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GWU Hosts 21st Annual Academic Conference

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GWU Hosts 21st Annual Academic Conference

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Office of University
Communications

March 26, 2018

More Than 50 Students Present Research Projects

By: Chelsea Sydnor, GWU Communications Intern

Participants at the LOTS-MC Conference

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University students presented their undergraduate and graduate research recently at the 21st annual Life of the Scholar Multidisciplinary Conference (LOTS-MC). More than 50 students gave presentations, making this year's conference the largest ever.

Presentations featured a variety of topics, including: fiction writing, sustainability, nutrition, genetics, social media, politics, pedagogy, physical therapy, psychology and other subjects in science, music, political science, religion, entertainment and language.

Nine students received awards for best presentation: Holly Strother of Pinehurst, N.C., Eli Hardin of Boiling Springs, N.C., Lindsay McCracken of Forest City, N.C., Shaquavia Chiles of Greenville, S.C., Ethan Ramsey of Robbinsville, N.C., Garrett Simpson of Shelby, N.C., Luciana Ryndycz of Argentina, Gabrielle Cortese of Athens, Ga., and Natalie Proctor of Hickory, N.C.

Senior Hannah Ray of High Point, N.C., won the Caudill Prize for best overall presentation for her project “Now Memories: The Present Realized through the Nostalgia for Our Past.” Her research examines how authors use stories from the past to discover what a culture lacks in the present and longs for from its history. She applied this theory of criticism to the Netflix show “Stranger Things” to see how the series, set in the 1980s, reveals attitudes in the 21st century about time and memory.

According to Ray, presenting her research to an audience with varying degrees of knowledge about her topic strengthens her argument by forcing her to identify its most important parts. She also appreciates the way the GWU community comes together for the conference. “It's one of the rare occasions when all disciplines collide, and we get the opportunity to gain knowledge and respect for all the ways scholarship is taking place on campus, not just in our department,” she said.

Ray is one of 16 GWU students who will present their projects at the Alpha Chi Conference in Portland, Ore., April 5-8. They will be among approximately 400 student participants from around the United States. Alpha Chi is a national honor society for undergraduate juniors and seniors in all academic disciplines.

The Life of the Scholar Advisory
Board is chaired by Dr. Kent Blevins.

Life of the Scholar participants

The conference's steering committee includes Dr. June Hobbs, Dr. Bruce Moser, Dr. Steve Bingham, Dr. Shea Stuart, Dr. Meredith Rowe, Prof. Hannah Allford and Dr. Nancy Bottoms.

According to Hobbs, GWU professor of English and newly-appointed chair of the Fay Webb Gardner Master Mentorship Program, faculty members join the committee voluntarily, and organize the conference as a gift to the students. "We have been richly repaid by the depth and breadth of scholarship and creativity displayed by our wonderful, hard-working students who demonstrate that Gardner-Webb is a place to get an education, not just a degree," she said.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.