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### Eight GWU Students Attend Fall Honors Conference

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**ACADEMICS**

# Eight GWU Students Attend Fall Honors Conference

**BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON DECEMBER 8, 2021**

## Students Present Work, Gain Ideas for Future Honors Programs

*By Claire Allen, '22, Intern for Communications*

Led by Honors Program Director and Professor of biology Dr. Tom Jones, eight Gardner-Webb University students from the Honors Student Association recently attended the National Collegiate Honors Council's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Students presented Honors Thesis work, Summer Scholars research, and select special projects. Between presentations, they shared ideas about Gardner-Webb's close ties to the surrounding community in an Idea Exchange.

Going to the conference serves many purposes. As Jones shares, "To show students off and to have them share ideas with others. In the process, many will get some unique ideas about other presentations while they are there."

Students choose to attend events and conferences such as these for a variety of reasons. Emily Horchler, '23, a graphic design major from Gaffney, S.C., stated that she "wanted to go to the Honors Conference for the experience of being at a national event for academics. I was so proud of myself and my group for our proposal getting accepted, and I knew this would be a great event to put on my resume." Like many others, this was her first time at an academic conference.



Expectations among the students were high. During their stay, as the conference was hosted at the Walt Disney World Resort, attendees got the chance to spend a day at a festival happening in Epcot, one section of the theme park. Helena Berczes, '23, a biomedical sciences and American Sign Language (ASL) major from Varina, Va., also had never attended a conference like this before. Despite this, she got the opportunity to moderate select conference sessions and had fun with the experience.

Blake Henkel, '24, from Granite Falls, N.C., said, "I expected to find other students from around the world that shared the same interests as me. In addition, I expected to interact with other honors leaders from other schools to discuss what opportunities they offer their students to improve their honors experience, so I could bring back those ideas to our program at GWU. When I went to the conference, I received everything I expected and more. On top of the already fulfilled expectations, I was able to enjoy a day at Epcot with friends, eat different foods offered at the event, and see the firework show at Magic Kingdom every night from our condo. Each day was unique and kept me on my toes at all times."

Because of their great experiences, these students recommended that those who would like to go in the future should not wait to begin the process of preparing. Horchler advised, "Start your research as soon as possible and come to the conference ready to show off your findings, because you have worked hard on this research and people have come from all over the country to listen to it."

*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.*