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### James G. Martin Center Recognizes Gardner-Webb's General Education Requirements

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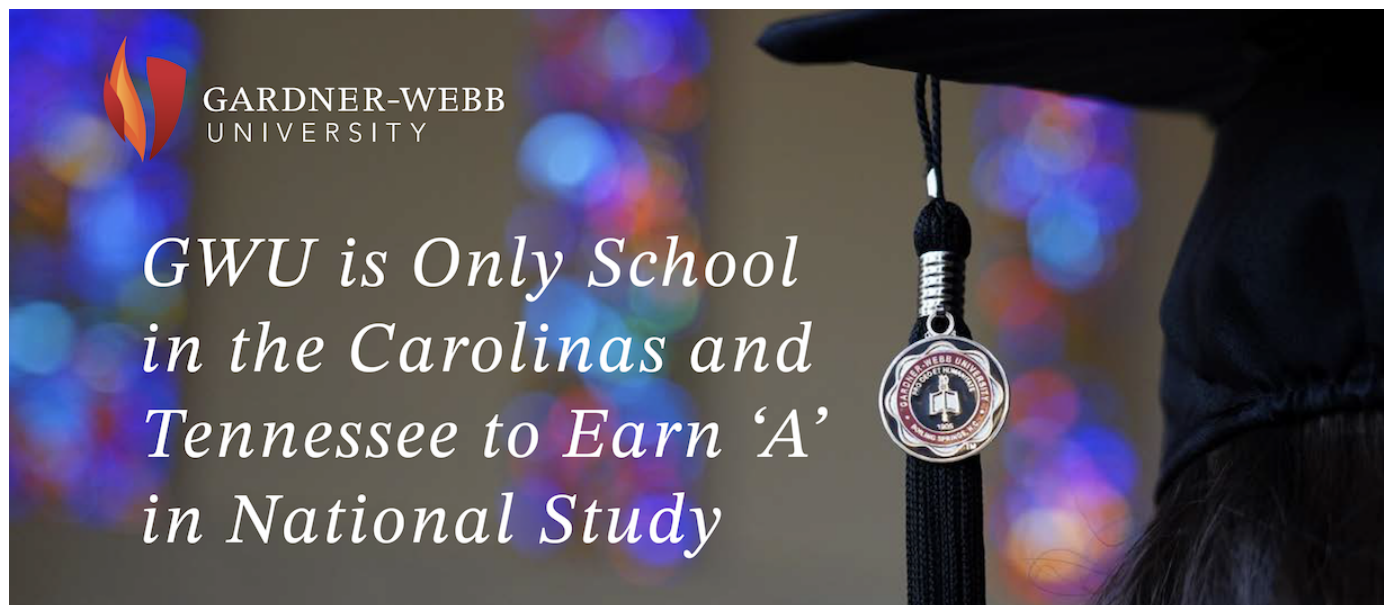
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**NATIONAL INTEREST**

## James G. Martin Center Recognizes Gardner-Webb's General Education Requirements

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JANUARY 4, 2022



### **‘What Will They Learn’ Report Examines Over 1,100 Institutions**

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University’s core academic requirements, which provide students with a foundational knowledge for leadership and service, recently received recognition from the James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal (<https://www.jamesgmartin.center/2021/12/many-nc-students-are-missing-out-on-core-knowledge/>). The center, which is a nonprofit institute dedicated to improving higher education in North Carolina and the nation, praised Gardner-Webb for being the only school in North Carolina to earn an “A” on the annual “What Will They Learn?®” (<https://www.whatwilltheylearn.com/>) study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA).

The report examines over 1,100 institutions—public universities with a stated liberal arts mission as well as hundreds of private colleges and universities selected on the basis of size, reputation, and regional representation. Gardner-Webb is one of only 24 schools to achieve the “A” grade, included with schools such as Pepperdine University (Malibu, Calif.), Baylor University (Waco, Texas), Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.), and the United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colo.), among others. Moreover, the ranking places GWU in the top 2.1 percent in the nation, a spot the University has consistently held since 2011.



▲ GWU President Dr. William Downs

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“Our goal at Gardner-Webb is to educate the whole student, which means we want our graduates to be equipped with both intellectual breadth and professional readiness,” explained GWU President Dr. William Downs. “Faculty here have worked hard to shape, and then reshape, a curriculum that attracts, engages, and prepares students for society’s diverse and dynamic needs. It’s wonderful to see their efforts externally validated and to have our University come out atop this comparative study.”

According to the Martin Center story, 37.3 percent of institutions in the study scored either a “D” or “F.” The report included 49 North Carolina colleges and universities, which averaged a “B” or “C” grading with 22 schools receiving “B”s, 18 “C”s, five “D”s, and three “F”s. There were no “A” schools in South Carolina or Tennessee. Further, in the entire southeast (13 states), Gardner-Webb was one of only six to receive the “A” grade.

Using a team of researchers, the ACTA rates universities on seven core subject areas: composition, U.S. government/history, economics, literature, math, science, and foreign language components. For the 2021 report, the team examined GWU’s 2020-21 academic catalog and evaluated each course in the general education curriculum. The ACTA members believe that these subjects help students gain the knowledge and values necessary for responsible democratic citizenship. “A”-rated schools require at least six out of the seven core courses; “B” schools must offer four or five out of seven. Half-credit is given if a requirement exists from which students choose between otherwise qualifying courses within two subject areas (e.g., math or science, history or economics, etc.).

Founded in 1995, ACTA is the only organization working with alumni, donors, trustees, and education leaders across the United States to support liberal arts education, uphold academic standards, and safeguard free expression and open exchange of ideas on campus. The network consists of alumni and trustees from nearly 1,300 colleges and universities, including over 23,000 current board members. “What Will They Learn?®” project is a survey of general education programs that began in 2009 as a part of ACTA’s commitment to fostering academic excellence on college campuses.

*Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina's recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*