

*Catalyst Profile*  
**Colin Gage**

From dermatology in Raleigh, North Carolina, to emergency medicine in Hartsville, South Carolina, Colin Gage, the WCU alumnus of 2008, is set on making positive change, one patient at a time. And by juggling a physician's assistant position at both Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center and Laing Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center, he is doing just that.

“My greatest achievement is being able to help people in need,” said the WCU alumnus. “There is no better feeling than knowing that you made a positive difference in someone's life.”

Before becoming a leader in a medical community that stretches across the Carolinas, Gage studied biology in Cullowhee. Opposed to the auditorium-style classes typical of most universities, WCU offered a small, close-knit environment. The professors, says Gage, “were always happy to go the extra mile,” expanding on topics that he found interesting.

Seán O’Connell, H.F. “Cotton,” and Katherine P. Robinson, professor of biology, helped shape his career, offering guidance in ion mass spectrometry and the taxa of the Smoky Mountain Ecosystem. Meanwhile, behavioral neuroscientist Ron Michaelis and cell specialist Henry Mainwaring pushed the undergrad more toward the medical end of things.

“These gentlemen, all so very knowledgeable in their respected areas, inspired me to learn as much as possible,” said Gage. “They also inspired me to not only learn the material but to also understand the material, a very important factor in any aspect of education.”

Armed with a scientific foundation and the ability to analytically examine information, Gage soon sought out a graduate degree at Barry University. From 2012 to 2013, master’s degree in tow, he worked as a PA at Lowcountry Orthopedics, a comprehensive surgery center in Charleston, South Carolina.

Fast-forward three years and this former Catamount is spending the weekends in emergency rooms and Monday through Friday in a dermatology office. Still, he is set on finding a “work-life” balance.

“You need to work hard but you also need a balanced life,” he said, perhaps with his hectic schedule in mind. “You need to find time to enjoy life and all the beautiful outlets the mountains have to offer.”

Though Gage would come back to Cullowhee “in a heartbeat,” he is now focused on those of his patients, the whole lot of them, from Raleigh to Hartsville.