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Office of University Communications

February 19, 2014

Annual Event Designed to Prepare Students for Post-College Responsibilities

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Each year, incoming students are welcomed to the Gardner-Webb campus with an orientation that marks the start of their undergraduate educational journey. As the months turn to years, many begin to face the anxieties of entering the ‘real world,’ for which they have often had little preparation. To help students acclimate to life away from college, the GWU Office of Career Development will host “Student Disorientation Week” from Feb. 24 – 27 in the Tucker Student Center.

Themed “Hiking the Trail Toward Your Future,” organizers of the week’s events believe participants will yield multiple benefits from the information they receive. Lisa Yerrick, director of Career Development, hopes the week will be a time of fun and learning for attendees.

“In facing the end of college, our students are about to embark on a life that looks very different than that of school,” Yerrick explained. “They will be faced with issues such as personal finances, living in a new community, maintaining good health on a limited budget and dealing with distance and gaps in their long-standing social network. Our event will encourage students to begin thinking about some of these issues now, as well as provide answers to some of these questions.”

Workshops and activities will tackle subjects such as finding a job, living life after college, managing money, and college loan repayment. A professional image dinner is planned to offer insight for handling lunch or dinner job interviews and overall personal presentation in professional settings.

Zachary Parker is a student who participated in last year’s disorientation week professional image dinner. Now a senior, Parker encourages his peers to take advantage of all opportunities to be better prepared for the future. “It’s important for all students, but mostly seniors because they are about to leave college and begin looking for a job,” he shared. “And for them to be in the job market, they need to be able to use all the skills that they can possibly have so they can land better jobs and edge out the competition.”

Haley Doolittle engaged in previous disorientation week events at Gardner-Webb. “As much as we like to think we know a lot of stuff, we are definitely not aware of everything we need to know,” she admitted. “I would definitely recommend it to just get our heads on straight

because I know at the end of the year everybody is ready to leave. You just don't know what you're getting into yet."

On Monday, Feb. 24, evening workshops are planned in the Tucker Student Center at 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. "My Journey to a Career: Do I Have the Right Gear?" (Faith Hall) will focus on having the accurate knowledge, skills and experience for success in the job search and will include a panel of recent GWU graduates sharing their personal experiences. "Uh-Oh, I Forgot the Matches!" (Stewart Hall) will explore small, important, yet often overlooked points about the career journey. "Water, Water Everywhere, But Not Enough to Drink!" (Hope Hall) will offer tips and techniques for successful money management including budgets, insurance, and taxes.

The "Gear Pack Out: Disorientation Fair" is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 26 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. in Faith Hall. From banking to apartment hunting, finding a job to paying taxes, students will enjoy opportunities to network and learn about the many people who will be important in the life of a college graduate. From 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., a student loan repayment seminar ("The Hike was Great, but Now I've Got Blisters!") will be held in Faith Hall to help students understand the college loan repayment process and will address ways to proactively manage school loans to prevent future problems.

Student Disorientation Week will culminate with the "What's Wrong with Flannel?" Professional Image Dinner in Stewart Hall on Feb. 27 from 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Through this event, participants will learn about the variety of ways they can make a good impression on potential employers. Attendees will have dinner and find out how to talk, dress, eat and even ask questions in a way that highlights their best traits.

"We don't realize how much of our behavior is being watched and judged as we interact with people," Yerrick shared. "So often, a potential employer is looking for how we think on our feet, how we problem-solve, how we relate to others, and how we communicate. They are able to pick up on those skills through conversation and watching us. Having a meal just adds an extra dimension to that process. So we want students to be prepared for those types of interview situations."

For more information on the activities planned as part of Student Disorientation Week, call the GWU Office of Career Development at 704-406-2170.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.