division I school in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and she liked the atmosphere on campus. "The size of the school really allows you to get to know the people around you, and truly create a community," she reflected.

The Rock Hill, S.C., native's goal was to become a Physician Assistant (PA). She chose to major in exercise science to prepare for graduate school. Being in the small classes at GWU gave her opportunities to collaborate with her classmates and seek help from her professors. "Students get to know the students around them and work as a team to learn tough material," White observed. "The exercise science professors—Dr. Jeff Hartman and Dr. David Granniss—were always willing to meet me at any time, even in the summers, to mentor and guide my path. They push you out of your comfort zone and lift you up to a new level. It is very evident they truly want their students to succeed in their classes, as well as the real world."

When she graduated in 2017, she also celebrated acceptance into the PA program at the University of South Carolina in Columbia. She was ready for this next step for several reasons. Her exercise science courses combined academic content with resume workshops and other career readiness opportunities. She developed leadership skills by serving on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and helping to start a chapter of Delight College Women's Ministry. She gained laboratory experience in organic chemistry, microbiology and biochemistry.

"I also shadowed professionals in the field I intended to go into, logged hours of service learning and participated in many other opportunities," White assessed. "These helped me grow as a professional while still learning the ins and outs of exercise science."

In addition to preparing her academically and professionally, Gardner-Webb also gave her a support network. "GWU is a special place—the Lord is working through the professors, faculty, coaches, and students," she affirmed. "The people you meet at GWU will become

your family. Professors and faculty will become your mentors, and you will cherish your time spent there.”