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Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs speaks to the crowd before cutting the ribbon.

Dr. Jill Houser, Former Nursing Assistant Professor, Will Serve as Provider

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University and its partner, Atrium Health, celebrated a historic day for the campus on Thursday, July 16, 2020, with a ribbon cutting for the new GWU Student Health Clinic at 148 Memorial Drive. Leaders of the two entities

also praised the experience and leadership of the clinic's new provider—a familiar face on campus and in the community—Dr. Jill Houser, previously an assistant professor in the Hunt School of Nursing.

Dr. Sarah Currie, vice president of Student Development and dean of students, welcomed guests and led in prayer. She expressed her appreciation to everyone involved, and especially to GWU President Dr. William M. Downs for his leadership. “This has been an aspirational dream that we have had for a long time here on campus,” Currie related. “Once Dr. Downs arrived on campus, he saw the deficit we had in that area and was willing to move us forward on the pathway to land on a partnership and bring a Student Health Clinic to Gardner-Webb University.”

Next, Dr. Nicole Waters, associate provost for the College of Health Sciences, brought greetings and remarked how plans for the new Student Health Clinic began long before the Covid-19 pandemic. She noted that God's timing was perfect in providing the clinic and its new provider. “I am grateful for Dr. Jill Houser's servant heart to meet the needs of the young adults on campus,” Waters observed. “I am confident that she will display the Atrium Health and Gardner-Webb University mission daily. I know her knowledge and advanced skills will serve the health and well-being of our campus. More importantly, I know her heart. She exemplifies the core nursing value of caring, and her relationship-building strengths will serve well in building mutual trust among students.”

While teaching full time for the past five years, Houser has maintained her Family Nurse Practitioner national certification by practicing in a clinical setting on a regular basis. In that capacity, she has worked for more than seven years for Atrium Health Employer Solutions in Cleveland County, N.C.



From left, Brian Gwyn, GWU alumnus and Atrium Health senior vice president, West Market president, and chief executive officer of Cleveland County Healthcare system, GWU President Dr. William M. Downs, and Pam Annas, Manager, Ambulatory Services, On-Site Clinic Division / Employer Based Clinics, discuss the new Student Health Clinic before the ribbon cutting ceremony.

“I am really excited about the opportunity to serve Gardner-Webb in this new way,” stated Houser, a Boiling Springs native. “I have a deep love for this institution and community and see this as part of my calling as a nurse practitioner. I would love to see the clinic be a safe place for students to interact with the healthcare system. Being part of the larger Atrium Healthcare System will allow students to have access to much more than just this one clinic. They will have access to all the resources and expertise of the entire Atrium system. Being in a rural area, access to care is a concern for many of our students. I would like to eliminate that barrier with the addition of the new student health clinic.”

Joining the occasion from Atrium Health was GWU alumnus, Brian Gwyn, who is Atrium Health senior vice president, West Market president, and chief executive officer of Cleveland County Healthcare system. Gwyn noted the history of healthcare in the Boiling Springs area with physicians, Dr. Wyan Washburn, and his brother, Dr. Gene Washburn. He also mentioned the partnership Atrium Health and Gardner-Webb have had for many years to educate and train future healthcare professionals. “We want to be a great partner with Gardner-Webb University, not only because I am an alum, but because it is one of the best universities in the southeast, and we can see that with some of the data,” Gwyn affirmed. “I am very excited to speak about the health clinic. I’ve been in this market for 12 years, and it’s one of the first things I noticed as a deficit in this market. Today is a very special day, and we are finally here. We’ve got a great provider who’s going to be here every day, and we’ve got great leadership to help lead this practice. I’m excited about the opportunities that Gardner-Webb and Atrium Health can bring together.”

Downs thanked everyone from GWU and Atrium who had a part in making the Student Health Clinic a reality. “This is a very big day for Gardner-Webb, a big day for our students, and by extension, it’s a big day for Boiling Springs, because I think that the health of the town of Boiling Springs depends in large part on the health of the 2,000-plus students who we have on our campus,” he asserted. “Atrium’s excellent reputation lends instant credibility to what we are doing here. That’s important to us, to parents and to the community. We are thrilled to have Jill’s expertise and her knowledge of Gardner-Webb running the show here.”

In addition to Houser, the Gardner-Webb Student Health Clinic will have a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) on staff. “We will provide primary care student health services and can see patients in person, via telephone, or virtually via video,” Houser said. “We have a lab for needed services and two exam rooms. In July, we are open Monday through Thursday from 1 to 5 p.m., and in August through May, we will be open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Students can call 980-487-2390 to schedule an appointment.”



[Learn more about the Student Health Clinic.](#)

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.