Name: Janath Samira Kasthuriarachchi  
Degree: Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Physiotherapy  
Year of degree: 2nd (2011)  
Campus: Campbelltown  
High School: Baulkham Hills High School  
Completed Year 12 in: 2009  
Scholarships held: UWS Academic Excellence Scholarship

Is the degree or course structure what you expected?  
No. When I first started, I expected to be learning about all types of injuries and how to treat them from the first day. In fact, physiotherapy is much more than simply being a 'mechanic' for the human body. It involves a high level of professionalism and core health science skills, which must be mastered before learning about a single muscle.

How is university different from school?  
The main difference, and I'm sure all university students will agree with me, is the level of freedom in your studies. At school, you go from 9-3, five days a week, memorising essays, math equations or chemical reactions - study is your number one priority, especially at a selective school. At uni, you choose how to study - by yourself or in a group, whether you attend uni one day a week or five and even whether you go to your lectures. University is much more than simply a place to study.

How did high school help you in preparing for university?  
High school taught me to organise my studies and to find the study techniques that work for me.

What is the most interesting thing you've done at university so far?  
Interviewing patients, as a student physiotherapist. Finding out about their history, connecting with them on both a professional and personal level really opened my eyes.

What are some of your achievements since you started university?  
My biggest achievement would have been taking part in the ICTC (increased clinical training capacity) project at Camden hospital and going beyond the required five clinical placements. I've put my hand up for the position of secretary with the Physiotherapy Association at Uni. I've also volunteered to help out, as a student Physio, with the AFL cup which involves international teams. And I'll be completing a Sport Taping Course, with the Australian Physiotherapy Association.

Have your career aspirations changed since you began studying?  
Sports Physiotherapy has always been my passion however my eyes have been opened to other fields in physiotherapy and other health professions.

What advice would you give to students at your high school about pursuing university study?  
High school students will hear this ALL the time, but the HSC is not actually the be all, end all! If you don't get into the uni course you initially want, transferring to that course the year after is always an option. Study what YOU want to do, not what your parents think you should do. Selective school children often have to endure the pressures of their parents, but really, if you end up going to uni and doing something that someone else told you to do, it will be a nightmare.

Why did you choose to study at UWS?  
When I finished high school, UWS was just starting an exciting new physiotherapy course. The chance to be in the first cohort, paving the way for future students, was too good to pass up! I also love that there is a small number of students doing the course. You get to know everyone personally and it makes uni that much more enjoyable.

Any other comments or observations about university study?  
University study is much more enjoyable in groups, I found that out on the first day! It is nothing like high school - make the most of the freedom given to you!

More School Graduate Stories at: http://www.uws.edu.au/community/in_the_community/for_schools/school_graduate_stories
Course Information

Bachelor of Health Science/Master of Physiotherapy

Where is it held (campus)?   Campbelltown
How long is it?    4 years full time
Recommended studies:   Biology

Career opportunities: Work in private practices, aged care, private and public hospitals, workplaces, women’s health, schools, rehabilitation and chronic health management, community based agencies, rural and regional healthcare providers and working with athletes and sporting organisations.

Graduates may also choose careers in research, teaching or as consultants to industry and/or government bodies.

Practical Experience: Practical and clinical experience commences in the first and second years. In addition, students undertake five weeks of external clinical placements in third year and four placements of five weeks each during fourth year. Students return to the University for a final module on clinical experience for a professional career, focusing on professional, technical, industrial and legal topics and complex cases. Students may also gain experience at UWS’s onsite clinical training facility, the UniClinic.

ATAR (2011): 97.10

Additional information: The first three years of the program result in a Bachelor of Health Science qualification. You will study core common subjects with other Health Science students and Allied Health students. UWS is a leader in taking an evidence based approach to health sciences teaching, learning and research, to produce professionals who can truly help clients and communities to lead healthier, more productive lives.

For more information: Visit the UWS website course information at http://future.uws.edu.au/