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Gardner-Webb Returning Students: Be Fully Present, Find a Balance and Dream Big

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Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "Gardner-Webb Returning Students: Be Fully Present, Find a Balance and Dream Big" (2021). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 2277.
<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive/2277>

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STUDENT-CENTERED

Gardner-Webb Returning Students: Be Fully Present, Find a Balance and Dream Big

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON AUGUST 31, 2021



From left, Jada Newton, Katie Wilson, Javonda Adams, Mackenzie Sauter and Sammy Itodo

Student Government President and Others Share Tips From Their Experiences

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—“Live in the moment.” Four words that can make a difference in your college experience, noted senior Jada Newton, president of the Gardner-Webb University Student Government Association (SGA). Her advice is echoed by sophomore Katie Wilson, junior Sammy Itodo, and seniors Mackenzie Sauter and Javonda Adams. From their experiences, these students offer tips to those beginning their college journey.

Remembering her first semester at GWU, Newton said she was skeptical when people told her that college would fly by. A business major and criminal justice minor, Newton realizes now that they were right. Factor in a global pandemic that took away a year of the usual college experience, and she has all the more reason to be fully present—in class, at football games, club meetings, etc.



▲ Jada Newton

“I’m most excited to get to know the student body face-to-face and be out there and immersed in the Gardner-Webb culture post COVID,” informed Newton, of Woodbridge, Va. “Like getting to enjoy the regular, fun stuff about college that everyone missed out on last year, but also finding our new normal moving forward from the pandemic and building a new camaraderie and school spirit.”

Even though this year didn’t start the way Newton wanted—a soccer player, she is out for the season because of a broken metatarsal—she will serve her team in different ways and enjoy her senior year. “The only thing you can control is your perspective,” advised Newton, who plans to pursue a graduate degree. “Take control of that and make it something that will enhance the moment. Don’t look back with regrets. I’m never going to be a senior at Gardner-Webb again.”



▲ Sammy Itodo

Itodo, who is from Nigeria, is a member of the men’s basketball team. An economics/finance major, he graduates in 2022. His goal is to play basketball professionally, and when his sports career is over, he would like to start his own business. Like his own goals, Itodo advised, “It’s OK to dream big. Every work is an artistry of the person who does it, append yours with excellence. The best or nothing. Go Dawgs.”

Wilson, of Connelly Springs, N.C., is also looking forward to activities she missed last year. A biology major, she graduated from high school and experienced her first year at GWU during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. “I am very excited to actually get to do labs, meet my professors and really connect with them,” she said. “I’m excited to get to go to games and be a college student.”

Sauter and Adams are also ready to experience a more normal college life. Sauter is an exercise science major. Adams, a deaf student, is majoring in American Sign Language. Communicating through an ASL interpreter, Adams said she hopes to become an ASL teacher. The new president of the ASL Club, Adams said her goal this semester is to make the Dean’s List.

Sauter will be applying to graduate school with the goal of becoming an athletic trainer. She intends to study hard and make good grades, but also hopes to build relationships with her peers that will last long after graduation. “I’m going to try and spend more time with my friends and actually do college people stuff,” she related. “I’m super excited that sports are back. I love watching sports. I used to play soccer, so I’m excited to see all of them play again.”



Katie Wilson



Mackenzie Sauter

Advice for the Class of 2025:

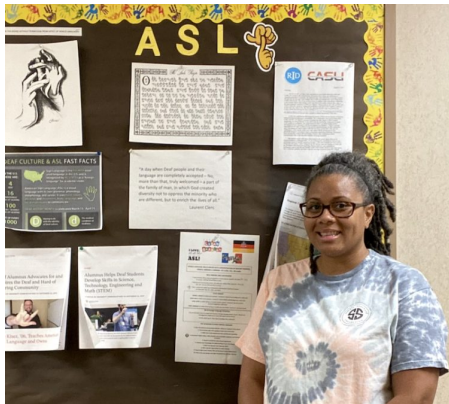
SOPHOMORE KATIE WILSON

“Get involved but don’t overload yourself. Give yourself time to breathe and just have fun.”

JUNIOR SAMMY ITODO

“If there is anything I have learned over the last three years at Gardner-Webb, it’s that procrastination is a big enemy of success. Some people come into college and forget why they are here and so their academic work suffers. Others come and are so focused on their academic work that their social life suffers. It is important to find and strike a balance between academic and social life. There is a big world out there, explore it.”

SENIOR MACKENZIE SAUTER



- ▲ Senior Javonda Adams is president of the ASL club this year.
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“Learn to balance school work and the college life. It may take a minute to figure out what works for you, but it is so important to find the balance!”

SENIOR JAVONDA ADAMS

“Always put your priorities first and aim for the goal that you want to succeed.”

SENIOR JADA NEWTON, SGA PRESIDENT

“Like anything in life, Gardner-Webb is what you make it. Don’t be afraid to put yourself out there. Don’t just get involved, but go outside of your comfort zone and meet new people or get involved in a club you don’t think you would have seen yourself in. Those small sacrifices or small acts of courage add up and lead to bigger rewards than you think. The worse thing that is going to happen is you learn something new or you learn that you don’t like something or something isn’t for you. That experience isn’t wasted; it’s more knowledge for you.”

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.