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### High Schoolers From Six States Attend Gardner-Webb Honors Experience

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# High Schoolers From Six States Attend Gardner-Webb Honors Experience

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Office of University  
Communications

July 20, 2020



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## ***Students Accepted to Summer Program Automatically Invited to Compete for Academic Scholarships***

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—A group of 26 high school students, from 26 different schools in six states, recently spent a week on the campus of Gardner-Webb University previewing college life. As participants in The Honors Experience, the teenagers were introduced to dorm living and eating in the cafeteria, attended credit-bearing college courses, and completed service projects.

This year's group is the largest one to attend since the program began three years ago. Classes were offered on various subjects, including relationships, religious studies, biology, nursing and exercise physiology. The students attended two classes based on their interests.

On day two in the nursing class, the students performed surgery—on Mr. Banana. Dr. Nicole Waters, associate provost of the College of Health Sciences and associate professor of nursing, gave each student a banana patient, surgical kit and gown, and sterile operating field. As they received instructions on Mr. Banana's health problems, the students learned about anatomy, surgical terms and practiced using a scalpel and sutures.



After drawing different organs on Mr. Banana, such as the liver, stomach, gall bladder and kidneys, the students put the patient to sleep and began operating. Waters led a discussion about hospital protocols, caring for a patient, and medical terminology. Mr. Banana had several conditions that needed treatment: hydrocephalus, fluid on the brain; blepharoptosis, drooping eyelids; cholelithiasis, gall stones; and other ailments.

The students listened to Waters' directions and operated with precision. Savannah Greene, a senior from Polk County (N.C.) High School, hopes to become a pediatric doctor. "We get a chance to see what it's really going to be like," she observed. "It teaches us new things that will be good to know in the future." Courtney Gant, a senior at Alexander Early College in Taylorsville, N.C., wants to be a pharmacist. "I thought it was really neat to experiment with the actual instruments," she said. Skyler Hardin, a senior at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in Rutherford County, N.C., wants to be a trauma nurse. "It's really interesting, because this is what I want to do," she noted.

The Honors Experience is offered each summer to academically gifted and talented students who are currently in the ninth through 11th grade. Students who are accepted into the program are automatically invited to participate in GWU's Ignite Excellence

Scholarship competition during their senior year of high school, giving them a chance to compete for academic scholarships—the highest honor covers full tuition as well as room and board, totaling over \$40,000 per year.

Students attend chapel each day and work at service projects in the afternoon. This year, they painted a house for Rutherford County Housing Partnership, deep cleaned and did yard work for Laura's Homes of Cleveland County, N.C., performed yard and work projects for Shelby (N.C.) Mission Camp, and stocked and organized donated materials for Washington Outreach Ministry in Waco, N.C.

Dr. Eddie Stepp, professor of religious studies and philosophy, is the director, and Mindy Robinson, coordinator for Community Engagement and Student Ministries, is the assistant director. Several GWU faculty and staff help with the event. In addition to Waters, classes were taught by Dr. Candice Rome, associate professor of nursing; Dr. Iva Naydenova, associate professor of psychology; Dr. Don Berry, professor of religious studies; Dr. Jay Zimmer, assistant professor of biology; and Dr. David Granniss, chair and associate professor of exercise science. Speaking at the chapel service were Anna Sieges-Beal, assistant professor of religious studies; Tracy Jessup, vice president of Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University; Neal Payne, associate minister to the University for Student Ministries; Stacy Simmons, associate minister to the University for Pastoral Care; and Dr. William M. Downs, GWU president.



*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.*

[Learn more about The Honors Experience.](#)