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### **Gardner-Webb Students to Participate in Discussions of Media and Politics**

Office of University Communications

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# Gardner-Webb Students to Participate in Discussions of Media and Politics

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Office of University Communications

January 13, 2012

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— Just days before South Carolina’s GOP presidential primary, a Gardner-Webb government class will travel to Winthrop University to attend a panel discussion on media coverage of the presidential campaign, led by three of the nation’s leading political news analysts.

On Jan. 19, NBC’s Chuck Todd, CNN’s Steve Brusk, and Steve Brook of Columbia’s The State newspaper will share their unique insight on “The Evolving Media Coverage of the Presidential Campaign” in an hour-long roundtable discussion beginning at 11 a.m. in the Richardson Ballroom of Winthrop’s DiGiorgio Campus Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Dr. Ben Gaskins, professor of political science at Gardner-Webb, jumped at the chance for the fifteen students in his “President and Congress” course to participate. “The topic of this panel and my course just overlap perfectly,” Gaskins said. “It’s a great opportunity for the students to gain an understanding of the political process from a media point of view, and to get that understanding from national experts who are living it on a daily basis.”

The discussion is the latest in an ongoing consortium of academic events, initiated by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, focused on raising political interest and awareness at Charlotte-area colleges and universities leading up to Charlotte’s hosting of the Democratic National Convention in September. Gaskins took another group of students to the first event last fall, a discussion of budget reform led by Erskine Bowles and Senator Alan Simpson, co-chairs of the National Commission of Fiscal Responsibility and Reform.

“I really think the most important thing Gardner-Webb can do, especially as a liberal arts university, is to encourage and expect students to learn outside the classroom as well as inside it,” Gaskins said. “It’s imperative that we supplement classroom instruction with opportunities for students to encounter and learn from people outside the University, people with different perspectives and experiences like working on Presidential campaigns or in the national media spotlight.”

Gaskins added, “We want to create an atmosphere where it’s not only encouraged but expected for students to deliberate on very important issues with their peers, so that they are informed, well-rounded, thoughtful adults when they leave here.”

Chuck Todd, chief White House correspondent, is the NBC News political director, and host of the television program “The Daily Rundown.” Steve Brusk is political coverage manager for CNN, and has played a key role in coverage of three presidential campaigns, as well as the 9/11 tragedy, Hurricane Katrina and the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster. Steve Brook, managing editor of The State, is the head of day-to-day operations in the newsroom and the editor of the paper’s political and state government coverage.

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