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### **Standout Student, Swimmer Finds Ultimate Success Through Faith**

Office of University Communications

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# Standout Student, Swimmer Finds Ultimate Success Through Faith

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Office of University  
Communications

November 7, 2015

*Connor Bos ('17) says GWU has Taught him to Balance Life's Priorities*

Before the sun sends rays through the glass surrounding Gardner-Webb's Bost Pool, Connor Bos ('17) backstrokes through the water. His 5 a.m. practices several times each week are often followed by weight-lifting sessions and studying, all before he attends his first class of the day.

The GWU junior's constant work in the pool has already helped him shine in two years of collegiate swimming. He won a Coastal Collegiate Swimming Association (CCSA) championship in the 100 backstroke earlier this year, and he followed with intense training toward goals of making the U.S. Olympic Trials and the NCAA Division I nationals.

At best, swimming comes third in priorities for Bos, who puts more emphasis on his academics and utmost importance on his walk with Christ. Gardner-Webb, Bos shared, has helped him balance and correctly order what matters most in his life, now and into the future.

"When my dad saw me halfway through my freshman year at Gardner-Webb, he said, 'Your faith and spiritual walk with Christ have taken off,'" Bos remembered. "Having professors, coaches and teammates of the Christian faith around me all the time, those positive influences and discipleship mentors who get involved in my life, has been a major victory in itself."

In addition to deepening his spiritual focus, faculty and staff members at the University have allowed Bos to excel in his studies while also succeeding in the pool.

"I've had professors record lectures for me to watch later and allow me to take tests and quizzes early so I don't have to worry about learning the material and my grades when I'm away from campus for a meet," he revealed. "That's been a big help to me, and I've seen professors extend the same opportunities to other athletes time and time again. If you take the initiative, your professors will go out of their way to help you at Gardner-Webb."

In the Godbold School of Business, faculty members often take students beyond the classroom to teach and offer workplace readiness skills. Bos credits business school professor Dr. Anthony Negbenebor with providing immense opportunities for career

preparation through networking with GWU alumni who now work for companies like BMW, Walmart and Duke Energy. Other mentors have allowed him to apply knowledge to reality-based learning exercises such as designing an iPhone case company and conducting a study on the impact a student's soda choice has on their GPA.

“Gardner-Webb is good at making a point of using everyday situations to give you the practice for the real world,” Bos assessed. “And Coach (Mike) Simpson encourages our career preparation with the mentality that we are great students who are also a great swim team. You are a student first and an athlete second at Gardner-Webb. Coach tells us we won't be in the pool 20 years from now, but we will be working jobs and providing for our families. Having those reminders has played a role in my performance in the classroom.”

Throughout the day, Bos finds times to focus on scholastics outside the classroom, too. Lunch and dinner often come with a side of books, and he finds pockets of time for studying throughout every part of his busy schedule as a student-athlete. His focus on his academic growth has led to a 4.0 GPA toward a major in both business finance and administration, a career path inspired by his father Jim, who worked his own way up the ranks to take charge of global purchasing for a technology and industrial company.

As the sun sets on days punctuated by afternoon swimming practice and additional time studying, Bos said his spiritual focus determines his success, regardless of his performance in the classroom or the water.

“If I learn nothing and do nothing faster in the pool, I'm OK with knowing that my faith in Jesus Christ has grown dramatically at Gardner-Webb,” he praised. “From here, it's about where Christ wants to lead me. His plan is there, and He will help me execute it. Having a positive, uplifting environment and seeing Christ in all relationships is why I believe there's so much success at Gardner-Webb. An increased walk with the Lord: That's the biggest victory for all of us.”

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University provides exceptional educational opportunities within a Christian environment, preparing students to think critically, to succeed professionally, and to serve faithfully as members of their local and global communities.*