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Gardner-Webb University Announces Record-Breaking Enrollment for 2012 Fall Semester

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Office of University Communications

September 3, 2012

Nearly 5,000 Students Currently Enrolled at GWU

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Enrollment at Gardner-Webb this fall is up more than four percent over last year, totaling a record 4,970 students in all university programs. The University also welcomed the largest freshmen class in history with 494 students. Last year, a total of 4,768 students were enrolled at the University.

“We are ecstatic to have enrolled the largest number of new students in the traditional undergraduate program,” said Debra Hintz, vice president for enrollment management. “We are extremely fortunate and blessed to work with a community of dedicated faculty and staff that have enabled our success.”

Several programs and areas broke records including the Gayle Bolt Price School of Graduate Studies, which logged a 36.33 percent jump in enrollment to 1291 students. The Master of Nursing program generated an all-time high with a total of 145 students for a total increase of nearly seven percent over 2011. For the first time in Gardner-Webb history, the School of Divinity is above the 200-student mark, enrolling a total of 238 this fall.

“In addition to the increased enrollment, this population has demonstrated the highest academic credentials in the history of the University,” said Hintz. The average high school grade point average for first-year students is also the best ever at 3.61, compared to 3.53 in 2011 and 3.47 in 2009 and 2010.

“We have met goals for new traditional undergraduates, although we lost some ground in returning students,” said vice-president and provost Dr. Ben Leslie. “Graduate programs, on the other hand, have far exceeded expectations.”

Gardner-Webb’s continued growth in both undergraduate and graduate enrollment speaks volumes on the necessity of both ongoing and recently completed projects that are part of the University’s Higher Ground Campaign. The Tucker Student Center offers new and returning students a transformational facility in which to study, socialize, and connect with services to enhance their college experience. Complete with skylight ceilings and glass walls, open staircases and fresh-air balconies, the Center’s personality was designed to mirror that of Gardner-Webb’s community: open, relational, transparent and unique.

Ever-increasing student enrollment also revealed a deep need for a science research facility that would enable students to do compelling research in the 21st century. When the University launched its Higher Ground Campaign, building a new science annex topped the list of priorities for strengthening the academic program. Construction on the new science research wing is nearing completion and will give current and incoming students access to new research equipment that, combined with Gardner-Webb's budget to support undergraduate research, will propel them into the center of the nation's most critical research conversations in the sciences.

In November of 2010, GWU launched the Higher Ground Campaign to raise \$45 million for student scholarships, faculty development, buildings, service learning and several other university needs. The Higher Ground Campaign is rooted in the University's strategic plan and focuses on: strengthening the Christian foundation of the University; strengthening the academic program; becoming a true student centered university; maintaining a reputable and competitive athletic program; maintaining a culture of service; and building supportive relationships and new facilities.