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GWU Exercise Science Professors Prepare Student for Competitive Graduate School

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Office of University
Communications

June 9, 2017

Jordan Davis '17 Accepted to Mercer's Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

More than 600 students applied to the Doctor of Physical Therapy program at Mercer University in Atlanta, Ga. Jordan Davis, a 2017 graduate of

photo of Jordan Davis

Gardner-Webb University, was one of 38 who were accepted. "I credit my very quick admission (same day as my interview) to the unique and thorough preparation the GWU Exercise Science program provided," Davis related. "I feel as though I stood out among the others who were selected to interview due to two major aspects: 1) the rigorous coursework on my transcript and 2) the heavy emphasis my major professors placed on developing 'soft skills' for professional success."

Those "soft skills" include being able to communicate well, collaborate with others on a project, and solve a problem. "I attended etiquette dinners, participated in mock interviews, frequently presented complex ideas to peers, and practiced elevator speeches," Davis expounded. "These experiences made it easy to transition through all three phases of my interview at Mercer with confidence."

Along with practicing interpersonal skills, students in the GWU Department of Exercise Science demonstrate their knowledge through service learning projects and research studies. "We had to clearly display adequate growth from the service provided and explain how this related back to the class curriculum," Davis noted. "The program makes sure what we are learning is pervasive and applicable instead of compartmentalized and forgettable. For example in motor behavior, I was taught how muscles work from the individual fibers to entire muscular systems."

One of the most difficult courses for Davis was exercise physiology, especially the lab portion. "I remember being handed a sheet

Jordan Davis with a patient

with about 10 columns of different numbers with abbreviations at the top," she described. "I also remember the horror of having to turn those metabolic cart readings into a 10 to 15 page lab report. Through that experience I learned how to be resourceful and properly navigate academic journals. Being able to filter through jargon and find what was most beneficial for my purposes was a must. When I came through that course, I was a completely different student."

The seminar course gave her an opportunity to research a topic and write a 60-page research proposal, “The Impact of a Positive Sickle Cell Trait Status on Athletic Performance and Self-Efficacy.” She also submitted references and appendixes and an actual application for IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval. “There are not many programs that require something of this caliber at the undergraduate level,” Davis assessed. “It speaks to the expectations our department places on its students and to our as students’ ability to meet that exceptional standard. Even though I’m not exactly sure what obstacles lie ahead as I continue my education, I know that I can meet any requirement through persistence, passion and dedication. I am secure in this fact because of my experiences here at Gardner-Webb.”