

Gardner-Webb University

## Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

---

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

---

1-15-2019

### **Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees Names Interim President**

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

---

# Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees Names Interim President

[webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-university-board-of-trustees-names-interim-president/](http://webpublish.gardner-webb.edu/newscenter/gardner-webb-university-board-of-trustees-names-interim-president/)

Office of University  
Communications

January 15, 2019

*Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU Provost and Executive Vice President, Will Assume Role on Feb. 1*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees has named an interim president, who will begin on Feb. 1 when President Dr. Frank Bonner retires. Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU provost and executive vice president, will lead the University until the new president assumes the role.

“With nearly 13 years of administrative experience as provost and executive vice president of the University, the board is pleased to entrust Dr. Leslie with this responsibility and confident that his leadership will help ensure a stable and smooth transition,” noted Jennifer Marion Mills, chair of the GWU Board of Trustees.



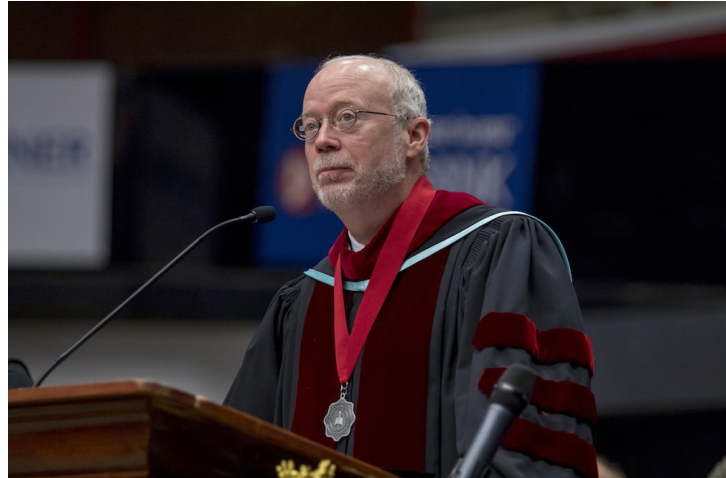
She added that the Presidential Search Committee, under the leadership of trustee David Royster, and in collaboration with the full Board of Trustees, is working diligently to fill the vacancy. Interviews of presidential candidates have been completed, and an announcement on the new president is expected soon.

“Obviously, it is critically important that the Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Committee take the time that is necessary to identify the ideal candidate to lead Gardner-Webb into the next chapter of its proud history,” said Leslie. “And I consider it nothing short of a privilege to have the opportunity to step in during this transition period. Even though new leadership is on the horizon, we have no plans to simply stand still. My aim is to continue our rich heritage of providing the highest quality of graduate and undergraduate education to our region in the context of our Christian identity. Dr. Frank Bonner, our retiring President, has laid a strong foundation for the future that will serve us well as we continue to move forward.”

Leslie came to Gardner-Webb in 2006 from Sioux Falls Seminary in Sioux Falls, S.D.,

where he was academic vice president and dean, and professor of systematic theology and Christian ethics. He earned a Bachelor of Arts from Samford University (Birmingham, Ala.), the Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, Ky.), the Master of Theology from Baptist Theological Seminary (Rueschlikon, Switzerland), and the Doctor of Theology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland.

As provost and executive vice president for Gardner-Webb, Leslie supervises the teaching, learning, scholarship, and research initiatives at GWU. Through collaborative work with associate provosts, deans, departmental chairs, and other vice presidents, Leslie administers faculty appointments, promotions and tenure. In addition, Leslie ensures the quality of Gardner-Webb's curricula and student learning. For the time being, he will also continue his duties as university provost.



Since 2009, he has served as Gardner-Webb's accreditation liaison for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). He provided institutional oversight of the school's most recent reaffirmation of accreditation (2017) and has frequently served as a committee member for SACSCOC off-site and on-site reviews of other institutions.

Under Leslie's leadership Gardner-Webb has been consistently recognized nationally for outstanding achievement through academics and community/service-related efforts.

Leslie is active in the Boiling Springs Rotary Club and served as its president in 2014. He is a member of First Baptist Church in Shelby, N.C., where he teaches Sunday school. An ordained minister and Christian Scholar, Leslie has been a featured speaker in churches, conferences, and events and has authored numerous journal articles, essays and publications on Christian life, history, ethics and culture.

*Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a place where Christian compassion meets critical thinking. A private, Christian, liberal arts university, Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective servant-leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.*