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### **Gardner-Webb Establishes Partnership with Virginia Baptists**

Office of University Communications

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# Gardner-Webb Establishes Partnership with Virginia Baptists

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Office of University  
Communications

November 14, 2014

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner-Webb University signed a partnership mission covenant with the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV) on Nov. 12, becoming the first school outside the state of Virginia to do so. According to the BGAV, the purpose of the partnership is to help “fulfill the Great Commission through shared commitments and cooperative ministry, while at the same time maintaining the independence and distinct character of each.”

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Dr. Tracy Jessup  
addresses messengers  
at the BGAV Annual  
Meeting in Hampton  
(Photo by BGAV)

“Gardner-Webb University exists to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education,” said Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian life and service and senior minister to the university. “We pursue this mission with the same mandates of the BGAV—the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. It is with great joy that we look forward to seeing how God will use the development of this partnership for his glory.

The BGAV is a cooperative missions and ministry organization that consists of over 1,400 autonomous churches in the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as churches from Seoul, South Korea, the District of Columbia, and the states of California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Maryland, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, and West Virginia.

Jessup spoke at the BGAV Annual Meeting in Hampton, Va. “As I had the opportunity to meet and greet messengers to the annual meeting as well as employees of the BGAV, their common greeting was ‘welcome to the family.’ You could tell their sentiment was sincere. It really did feel like family, as it well should since together we are part of the family of God.”

The covenant marks the second coordinated agreement this year between Virginia Baptists and Gardner-Webb. In June, the GWU Pittman Center for Congregational Enrichment announced a new partnership with Christian Leaders Link, a leadership training entity of Virginia Baptists, located in Roanoke, Va. The Pittman Center provides resources for use by the Link, allowing the two ministries to co-host workshops, conferences, and other non-degree training events during the year. Events are hosted in a variety of locations throughout Virginia, especially in southwest and southern Virginia.

Both partnerships represent a new wave in church relations and Kingdom building for

Gardner-Webb University, said Aaron Hinton, director of church relations. “As we look to the future, it is exciting to be partners in ministry with an organization that is so similar in mission, the core of which is spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We look forward to what this partnership means for GWU and for the BGAV in what is now ‘our’ pursuit of advancing the Kingdom of God in the ways that the Spirit leads us.”

For more information, visit: [vbmb.org](http://vbmb.org).

*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 for professional success and for productive citizenship.*