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Communications

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Brandon Smith ('15) Working with High School Athletes

As athletic trainer for Shelby (N.C.) High School, Brandon Smith ('15) aims to be a source of encouragement for the student-athletes under his care.

“I enjoy having the opportunity to work with high school students and hopefully make a positive impact on their lives, whether it is by helping them realize what they want to do with their lives, being someone they can talk to and counsel with, or just by being a role model,” Smith shared. “The most rewarding part of my job is getting to help athletes return to play as soon as possible.”

Smith, originally from Mooresville, N.C., teaches three levels of sports medicine classes and provides prevention and care of injuries. He educates athletes on injury prevention, nutrition and hydration. He provides emergency care and is available during practices and competitions for all of the school's teams.

“My experiences at Gardner-Webb set me up well for where I am today,” Smith observed. “I had many clinical experiences and a hefty workload in my athletic training core that have helped me to mold my skills and work ethic. These included hands-on experience working with Gardner-Webb athletic teams and athletes that is priceless in the field of athletic training. I also had a chance to do a case study presentation at the North Carolina Athletic Trainer's Association Spring Symposium, which gave me great exposure to professionals in the athletic training community.”

Professors at the University work to create a supportive environment for students, Smith added.

“All the Gardner-Webb faculty members that I encountered were extraordinary people,” he assessed. “Their number-one goal was to help their students prepare for the future, a goal that was met in several different ways. They challenged us to grow in our selected fields of study but also in our faith.”

A faculty member who was most helpful in his academic pursuit was Dr. Heather Hudson, dean of the School of Preventive and Rehabilitative Health Sciences. Hudson was always willing to meet with him to answer questions.

“She challenged me to stay focused on the goals I had for myself that extended past my time at Gardner-Webb while also keeping me on track with what was in front of me,” he

praised. “One thing that always stood out to me about her was the fact that she spoke to me as one colleague to another as opposed to that of a professor or dean to a student. She also has been a mentor to me during the beginning stages of my work as an athletic trainer.”

Smith chose to major in athletic training, because the field combines two of his interests—medicine and athletics. He applied to Gardner-Webb, because the application was free and “once I stepped on campus, I felt like God was telling me, ‘This is where I want you to go,’” he asserted. “Attending Gardner-Webb was one of the best choices that I have made in my life. I received a great education, built life-long relationships, and grew in my faith more than I ever could have imagined. I would strongly encourage someone to consider Gardner-Webb.”