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### **Gardner-Webb University Announces Plans to Rebuild Marching Bulldogs**

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# Gardner-Webb University Announces Plans to Rebuild Marching Bulldogs

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Office of University  
Communications

March 5, 2020

*Director, Dr. Mark R. Cole, Will Recruit Musicians to Take the Field in Fall 2021*



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.— Gardner-Webb’s Department of Music has announced plans to rebuild the University’s marching band program. Dr. Mark R. Cole, director of bands, is recruiting musicians for the Marching Bulldogs, which will take the field in fall 2021.

“I would love to see the marching band come back and thrive,” Cole shared. “I’m certain that when we get the kids here, and they experience the game day, the program will feed itself.”

Gardner-Webb has previously had marching band programs in the 1940s, 1970s and most recently, from 2007 to 2017. When the number of band members dipped below 40, Cole decided in the fall of 2018 to only offer a pep band to interested musicians.

Leading the efforts to revive the marching band is GWU President Dr. William M. Downs. “There’s nothing quite like the sights, sounds, and pageantry of college football Saturdays here in the South,” according to Downs. “With the return of the Marching Bulldogs to Spangler Stadium, we will elevate the gameday experience for our fans and help create that 12<sup>th</sup> Man that all great football teams want on their home field. I can’t wait for Dr. Cole to lead our band back to prominence.”

Cole came to GWU in 2011, and became director of bands in 2012. His experience includes leading several high school marching band programs. During his career as a Navy musician, he served as musical director for the Midshipman Drum and Bugle Corps at the U.S. Naval Academy, director of the Navy Band Memphis, Tenn., director of the Sixth Fleet Band in Naples, Italy, and assistant director/associate conductor of the United States Navy Band in Washington, D.C.

He has written halftime shows for GWU and composes and arranges for high school bands around the country. He is also in frequent demand as a guest clinician, consultant, and conductor. Cole is a member of Phi Mu Alpha, Music Educators National Conference, the College Music Society, the College Band Directors National Association and the Central States Judges Association.

Cole’s goal is to recruit at least 75 members for the Marching Bulldogs by visiting high schools in the region. He will share information about Gardner-Webb and work with the band students as a guest clinician. “They get a chance to meet me personally,” he offered. “We know that making those connections works. An example is Bessemer City. I know the director there, and we have some of their students here at Gardner-Webb, and they are very successful..”

Scholarships will be available to students who join the marching band. For more information, contact Cole at [mcole1@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:mcole1@gardner-webb.edu).

[Learn more about the GWU Department of Music.](#)



Dr. Mark Cole, GWU Director of Bands

*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](http://Gardner-Webb.edu).*