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### Doctoral Program Growth Yields New, Elite Status for Gardner-Webb University

Office of University Communications

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# Doctoral Program Growth Yields New, Elite Status for Gardner-Webb University

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Office of University  
Communications

August 17, 2016

## *GWU Now Listed as Doctoral Research Institution in Updated National Carnegie Classification*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University has achieved Doctoral University status with The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, moving from a pool of some 750 institutions in the U.S. to an elite list of just 334 in the nation. Among private schools in North Carolina, only Gardner-Webb, Duke University (Durham) and Wake Forest University (Winston-Salem) share the Doctoral University classification.

“Like the move to NCAA Division I athletics over a decade ago, Gardner-Webb University’s new Carnegie classification is simply one more indicator of the remarkable growth the University has experienced in recent years,” shared GWU Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Ben Leslie. “The most rapid growth has been in the area of graduate degrees, particularly in education, nursing and our new physician assistant program.”

Carnegie separates its Doctoral University classification into three tiers: moderate research activity, higher research activity, and highest research activity. Gardner-Webb is classified as “Doctoral University: Moderate Research Activity.” The only other private institutions in North Carolina carrying Carnegie’s Doctoral University status are Duke and Wake Forest, both at the “highest research activity” tier.

“This new classification is simply one measure of the success that the University has been blessed with as we continue to expand the kinds of educational opportunities available both on the Gardner-Webb campus and through our distance education programs,” Leslie affirmed. “And it doesn’t represent a shift in the University’s mission.”

He continued. “If there has been a shift, it has been in the evolving needs of our region for more professional and graduate studies that stand on the strong foundation of Christian, faith-based education. Gardner-Webb upholds its commitment to four-year, residential, undergraduate education as the centerpiece of its educational offerings. The life-changing experience of our traditional undergraduates on the Boiling Springs campus remains the heartbeat of this University.”

*The Carnegie Classification has been the leading framework for recognizing and describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education for more than 45 years. Starting in 1970, the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education developed a classification of colleges and universities to support its program of research and policy analysis. Derived from empirical data on colleges and universities, the Carnegie Classification was originally published in 1973, and subsequently updated in 1976, 1987, 1994, 2000, 2005, 2010, and 2015 to reflect changes among colleges and universities. This framework has been widely used in the study of higher education, both as a way to represent and control for institutional differences, and also in the design of research studies to ensure adequate representation of sampled institutions, students, or faculty. For more information, visit [carnegieclassifications.iu.edu](http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu).*

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them not only for professional success but for lives marked by empathy, compassion and a commitment to service on the broadest scale.*