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CAMPUS NEWS

Gardner-Webb Campus Community, Including New Mascot Bo, Gathers for 2021 Fall Academic Convocation

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON AUGUST 24, 2021



Students Honored for Academic Achievements; President Dr. William M. Downs Expresses Thanks, Encourages Action

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University President Dr. William M. Downs opened his remarks at the 2021 Fall Academic Convocation on Tuesday, Aug. 24, 2021, by expressing his gratefulness. “Thanks to the grace and glory of God, we are together again in this special place, celebrating the start of a new academic year,” he proclaimed. “Convocation is a calling together, a summoning, or a convening. It is a time-honored academic tradition at most universities.”

Downs noted that parts of his message were serious, but he would end on a light tone with a special presentation. The surprise was the first public appearance of new mascot Bo, who joined the president on stage while a choir led by Dr. Joshua Cheney, assistant professor of music, sang the recently-discovered GWU Fight Song. A little shy at first, the English bulldog puppy was led by caretaker Ashley Chapman, administrative assistant to the School of Psychological Science and Counselor Education. He was available afterward to greet students who stayed for a reception.



- ▲ Bo is led onto the stage by his caretaker Ashley Chapman.

Before Downs addressed the assembly, Vice President for Christian Life and Service and Senior Minister to the University Tracy Jessup gave the welcome and invocation. Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Ben Leslie presented the Scholastic Achievement Awards, and Downs recognized the recipients of Ignite Excellence, R.W. Andrews and the Tucker Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength scholarships.

Student Government Association President Jada Newton led the reaffirmation of the University Honor Code. Staff accompanist Timothy E. Scruggs, and violinist Hannah C. Thurman accompanied by Caleb A. Etchison presented musical selections. Cheney led the singing of the GWU Alma Mater.



- ▲ GWU President Dr. William M. Downs speaks to students at the 2021 Fall Academic Convocation.

Downs' message focused on three areas: thanks, encouragement and action. He thanked the faculty for their dedication and innovation to provide world-class instruction. "We have faculty with impressive academic pedigrees who actually care about the success of their students—and that doesn't happen everywhere," he stated. "We have scholars and practitioners who go the extra mile not just to teach their students but to mentor their students, to coach their students, to listen to their students."

He invited the students to think ahead to the year 2025 and wonder what might change in four years—in the workplace, technology, the world, society, and Christian faith. He asked students to take ownership of their future and to actively shape their destiny. “We live in a divided society and a broken world...humanity needs healers, uniters, and peacemakers,” Downs remarked. “Why not us? Who among us will stand up and step up? The world needs more Gardner-Webb. More of our nurses and health care professionals, more of our educators, our counselors, our pastors...Let us be the solution.”

Lastly, he reminded students to stay vigilant about dealing with COVID-19. “This is our home. This is our family,” he affirmed. “We will do whatever it takes to keep this place open and to keep you on track for success.”

Awards and Scholarship Recognitions

Scholastic Awards

The Scholastic Awards are presented to those students with the highest GPA at the conclusion of one, two and three years of study at the University.

One-Year

The 2020-2021 One-Year Scholastic Award is presented to 22 students, who tied for the award with perfect 4.0 averages.



▲ Violinist Hannah C. Thurman

- Helena Berczes
- Eli Brooks
- Leah Carpenter
- Mark Chandler
- Caleb Cook

- Rebecca DeMar
- Hannah Early
- Bien Gabrielle Gaddi
- Luke Goodyear
- Alexandra Haasser
- Paula Harvie
- Makayla Jibben
- Micah Moulder
- Emma Rayfield
- Grace Schiefen
- Victoria “Baylee” Short
- Laura Sloan
- Chelsea Walters
- Tori Weatherley
- Selah Werner
- Makayla White
- James “Trevor” Wyatt

Two-Year

The 2020-2021 Two-Year Scholastic Award is presented to five students, who have a perfect 4.0 average.

- Allyson Butts
- Emma Cloninger
- Jasmine Jones
- Victor Putter
- Annabeth Reed

Three-Year

The 2020-2021 Three-Year Scholastic Award is presented to six students with a perfect 4.0 average.

- Timothy Bennett
- Jonathan Frye

- Holly O'Brien
- Faith Parandhamaia
- Emily Rhew
- Louise Schmidtgen

Ignite Excellence Recipients

The Ignite Excellence Scholarship competition serves as an opportunity for students to compete for the highest academic scholarships awarded by the university.

2020-2021

- Helena Berczes from Varina, Va. majoring in Biomedical Sciences and American Sign Language
- Elle Decoe from Hickory, N.C. majoring in Psychology
- Makayla Jibben from Green Valley, Ill., majoring in Biology with a Biomedical Science concentration
- Andy Jones from Nashville, N.C. majoring in Management
- Justin Tolleson from Chesnee, S.C., majoring in Psychology
- Emily White from Apex, N.C., majoring in Communications

2021-2022

This year, eight students received full-tuition scholarships to honor their exemplary academic achievements. The average grade point average of these students is 4.45.

- Logan Baumstark from Charlotte, N.C., majoring in Accelerated Pastoral Ministries Program
- Nicholas Cobble from Manassass, Va., majoring in Exercise Science
- Allie Cooke from Hidebran, N.C., majoring in Exercise Science
- John Haynes from Lincolnton, N.C., majoring in Nursing
- Alethia McDowell from Greenville, S.C., majoring in Nursing
- Anna-Kate Schiebel from Asheboro, N.C., majoring in Business
- Shelby Watkins from Manchester, Tenn., majoring in Missiology and English
- Sorelle Werner from Cornelius, N.C., majoring in Biology with a concentration in Nutrition Science

R.W. Andrews Scholarship



- ▲ The R.W. Andrews Scholarship Winner, Devin Pressley, is congratulated by GWU President Dr. William M. Downs.
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The R. W. Andrews scholarship is awarded to a male student from Cleveland County planning to attend Gardner-Webb. This year's recipient is Devin Pressley from Kings Mountain, N.C. To be considered for the scholarship, candidates must display integrity, leadership, and academic success. The student awarded this scholarship is one who upholds the true mission and value of Gardner-Webb University.

Tucker Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength Scholarship

The Tucker Scholarship is awarded each year to one high school student who exemplifies the principles and values representative of the Gardner-Webb community. This top scholarship is made possible by the generous support of Carolyn and Robert Tucker who exemplify these same principles and values in their personal and professional lives.

- The 2020-21 recipient is Leah Carpenter from Stanley, N.C. Carpenter is majoring in nursing with a minor in Spanish.
- The 2021-22 recipient is Kyndal Jackson from Gaffney, S.C. Jackson is majoring in exercise science with a minor in Spanish.

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.