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Gardner-Webb University Establishes Partnership with Regional Sports Facility

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Office of University Communications

August 29, 2017



Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) Offers Professional Opportunities to Students, Alums

 Tryon International Equestrian Center map

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University is excited about a new partnership with a nearby \$175 million equestrian facility. The Tryon International Equestrian Center (TIEC) is a 1600-acre equestrian resort located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains just 25 miles west of the University.

“Gardner-Webb has a long tradition as a community and business partner at the state, regional, and local level,” shared Richard McDevitt, GWU Vice President for Marketing. “The Tryon International Equestrian Center is a major regional economic driver, literally in our backyard. We’re pleased to be engaged with this important initiative and believe it offers an excellent opportunity to increase visibility of the Gardner-Webb brand.”

Since TIEC was established in 2014, Gardner-Webb professors and administrators have worked to expose students to various aspects of the equestrian tourism industry. Students have participated in professional internships and alums have been offered employment at

the facility. “The Center has made an immediate impact on the travel and tourism, hospitality, retail, and sports markets in North Carolina,” McDevitt offered. “We have already seen internship and employment opportunities for our students and graduates and we expect those to only expand over time.”

When he graduated from GWU in May, Evan Humphries found his ideal job at the TIEC in Mill Spring, N.C. Humphries is a machine operator and graphic designer at the year-round venue for international riding competitions. His job combines his skills in communications, public relations and graphic design with his woodworking and machinery experience from his summer jobs.

“It was a rare thing for them to find somebody who had some CNC [Computer Numerical Control] machine experience but also knew graphic design,” Humphries shared. “It was beneficial for me to already have knowledge of the software we use here and have the adaptability to learn new software. It was easier for me to pick up on that (software) having the knowledge I obtained during the classes for my minor in graphic design at Gardner-Webb.”

GWU Vice President for Enrollment Management Kristen Setzer agrees that the opportunities for students and alumni at the Center are significant. “It’s important for Gardner-Webb to establish partnerships within our community and region,” she affirmed. “Through these kinds of efforts, we hope to share our university mission to future students as well as continue reinforcing and growing that mission with our alumni base and other stakeholders.”

Officials hope to continue efforts to establish business partnerships that bolster hands-on learning opportunities and professional readiness for students. “Our commitment to student internships begins with our business partners,” McDevitt stated. “Working this way allows us to stay current with the changing needs of businesses. We know that our graduates are professionally prepared on day one because our business partners are always involved.”

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.