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GWU Stands Alone in Carolinas to Earn an “A” in Annual Study

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – An annual study on core curriculum requirements at over 1,100 colleges and universities from all over the United States has placed Gardner-Webb University at the head of the class for the fifth year in a row. Ranked among 25 institutions throughout the nation with an “A” grade, Gardner-Webb is the only school in the Carolinas to earn an “A” distinction for general requirement standards.

The 2015-2016 *What Will They Learn?* Study, conducted by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), ranks the core curriculum of all the major public and private colleges and universities in all 50 states. The ranking places GWU in the top two percent in the nation, included with schools such as Pepperdine University (Malibu, Calif.), Baylor University (Waco, Texas), Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.), and the United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colo.), among others.

The ACTA study analyzes seven core subjects and rates universities accordingly. ACTA believes that composition, U.S. government/history, economics, literature, math, science, and foreign language components help students gain the knowledge and values necessary for responsible democratic citizenship. “A”-rated schools require at least six out of the seven core courses; “B” schools must offer four or five out of seven.

GWU blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 60 specialized major and minor programs. Officials say the result is a truly comprehensive academic experience grounded in a Christian environment of service, leadership and intellectual freedom.

Dr. Ben Leslie is provost and executive vice president for Gardner-Webb and believes the distinction is proof of the University’s commitment to providing an excellent academic backbone for its students. “We are certainly gratified by this endorsement by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni,” Leslie shared. “Now more than ever, general education is the real heart of an undergraduate education.”

He continued, “It’s in these basic courses in history, economics, literature, math, science and foreign languages, for example, where students begin to gain a comprehensive understanding of the world. And not only that, it’s in these same courses where critical-

thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and even foundational values of citizenship have their foundation. So we take this award very seriously, and we're encouraged that we appear to be doing something really worthwhile in the lives of our students."

The 1,100 institutions measured in the *What Will They Learn?* Study comprise all public universities with a stated liberal arts mission as well as hundreds of private colleges and universities selected on the basis of size, reputation, and regional representation. Last year, GWU was among only 23 schools in the nation to earn an "A."

ACTA is an independent, non-profit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. To learn more, visit goacta.org. For additional information on the *What Will They Learn?* report, visit whatwilltheylearn.com.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).