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Office of University Communications

March 6, 2012

Teams Set for Shelby, Nicaragua, Romania, Brazil, Louisiana, and Honduras

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— Six spring break mission teams, and 71 team members, will put Gardner-Webb's core values of faith, service and leadership into action across the globe during March 8-18. The six trips in 2012 doubles last year's number of spring break trips through the University's office of Christian life and service.

"We are especially excited about the great variety of projects and ministry activities our six teams are pursuing this year," said Dr. Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian life and service and senior minister to the University. "We have a student body, and a group of faculty and staff, with a range of talents and abilities and a deep commitment to service on the broadest scale. I can't wait to see how God chooses to use those talents this spring."

The teams will build a Baptist Men's mission center in Shelby, N.C.; lead wellness clinics and conduct health assessments in Jinotega, Nicaragua and Bucharest, Romania; serve orphaned youth at a children's home in Fortaleza, Brazil; support a community outreach ministry in Lake Providence, La.; and assist a school for the deaf in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Several of the teams' projects are overtly evangelical, like speaking in Nicaraguan churches, leading vacation bible schools in Honduran sign language, or playing games with orphans at a Christian orphanage in Brazil. Others will try to demonstrate the gospel by building relationships, like in Lake Providence, or in the case of the Shelby team, just plain grunt work. As Romania team co-leader Dr. Doug Bryan said, "In a healthy way, I think it's all evangelical, in the sense that we're trying to show care and concern."

Genuinely communicating true "care and concern" in a short period of time is one of the great challenges each team will face, says Andrew Woods, co-leader of the Louisiana team and a graduate student in psychology at Gardner-Webb.

"It's very much like the challenge that Jesus faced, when he entered a town and began ministry there," Woods said. "So he chose to give people his true self, in an authentic manner, and that gift forced people to question what they previously thought about their own lives. Hopefully, if we can offer the people in Lake Providence our unique selves, they'll be challenged by our testimonies and our witness in ways they never could have imagined."

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University seeks a higher ground in higher education – one that embraces faith and intellectual freedom, and inspires in students a love of learning, service, and leadership.

