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Office of University Communications

October 28, 2013

GWU is Only University in the Carolinas to Earn an “A” in Annual Study

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – An annual study on core curriculum requirements at over 1,000 colleges and universities from all over the United States has placed Gardner-Webb University at the head of the class for the third year in a row. Ranked number 12 out of only 22 institutions with an “A” grade, Gardner-Webb earned the number one spot out of all schools in the Carolinas for the highest core curriculum standards.

The 2013-2014 *What Will They Learn?* study, conducted by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), ranks the core curriculum of all the major public and private colleges and universities in all 50 states. The ranking places GWU in the top two percent in the nation, included with schools such as Pepperdine University (Malibu, Calif.), Baylor University (Waco, Texas), Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.), and the United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colo.).

Gardner-Webb University is the only college in the Carolinas to earn an “A” in the ACTA study, which analyzes seven core subjects and rates universities accordingly. ACTA believes that composition, U.S. government/history, economics, literature, math, science, and foreign language components help students gain the knowledge and values necessary for responsible democratic citizenship. “A”-rated schools require at least six out of the seven core courses; “B” schools must offer four or five out of seven.

GWU blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 specialized major and minor programs. Officials say the result is a truly comprehensive academic experience grounded in a Christian environment of service, leadership and intellectual freedom.

Dr. Ben Leslie is provost and executive vice president for Gardner-Webb and believes the distinction is proof of the University’s commitment to providing an excellent academic backbone for its students. “This national recognition of our curriculum, something we neither sought nor applied for, stands as a significant affirmation of our academic program,” Leslie shared.

“More than anything else, it is a tribute to the Gardner-Webb faculty, who along with their predecessors, have expressed a deep commitment to a broad-based general education in the liberal arts for many years,” Leslie continued. “Not only does GWU’s general education

curriculum conform to the criteria set forth by ACTA, but we actually exceed their expectations by requiring courses in arts, health and wellness, religion, and communications.”

The 1,070 institutions in *What Will They Learn?* comprise all public universities with a stated liberal arts mission as well as hundreds of private colleges and universities selected on the basis of size, reputation, and regional representation. Last year, GWU was among only 21 schools to earn an “A.”

ACTA is an independent, non-profit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America’s colleges and universities. To learn more, visit goacta.org. For additional information on the *What Will They Learn?* report, visit whatwilltheylearn.com.

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).