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Office of University
Communications

November 1, 2019

GWU President Participates in Higher Education Panel Discussion at Charlotte Event

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University President Dr. William M. Downs participated in a panel discussion on Oct. 30 at The Summit 2019, sponsored by the Charlotte Regional Business Alliance. The full-day event was held to discuss varying perspectives, trends and data in key industries. The agenda featured speakers who are experts in the fields of education, financial services, advanced manufacturing, transportation and Infrastructure.

Downs was on a panel with other higher education leaders from across the Charlotte region. Panel members shared their institutions' roles in shaping a workforce for today and tomorrow.

During his comments, Downs described Gardner-Webb's distinctive foundation and history as a faith-based institution. "In the mission of producing graduates who are critical thinkers, effective communicators and problem solvers, we are producing graduates who are good people that you would like to hire and retain," Downs observed. "One of the things we offer at Gardner-Webb is the Center for Ethics and Entrepreneurship. The Center promotes economic vitality in our region by assisting businesses with best practices for success without compromising ethics or integrity."

Participating with Downs were the presidents from Johnson C. Smith University, Central Piedmont Community College, Cleveland Community College, Catawba College, and Winthrop University.

Downs also talked about Gardner-Webb's comprehensive articulation agreements with community colleges and how those partnerships create opportunities for all. "There is incentive for us to compete for that dwindling number of college-ready students and that



can be self-defeating when you are trying to meet the needs of the state,” he offered. “To the extent to which we can overcome the incentives of the competition and actually collaborate with each other, I think we can serve the people of North Carolina a little better.”

Some of the other topics discussed during the event were regional transportation initiatives, leadership skills, municipal and business partnerships, and the future of the Charlotte region. Among the guests were Harvey Gantt, former Charlotte Mayor; Hugh McColl, former chairman and CEO of Bank of America; Kathy Higgins, the vice president of IT Business Management for Lowe’s Companies; and Eileen Braden, executive director, head of public affairs at JP Morgan Chase & Co.

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.