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### Senior Nursing Major Establishes Mentorship Program as Part of Undergrad Research

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# Senior Nursing Major Establishes Mentorship Program as Part of Undergrad Research

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Office of University  
Communications

November 1, 2016

## *Starr Tate ('17) Investigates the Importance of One-on-One Student Mentoring*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – When she graduated from high school and embarked on her college journey, Starr Tate of Gastonia, N.C., didn't anticipate some of the challenges she would face. Yet, her first year at Gardner-Webb was marked by individuals who were willing to help her navigate unexpected hurdles and invest in her success.

“My freshman year, I had a few nursing students who were ahead of me who were really great at giving advice and helping me along,” the senior nursing major shared. “Having that person that's kind of like a big brother or big sister that can help you and be a lifeline for you is really something I wanted to establish more formally at GWU.”

After taking part in the annual Life of the Scholar Multidisciplinary Conference (LOTS-MC) last spring, an idea began to take shape. Tate consulted with Dr. Nicole Waters, her research mentor and assistant professor in the Hunt School of Nursing, and decided to apply for the Undergraduate Research Scholars program, so that she could work on establishing a mentorship program among Hunt School of Nursing students.

“Nursing school can be hard. It's a lot of material, and it's very challenging, as any nursing student will tell you,” she offered. “I wanted to see if I could help other students who are coming to Gardner-Webb. I thought it would be really awesome to have a person who supports them and who can mentor them through their experience and their journey.”

She spent much of the summer investigating mentoring theories and discovered that there was surprisingly little scholarship connected specifically to student-nurse mentoring. “A lot of the nurse mentoring that I read about is oriented more toward the workplace,” Tate shared. “So I tried to find ways to apply what I learned within the nursing education environment.”

She worked on creating a mission statement and goals for the program, along with guidelines and parameters for both mentors and mentees so that each participant is aware of ways support and resources can be provided within specific relational boundaries. Tate has implemented a pilot mentorship program this fall with hopes of refining it and

collecting data from participants for her overall research project. Over 20 upperclassmen volunteered to serve as a mentor, while approximately the same number of first- or second-year students signed up to receive a mentor.

“Doing research over the summer surprised me. I wasn’t expecting to like it so much,” Tate confessed. “As soon as I get a job, the first thing I’m going to seek out is a mentor. I acknowledge the fact that I’m inexperienced and I’m new. I know I don’t have all of the answers like other, more experienced nurses do.”

With graduation just around the corner, Tate hopes to gain valuable experience in a hospital setting and potentially even work as a travel nurse. Ultimately, she wants to earn a master’s degree in nurse education so that she can teach future nurses. “All of the Hunt School of Nursing faculty have been excellent mentors to me—and so I will continue to seek mentors and to provide mentorship to those coming behind me.”

Her advice to those arriving on campus after she graduates is to acknowledge the importance of being intentional. “To be honest, it’s really what you make out of it,” she explained. “It’s just a matter of looking for it and not being afraid to sometimes put yourself out of your comfort zone. There’s so much to get involved in. At Gardner-Webb, you can find a way to serve in the areas where you are most passionate.”

Click below to hear more from Starr Tate about her undergraduate research project:

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University’s purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).*