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Gardner-Webb University Unveils Transformational Exercise Science Lab

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Office of University Communications

November 8, 2013

Carolina Chiropractic Plus Human Performance Lab Showcases the Latest in Physiological Technology

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University’s aspiring exercise physiologists and other allied health professionals will be among the first to benefit from a brand new laboratory designed to shift healthcare emphasis from disease management to preventive care. The vision for an advanced human performance lab is now a reality, due in part to the lead gift by Carolina Chiropractic Plus of Shelby, N.C. along with significant contributions from the Nanney Foundation and the McNair Educational Foundation.

Drs. Rich and Danielle
Berkowitz

Officially named the “Carolina Chiropractic Plus Human Performance Lab” and located in Gardner-Webb’s Suttle Wellness Center, the 1,300 square-foot facility will serve as the main supplement to the undergraduate exercise science program and is directed by associate professor of exercise science Dr. Jeffrey Hartman, in the GWU School of Preventive and Rehabilitative Health Sciences.

“The lab has been established to provide resources of the latest and greatest technology to our students so they can learn how to assess the physiological variables of human performance,” Hartman explained. “This facility is comparable to labs at much larger schools—Duke, Chapel Hill, and Wake Forest—the difference here at GWU is that every undergraduate student within the allied health field will have access to both use and run this equipment. That’s a privilege I didn’t even have as a graduate student at a larger school.”

A range of data can be collected with various pieces of equipment in the lab, and an individual’s overall physical condition can be assessed, potential problem areas can be identified, and a fitness prescription can be offered that will ultimately improve their strength, flexibility, range of motion, endurance, and cardiovascular capacity.

Dr. Rich Berkowitz and his wife, Dr. Danielle Rogers-Berkowitz, owners of Carolina Chiropractic Plus of Shelby, N.C., believe this project has the potential to eventually transform the scope and focus of healthcare at both Gardner-Webb University and within the community at large. With their gift, the Berkowitz’s hope to encourage a renewed awareness about the importance of an intentional health plan for individuals both within the Gardner-Webb family as well as the community at large.

“We always talk about scales of wellness. We are either moving toward disease and sickness and ill-health, or we’re being proactive and we’re moving towards health and vitality and wellness,” said Dr. Rich Berkowitz. “It’s a dynamic scale. We always need to evaluate where we are on that scale, and then we need to understand ‘which way are we moving?’ Most people are clearly moving in the wrong direction. The lab will help them identify where they are on the scale and then give them tools to begin moving toward wellness.”

For students, the benefits of the lab may not be fully realized until graduation. “The students coming out of our program will be so far ahead of other undergrad students, based on the vision of our donors who instructed us to get the best equipment on the market,” Hartman explained. “Whether they want to go into strength and conditioning, personal training, or corporate wellness, these students now have access to objective-assessment equipment that will make them head-and-shoulders above what we would consider our competition.”

Currently, the lab is still in the first of four phases of implementation. Phase one involves full exposure to the undergraduate exercise science majors (and other majors as desired). “The curriculum has been redesigned based on the available opportunities the lab offers to our students and faculty,” Hartman shared. “The next phase will involve the lab playing a major part in assessing the initial wellness of the University community—faculty and staff—so we can measure the long-term progress those individuals can make in terms of their overall health and wellness.”

Eventually, the final phases will include exposure to GWU athletes and finally, to members of the community at large. Hartman emphasized the residual benefits of the facility. “Really, the opportunities are endless with this lab,” he said. “It is a gem and we can do so much with it.”

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.