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10-29-2014

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Office of University
Communications

October 29, 2014

GWU Recognized "With Distinction" for Leadership in Interfaith/Community Service Projects

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – For the seventh consecutive year, Gardner-Webb University has been named to the 2014 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, sponsored by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and the U.S. Department of Education. Less than 100 institutions across the nation received the honor this year, and GWU is one of just 38 schools to be recognized "With Distinction."

Launched in 2006, the Honor Roll recognizes those institutions that reflect the values of exemplary community service and achieve meaningful outcomes in their communities. Gardner-Webb has continued as an Honor Roll mainstay because of students' commitment to a wide variety of service initiatives. This year, only 38 schools from around the U.S. received the "With Distinction" honors because of their stellar institutional commitment to volunteer service. Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU Provost and Executive Vice President, said the recognition is an affirmation of the University's overall mission.

"Service, volunteerism and community engagement are deeply rooted in the fabric of a Gardner-Webb education and have been for many years," Leslie shared. "But it is encouraging to see this external confirmation that we are indeed carrying out something that is so central to our mission. At Gardner-Webb, we believe that service is an essential part of a well-rounded education. It builds character, and for us character formation is really the necessary partner of intellectual development. Our students are encouraged to find ways to apply their learning through service in courses throughout the curriculum. And we find that through service, they gain a better understanding of the world around them."

In the past year alone, 905 Gardner-Webb students engaged in academic service-learning initiatives, while 1,006 students participated in community service opportunities outside of class. Through a wide range of projects, students logged a total of 34,174 hours of intentional community service.

“Our students, faculty, and staff members participated in many meaningful hours of service to help meet the needs of people in the community—both locally and globally,” said Susan Manahan, assistant professor of biology and GWU Director of Service Learning. “I am confident we will continue to see our students serving in many great future projects.”

Written into the University’s curriculum through the Service Learning Program, community service is a top academic priority at Gardner-Webb. Classes often partner with local organizations and initiatives like the Red Cross, the Salvation Army or the Cleveland County Potato Project, enabling students to discover connections between their work in the classroom and in the community.

“A lot of schools talk about their commitment to service,” Leslie reflected. “Our inclusion on the Honor Roll is just one indication that a Gardner-Webb education really does deliver the kind of character-transforming experience that comes with a high level of service and volunteerism integrated with the learning experience.”

CNCS oversees the Honor Roll in collaboration with the U.S. departments of Education and Housing and Urban Development, Campus Compact, and the American Council on Education. For a complete list of recipients, visit www.ed.gov/edblogs/fbnp/presidents-campus-challenge/.

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.