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### GWU Honors Program Expands in 25-Plus Years

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# GWU Honors Program Expands in 25-Plus Years

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Office of University Communications

May 1, 2014

## *Academic Track has Increased Students Served, Variety of Activities*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Through academic programs, social experiences and service opportunities, Gardner-Webb University's Honors Program has expanded since its launch over 25 years ago to now serve dozens of students.

The GWU Honors Program is open to academically qualified students in all majors and offers growth in time management, writing, research, leadership and other skills. Students enrolled in the program are typically much more likely to graduate within four years from the University, which means it's also a retention tool, according to Dr. Tom Jones, associate dean of University Honors.

"Honors classes are not necessarily harder," Jones offered. "Many of the students will tell you their honors classes are their easier classes. The biggest difference is the amount of discussion involved in the classes."

Students participate in a wide variety of activities outside the classroom. Recent experiences include a trip to France, consistent dining experiences at ethnic restaurants, and a program to clean up litter along waterways.

Participants believe honors activities significantly improve the student experience at Gardner-Webb. "It's the social side, the service side and the academic side," said Sarah Venn, the GWU Honors Program student president. "To participate, you have to take at least 27 hours worth of honors classes. It's more of a discussion setting. It is hard work, but it's rewarding."

GWU launched the program in 1988 with no affiliation to state and national organizations, and five students graduated in the first group. Students are now regularly recognized for achievements at state and national academic conferences. Every student also completes a thesis project.

The GWU curriculum offers more perks than similar offerings at some other universities, said Matt Autry, who's completing his first year on campus. "When I was looking at schools, I knew honors was something I'd be interested in," he reflected. "With some schools, honors is just the same class with an extra paper at the end. Here, it's actual separate classes, and that's a lot more enriching to my education."

For more information on the Gardner-Webb University Honors Program, click below or visit [gardner-webb.edu/honors](http://gardner-webb.edu/honors) or call 704-406-4369.

*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.*