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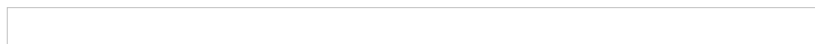
Gardner-Webb Senior Plans Future Military Career

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Office of University
Communications

December 7, 2017

ROTC Cadet Dean Cantrell ('18) Works to Develop Leadership, Time Management Skills at GWU



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – A Gardner-Webb senior is preparing for active duty in the U.S. Army, and believes the University experience has provided him with all the tools he needs for future success.

Dean Cantrell ('18), an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) cadet at GWU who will be commissioned as a Second Lieutenant upon graduation in May, is majoring in Computer Science and plans to use his skills as an officer in the military. The Williamston, N.C., native has taken full advantage of opportunities at Gardner-Webb, and encourages fellow students to do the same.

“Take every opportunity that you can. I have learned how to better manage my time so I can give my best effort to those I am leading,” Cantrell reflected. “The most significant thing I have learned how to do in leadership is to delegate, which incorporates time management and utilizing people’s strengths.”

As a member of the JROTC in high school, Cantrell knew he wanted to attend a college that offered the ROTC program, which prepares young adults to become military officers. During the college application process, he learned about Gardner-Webb and applied. Once he learned that the University offered an ROTC program, he made the decision to attend.

Dean Cantrell on campus

“I have been in Army ROTC at Gardner-Webb ever since my freshman year,” he explained. “I earned the ROTC Scholarship my sophomore year, which secured my commission in the Army when I graduate. After I commission as a Second Lieutenant, I will serve for at least four years in active duty in Air Defense Artillery.”

Although he is still deciding whether to pursue a 20-year career in the armed forces, Cantrell knows he made the right college choice. “The sense of community is amazing because it is so easy to make friends here,” he shared. “The professors and instructors take a lot of care with the classes and make it worth my time to be present. On the ROTC side, the people motivate me to improve every day. The cadets that I have sweat with—and, in some cases, bled with—will always be my brothers and sisters in arms.”

Cantrell acknowledges a range of people who offered individualized support through classes, programs, and campus activities. “Captain Michael Meissner has put so much of his time and effort into this ROTC program and it shows. In the course of a year, he has tripled the size of our program and given us facilities and opportunities to keep improving ourselves,” he said. “In addition to Nick Dyer, a fellow cadet and one of my closest friends on campus, I’m also grateful for Dr. Paula Qualls. She is one of the most understanding and caring professors I have ever met. When I was in her Old Testament class, she prayed for my family and me when we were going through a tough time. Even after finishing her class, she still welcomes me back to pray or to discuss the Bible.”

As he prepares to embark on his life journey—which he knows will be full of twists and turns—he believes he has been well prepared for all his future may hold. “I really have enjoyed my time at Gardner-Webb,” he affirmed. “It has opened doors to so many different things, and I have gained lifelong friends.”

Founded in 1916, ROTC—which stands for Reserve Officer Training Corps—is a college program offered at over 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States. In exchange for a paid college education and a guaranteed post-college career, cadets commit to serve in the military after graduation.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.