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Stonecutter Science Academy at Gardner-Webb Introduces Students to Careers in Science

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON JULY 5, 2022



High School Students from Rutherford, Cleveland and Cabarrus Counties (N.C.) Attend Annual Summer Camp

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Students from 16 schools recently participated in the 2022 Science Academy hosted by Gardner-Webb University and sponsored by the Stonecutter Foundation in Spindale, N.C. They learned about the Department of Natural Sciences at GWU and studied various aspects of science and applications, such as crime scene investigation and forensic anthropology.

Jay Zimmer, assistant professor of Biology at Gardner-Webb, and Jill Francis from Chase High School in Rutherford County, N.C., led the program and activities. Francis, who joined the academy for the first time this year, helped recruit students for the week-long event.

Benjamin Roach, a ninth-grader at Chase High School, said the experience helped him narrow down his career choice. “Science Academy is a fun, informative experience that will teach you more about science and careers in scientific fields,” he stated. “It has helped me learn that I want to do something in the medical field as a career.”

Kara Evans, an 11th-grader at Hope Academy in Concord, N.C., also said she appreciated being able to experience things related to the field she wants to pursue.

AJ Leyva, an 11th-grader at Chase High School, and Alexis Poe, a student at East Rutherford High School in Rutherford County, not only enjoyed learning more about careers in the science field, but they were grateful for the opportunity to meet new people.



Abby Sias, an eighth-grader at Lake Lure Academy in Rutherford County, agreed with Leyva and Poe. She commented, “My week at Science Academy very inspiring, and it was amazing to meet other students with similar goals and interests as myself.”

Besides classroom activities, the group toured the GWU College of Health Sciences and heard a presentation about medical school and Physician Assistants. They did various activities in the Human Performance Lab. They also learned about the organic chemistry and chemistry instrumentation labs.

The students visited Rutherford Regional Hospital and learned about careers in medicine. Cohesion Phenomics in Spindale made a presentation about its organization and the science of DNA and also gave a tour. The Rutherford County Sheriff’s Forensics Department demonstrated how crime scenes are analyzed and taught the group how to fingerprint with various powders.

Students participated in labs each day in the fields of biotechnology, physiology, or forensics. They also learned about:

- Gene sequencing analysis.
- Bioinformatics—GenBank.
- Biomechanics, muscle grip and fatigue.
- Chain of custody.
- Crime scene basics.
- Blood spatter analysis.

- Footprint and hair analysis.

The students said their favorite topics were forensics and DNA sequencing. They also liked touring the hospital, sheriff's department and Cohesion Phenomics.

A Gardner-Webb admission counselor talked to the group about how to select a college, what questions to ask, how financial aid works, as well as tuition, room and board. Zimmer stressed the importance of internships and research in college and also encouraged the students to join clubs while they are in school and in college.

The students were from the following schools:

Rutherford County

- Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy
- East Rutherford High School
- Chase High School
- Lake Lure Classical Academy
- Trinity Christian School
- R-S Central REACH
- Master's Academy

Cleveland County

- Pinnacle Classical Academy
- Cleveland County Early College
- Homeschool

Concord

- Hope Academy

About The Stonecutter Foundation:

The Foundation has sponsored the math academy at GWU since 2013 and the science academy since 2014. The Foundation, a non-profit established in 1945, has invested in numerous Rutherford County community institutions such as the town library and Isothermal Community College. Since its inception, the foundation has invested millions into the surrounding community.

About Gardner-Webb:

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.