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Gardner-Webb Team Finishes in Top Four at Annual Ethics Bowl

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Office of University
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Students Practice Debate Skills at State Competition

By Chelsea Sydnor '18, Intern for Communications

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—A team of students from Gardner-Webb University advanced to the semi-finals during this year's North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) Ethics Bowl. Held recently at the State Legislative Complex in Raleigh, N.C., GWU finished among the top four teams from the 24 private colleges and universities that participated.

Senior Harley Burgess of Forest City, N.C., as well as freshmen Destiny Neesmith of Kings Mountain, N.C., Carlee Winstead of North Topsail Beach, N.C., and Darby Yates of Hickory, N.C. made up this year's team. Dr. Kent Blevins, professor of religious studies, serves as campus coordinator.

The NCICU Ethics Bowl is an annual competition in which students address ethical issues by responding to case studies around a specific theme. This year's debate focused on "Ethics and the Future of Community."

Burgess, who has been a member of the team for three years, believes the group has gotten stronger each year. "This year was a great affirmation of the flexibility and adaptability of our team," she said. "I think we have a definite chance at taking the championship next year."

Neesmith liked competing against teams that had similar arguments to theirs. "We each used different ethical principles to arrive at that position," she said. "It made for an interesting debate each time."

Winstead appreciated the opportunity to connect with people from different parts of the state. "Everyone is truly a good sport," she said. "When you don't win the round, you are fully supportive of the team you went up against."



Gardner-Webb University finished among the top four teams at the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) Ethics Bowl held recently in Raleigh, N.C. Posing after the competition, from left, are Campus Coordinator Dr. Kent Blevins, Harley Burgess of Forest City, N.C., Darby Yates of Hickory, N.C., NCICU President Hope Williams, Carlee Winstead of North Topsail Island, N.C., and Destiny Neesmith of Kings Mountain, N.C. Photo courtesy of NCICU

Yates enjoyed learning to think critically about current issues in a high-pressure situation. “Ethics Bowl encouraged me to be more confident in myself and my opinions,” she said.

According to Blevins, judges are impressed by a team’s ability to work well together. “The judges are looking for signs that you have done some research and have data or background information,” he affirmed. “They also want to see your teamwork and the contribution each team member makes.”

Blevins is confident in the students’ ability to do well next year, especially as they seek to make improvements in procedures based on past competition experiences. “I’m very proud of our team,” Blevins said. “It felt good to represent Gardner-Webb.”

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.