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Office of University
Communications

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Idahoan Found a Home Away from Home on Welcoming Campus

Liv LuVisi ('16) of Kuna, Idaho, embraces life's challenges as opportunities for growth and adventure. Told by her parents that she would have to pay her own way to college, LuVisi concentrated on her studies in high school and participated in extracurricular activities with the purpose of winning scholarships.

"I even began competing in pageants to win scholarship money," she acknowledged. "When it came time to begin applying to colleges, I essentially applied to every college that emailed me, including Gardner-Webb University. Thirty-eight college applications later, I was invited to attend several scholarship competitions and was awarded multiple full-tuition scholarships."

Gardner-Webb offered her a University Fellows scholarship — now known as the Ignite Excellence scholarship — which is full tuition, room and board for four years. LuVisi wanted to come and check out the campus, but arranging the nearly 3,000-mile trip required time and money.

"Thanks to my amazing, supportive parents, my mom and I flew out to Gardner-Webb," LuVisi recalled. "We were given a tour, attended several informative sessions, met President Dr. Frank Bonner, talked with current students, and interviewed with a couple of the faculty members. I loved how inviting and kind everyone was, and I knew that Gardner-Webb was a place I could call home for the next four years. Receiving one of the University Fellows scholarships was icing on the cake and made my college experience possible for me."

Her next challenge came as she was thinking about her future. LuVisi intended to major in psychology with the goal of attending graduate school to become a counselor for the mentally ill or for troubled teens. But her first week on campus, her plans began to unravel. It started when she saw a flyer promoting Gardner-Webb's radio station, WGWG.org.

"I thought, 'Well, that could be fun. I've already moved across the country—why not go even further out of my comfort zone and try something completely foreign?'" LuVisi offered. "I reached out to Jeff Powell (WGWG operations manager), met him that first

week and started right away. I realized that radio was something I could see myself doing and loving for the rest of my life. As much as I loved psychology and the idea of becoming a therapist, I realized that I wasn't cut out for that line of work and that I would eventually wear myself out. Radio stations can have a large impact in their immediate communities, and I recognized how I could still have an influence through this unique outlet."

She decided to double major in broadcast journalism and English because of encouragement from a couple of professors in the Department of English Language and Literature. "I was awarded the First Year Writing Award among Gardner-Webb freshmen," LuVisi related. "After seeing how much my professors believed in my writing, I began to believe in myself, too. I decided to pick up a second degree in writing."

She considers the GWU radio station, located in Elliott House with the Office of University Communications and Media Relations, as her home away from home. "It has become a sanctuary and safe haven for me," she explained. "Not only did Jeff Powell cultivate my newfound love for radio, but he also took the time to get to know me as an individual. The rest of the staff offered encouragement, wisdom and advice. They have all left a lasting impact on my life – academically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally. And I will miss them the most after I graduate."

Diploma in hand, she has moved back home to Idaho to start her job as promotions manager over four radio stations in the Boise-area market. "I am beyond excited for this opportunity to work in the field of communications," LuVisi declared. "I value the person that Gardner-Webb has helped me become, and I am forever grateful for all the University has given me."

She continued to reflect on her experience, "This community—from my family away from home in the communications office to my bosses in undergraduate admissions, to my professors, friends, and classmates—has shaped me into the woman I am today, and I couldn't be more thankful. I have learned how to live with 30-plus other women, how to stand confidently in front of crowds and speak my mind, and how to be okay with the fact that sometimes, I don't know what I'm doing. Gardner-Webb has taught me that life is one great, big learning experience, and this is only a small portion of it. There is so much to still come, and I am excited to see where I end up in the future. I feel like I am someone who will make my family proud."