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Office of University
Communications

October 17, 2016

Michael Thorarinson ('17) Dedicated to Furthering Nursing Profession

Michael Thorarinson ('17) has a confession. A Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) in Lexington, N.C., he enrolled in the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) program at Gardner-Webb under the wrong impression about his studies.

“I thought DNP stood for Doctorate of Nurse Practitioner, and the course would provide higher-level learning for my specific type of nursing,” he disclosed. “So, you can imagine my surprise when 12 of the 15 in our cohort were educators. I would have struggled a lot more if the faculty had not been patient with me to see potential for excellence in my ill-planned pursuits. They stepped up to meet me where I was. I can only hope that someday I will be able to demonstrate this dedication and encouragement to others.”

The program has given him a new vision for the career he chose as a teenager. “The real lesson I am learning is that finishing my education is about what I will do for the furthering of my profession,” Thorarinson reflected. “We are charged to be more than just great at our particular roles in nursing. We need to take a closer look at the population we serve and consider how they might be served more meaningfully.”

Even class assignments go beyond writing papers to making connections in the community that lead to opportunities for service. After conducting research on childhood obesity, Thorarinson partnered with classmate, Lisa Snow, to present an educational program for children and parents at a church in Anson County, N.C. Their information was based on a national nutrition and exercise initiative called “5-3-2-1-Almost None.” Thorarinson, who also does some preaching, helped Snow create take-home materials that incorporated scripture references with the health guidelines. “We made a lot of friends,” he offered. “The blessings that have come out of this have been amazing.”