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Gardner-Webb SGA Executive Board Participates in National Conference

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Office of University Communications

October 30, 2012

Three Students Represent Gardner-Webb in St. Louis

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – “We, the students of Gardner-Webb University.” These are the first words to appear within the Constitution of the Gardner-Webb Student Government Association (SGA), but their meaning exceeds documentation. They show that students have a vested interest in their own happiness, their own rights. At Gardner-Webb, student interests really do come before all other matters.

Executive members Michelle Palacio, Katie Spiro, and Delton Barnes kept these interests in mind recently as they traveled to St. Louis, Mo. for the 34th Annual National Leadership Conference on Student Government. Lisa Yerrick, director of student leadership, accompanied them.

“Going to conferences like these are really helpful,” said Yerrick. “It helps us get ideas from students and governments all over the country.” These ideas will not only influence Gardner-Webb’s SGA to be more effective, but will also ensure the contentedness of the student body. “It’s also fun to contribute our own ideas,” Yerrick added. “We were able to contribute ideas that other governments have never thought about.”

The Conference is the longest-running SGA Conference in the nation, and is targeted towards both student government leaders and advisors. Participants were able to listen to presenters, interact with other student governments, and partake in more than 70 workshops, which covered topics such as delegating to others and improving student input.

The event was sponsored by the Center for Leadership Development, founded by Kansas State University’s dean of students, Pat Bosco. According to the event’s website, Bosco “has over 35 years of experience in leadership training, student government advising, and campus union programming.” Bosco presently directs the Center and was one of the main presenters at the conference.

Gardner-Webb SGA secretary, Katie Spiro, who attended a similar conference last year with current president, Palacio, thinks the event presented a lot of helpful ideas. “We found out a lot of information, but we’re focusing on what we can do to specifically help the University,” Spiro shared. “This conference has solidified my core understanding that Gardner-Webb is unique, distinct, and absolutely special.”

“Whereas last year’s sessions focused almost exclusively on the governmental aspect of SGA, this year’s focused more on the role of the student,” added Palacio.

Palacio says she feels a sense of pride in representing the University. “I was really excited to attend the conference, and it was extremely helpful to talk to other student representatives,” she said. “We learned that our governmental structure is pretty good at Gardner-Webb.”

The trip in itself was an experience, as this was the first time that the University sent representatives to the conference. Barnes, executive treasurer, was excited about the entire journey, from traveling to learning. “I’m glad I got to travel with some really special people,” he said. “I was able to get closer to them and develop relationships within the executive board. It was a learning experience which will equip me to better serve the student body over the next three years.”

Gardner-Webb supported the trip by backing the cost for each person. In return, the University will certainly receive even more leadership skills from student attendees.

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 career success and for engaged, responsible citizenship in their professional, civic, and spiritual communities.