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### GWU Psychology Major Ready for Rigors of Graduate School

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# GWU Psychology Major Ready for Rigors of Graduate School

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Office of University  
Communications

May 23, 2016

## *Juliette Ratchford ('16) Conducted Research, Developed Critical-Thinking Skills*

As a student at Gardner-Webb University, Juliette Ratchford ('16) explored various topics that developed her critical-thinking skills and prepared her for the next step in her educational journey.

Originally from Demorest, Ga., Ratchford is pursuing a doctorate in psychological sciences at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Calif. "My time at Gardner-Webb prepared me for the rigors of graduate school," Ratchford affirmed. "I've had the chance to do a lot of original and collaborative research. I am working toward getting some of this research published in academic journals."

While she feels confident in her scholarly pursuits, she believes her studies went beyond the classroom. "Anything I learned—the study of personality, counseling techniques, and crisis intervention—is applicable to my life outside of class," she concluded. "I believe the School of Psychology and Counseling is more focused on shaping well-rounded, intelligent individuals than it is on checking the boxes for a degree. I am leaving this program knowledgeable about more than just psychology. I understand how to defend my stance, listen to the perspectives of others, and acknowledge when I am in the wrong. I am exiting this program with skills that will continue to serve me through my entire life."

Ratchford appreciated her psychology professors because they were able to bring something new and exciting to the study of psychology by sharing their own interests and passions. "They were constantly seeking to challenge us to become better psychologists and, more importantly, better people," she observed.

She met one of her psychology professors, Dr. James Morgan, on her first visit to tour Gardner-Webb. She also met Susan Bell, professor of art. These professors helped to make her decision about college. "Their passion for their career and their intentionality drew me to attend Gardner-Webb," she shared.

The close-knit community welcomed her when she arrived as a first-year student. She joined FOCUS, a ministry involving teams of students who lead youth retreats locally and regionally. She was also a member of the Art Club, Psi Chi, Theta Alpha Kappa and Alpha

Chi, and recommends that new students take advantage of opportunities available on campus.

She expanded her base of knowledge by taking forensic chemistry and classical languages. “In forensic chemistry I was given the chance to explore a field of study that I had not really considered before. I was challenged throughout the course and my perspective was broadened,” Ratchford assessed. “I fell in love with the Greek class and the exploration of scripture in its original languages.”

After her first semester of Greek, Ratchford decided to minor in classical languages. “My Greek classes were really memorable as I was in class with the same group of people through four semesters,” she related. “Dr. Scott Shauf, the professor who teaches Greek, was a phenomenal teacher who impacted me greatly. The class discussed serious theological topics that made me think in new ways.”

Whether she was learning theology in Greek class or participating in campus activities, Ratchford felt like she was a valued member of the community. “People—professors and students—genuinely care for each other, and it was great to be a part of that,” Ratchford advised. “Immerse yourself in the community. Get involved with clubs, seek out other people, and do not be afraid to explore. Your time at Gardner-Webb will stretch you and grow you in ways you’ve never imagined.”