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### **Gardner-Webb Students Present Findings at Annual Conference**

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# Gardner-Webb Students Present Findings at Annual Conference

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Office of University  
Communications

March 24, 2015

## *Several Students Earned Awards for Undergraduate Research at Alpha Chi National Convention in Chicago*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – One dozen current Gardner-Webb University students recently presented a range of undergraduate research findings, and four of the GWU projects earned top awards at the Alpha Chi National Convention, held March 20-22 in Chicago.

With the theme “Harmonious Hemispheres: The Nexus of Science and the Arts,” students were challenged to develop collaborative team presentations that would explore the intersection between science and art. Individual research presentations were also included as part of the annual national convention. According to the Alpha Chi national web site, students crafted individual and group projects using original and secondary research in psychology, painting, bioethics, chemistry, creative writing, history, music, sociology, and other academic disciplines in pursuit of new knowledge.

Dr. June Hadden Hobbs serves as professor of English and is the GWU Alpha Chi chapter sponsor. She also heads the University’s Undergraduate Research program. Hobbs said Gardner-Webb University students have earned a well-deserved reputation at the national convention and several individuals reached out to her during the convention to comment on the excellent work displayed by the GWU contingency.

“After the poster session in which Charity Byrum presented her work, one of her judges sought me out to say he had asked for a copy of her poster so he could take it back to his own students as a model,” Hobbs shared. “These are our academic stars and the intellectuals of the future.”

Drawing over 400 students from across the U.S., the Alpha Chi National Convention features scores of student research presentations.

Charity Byrum discusses her project.

The GWU representatives offered twelve individual presentations and one group presentation. Additionally, a few of those research projects were also submitted for consideration in fellowship and scholarship opportunities. A total of four GWU projects received top honors.

Samantha Allen won a presentation prize in psychology for “Disney Princess Syndrome: The Effect of Disney Movie Consumption on Romantic Relationship Beliefs, Communication, and Levels of Androgyny, and Their Influence on Romantic Relationship Satisfaction and Success.” Her faculty mentor was Dr. Iva Naydenova, assistant professor of psychology at GWU.

“Samantha’s win was especially impressive because psychology had more students competing than any other discipline,” Hobbs declared.

GWU senior Josh Johnson won a Region III graduate school fellowship for his paper titled, “Photochemical Oxidation of Oils with Different Bulk Physical and Chemical Properties.” Johnson’s faculty mentor was Dr. Stefka Eddins, Gardner-Webb Professor of Chemistry.

Junior Sarah Lynch was one of just 10 students across the country to qualify for a Nolle Scholarship for undergraduate work. “The Nolle Scholarship provides \$1,500 to be used during my senior year as an undergraduate,” Lynch explained. “I submitted a paper I wrote last semester in my Modern Germany History class with Dr. [David] Yelton which was titled, ‘Music in the Third Reich.’ It explored the influence of music as propaganda during the time.”

GWU alumna Kate Oliphant won a \$3,000 Pryor Scholarship for students currently in their first two years of graduate study. “Kate is studying music with an emphasis on guitar at East Carolina University,” Hobbs offered. “National Alpha Chi gives only one of these fellowships per year, and this is the first time a GWU alum has won it!”

The Collaborative Project team (which included Charity Byrum, Nathan Lile, Brandon Searle, and Brooke Rampy) gave a convention-wide presentation on their project, “The Nexus of Science and Art for the Aging Brain: An Ideal Combination of Modern Medical Technology and the Arts to Improve the Lives of Aging Individuals.” During last year’s convention, the Gardner-Webb group project earned first place for their presentation on hydraulic fracturing. “Although we did not win the big prize this year, they brought glory and honor to their school with a presentation that was more original and more polished than many I’ve seen at professional conferences for established academics,” Hobbs asserted.

Another feather in the cap for Gardner-Webb was the chapter being nominated for the President’s Cup, which honors the Alpha Chi chapter of the year. GWU Alpha Chi chapter members were given the opportunity to attend the conference if they were willing to present their findings.

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GWU Alpha Chi National Convention attendees.

The following students offered individual project presentations:

- Samantha Allen—"Disney Princess Syndrome: The Effect of Disney Movie Consumption on Romantic Relationship Beliefs, Communication, and Levels of Androgyny, and Their Influence on Romantic Relationship Satisfaction and Success"
- Josh Johnson—"Photochemical Oxidation of Oils with Different Bulk Physical and Chemical Properties"
- Kevin Mills—"A Comparison of NAFTA and AFTA and Their Effects on Developing Nations"
- Sarah Lynch—"Music in the Third Reich"
- Charity Anne Byrum—"The Influence of Pencil Grasp on Handwriting Speed, Legibility, Fatigue, and Data Entry Preference in College Students"
- Nathan Lile—"Old-World Anti-Slavery Sentiments in the Antebellum Carolinas"
- Brandon Searle—"Altruism: Selflessly or Selfishly Benefiting Oneself?"
- Addison Abee—"Refugees: A Study of Family Dynamics and Acculturation Within Southeast Asian Refugee Families"
- Carrie Lee Arant—"Desolation and Redemption: The Concept of Wilderness in Isaiah, Hosea, and Jeremiah"
- Brooke Rampy—"Cortes and the Conquest of Mexico: Returning God or Advanced Invader?"
- Katie Hudson—"The Swastika and the Cross: The German Christian Movement of the Third Reich"
- Emily DeVries—"The Second Sex: An Examination of the 'Ideal German Woman' and Her Transition Throughout the Years of the Third Reich"

*Alpha Chi is a national college honor society that admits students from all academic disciplines. Membership is limited to the top 10 percent of an institution's juniors, seniors, and graduate students. Invitation to membership comes only through an institutional chapter. A college seeking a chapter must grant baccalaureate degrees and be regionally accredited. Some 300 chapters, located in almost every state and in Puerto Rico, induct more than 12,000 members annually. Alpha Chi is distinctive in that it involves members in all aspects of its operation: chapter officer leadership, student representation on the National Council, local chapter event planning, and presenting scholarly programs at national conventions. Alpha Chi members have been "making scholarship effective for good" since 1922.*

*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).*