## Blue Devils Collect NWCA All-Academic Honors

**April 19, 2017**

**DURHAM, N.C.—**The off-the mat honors continue to roll in for the Blue Devils with four members of the Duke wrestling team being named to the NWCA All-Academic Team. The four selections matches the most for Duke in program history and marks the second time under head coach Glen Lanham four Blue Devils have been honored.

Representing Duke on the NWCA All-Academic squad are Thayer Atkins, Cole Baumgartner, Jake Faust and Jacob Kasper. Atkins, Baumgartner and Kasper each also recently earned All-ACC Academic nods, while Faust earns the award for the second time. Kasper was one of 35 All-Americans recognized.

Duke finished 17th in the NWCA top 30 team rankings for team GPA with a 3.273 average. The Blue Devils were the only ACC team ranked in the top 30.

Kasper had one of the most exciting stories in collegiate wrestling in 2016-17, going from unranked to All-American status in a matter of just months. Bumping up two weight classes, the Lexington, Ohio native quickly climbed into the national conversation of top heavyweights by winning each of his first three tournaments, including the prestigious Southern Scuffle. He was the first Blue Devil to win a Southern Scuffle title as he moved into the top 10 in the national rankings.

After finishing runner-up at the ACC Championships, Kasper rolled through his first three matches at the NCAA Championships to solidify his All-America status with a spot in the NCAA semifinals. He became the third Blue Devil in program history to earn All-America honors and the third to advance to a NCAA semifinal. A sociology major, Kasper finished the year 30-6 overall to become the 13th Blue Devil to win 30 matches in a single season.

Atkins, a sociology major, had his strongest season as a Blue Devil in 2016-17, going 19-11 overall and taking fifth at the Wolfpack Open. The Texas native's 19 wins this season were six more than his previous two seasons combined. A three-year starter at 125 pounds, Atkins scored 28 points for the Blue Devils in duals this season and went a career-best 2-3 in ACC duals.

Baumgartner, a redshirt senior transfer from Missouri, anchored Duke's lineup at 133 pounds. He started all 13 duals and finished the year with an 18-12 overall record and just missed a spot in the NCAA Championships. Enrolled in Duke's Master's of Engineering Management program, Baumgartner took third at the Wolfpack Open and went 2-3 versus ACC foes.

Faust finished his Duke career by earning a spot in the NCAA Championships for the second straight season. He and Kasper became the 14th and 15th Blue Devils to advance to multiple NCAA Championships. The
Lexington, Ohio native's season was hampered by injuries throughout, but a gutsy performance at the ACC Championship secured him a berth in the national tournament. He finished fourth overall, having to medical default in the consolation final. Overall. Faust finished the year 9-9 and his career 57-35. He

[illegible]
is the fifth Blue Devil in program history to garner the NWCA Academic recognition multiple times.

#GoDuke

Meredith V. Rieder
Associate Sports Information Director | Duke University
Scott Family Athletics Performance Center | Room 281
110 Whitford Drive
Box 90557 | Durham, N.C. 27708
(O): 919-684-3328 | (F): 919-668-1765 |(C): 919-812-6741