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A President's Response to the Changing Organizational Landscape at Gardner-Webb

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A President's Response to the Changing Organizational Landscape at Gardner-Webb

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Office of University
Communications

March 16, 2017

Recently, Gardner-Webb University began offering a voluntary work force reduction program which provides employees the opportunity to leave the University voluntarily and with a severance package.

a photo of Dr. Frank Bonner

Given the obvious sensitivity of this announcement, I am writing to explain the context for this action. Contrary to what some might normally assume, this is actually being undertaken from a position of strength. It is part of a strategic initiative to better position the University in a rapidly evolving and competitive higher education environment.

Our ultimate objective is to respond to two major demands bringing about tremendous pressure within higher education: *affordability* and *results*. These demands are pervasive throughout higher education, with some exceptions in the cases of the most elite and heavily-endowed institutions.

Gardner-Webb is by no means immune to these demands. Our challenge is not only to continue the highest levels of quality in academics and student life, but to dramatically enhance them and achieve continuous quality improvement across the board. We must do this while holding down costs so as to increase affordability. In other words, we must do more with less, much more with less. It hardly requires brilliant business acumen to understand that we must therefore examine our operations and bring about the greatest possible efficiencies and cost effectiveness. Resources saved must be directed to affordability and reallocation for greater and greater quality.

So, how will we go about these endeavors? Within our campus community and in communications with our Board, I have provided guidance for what might be called *Strategic Pivot: A Transformation*.

Within that guidance, I have called attention to key components of our excellent strategic plan which should be expedited and given urgent attention, along with other ideas and strategies for emphasis and special attention.

Second, we are working with the Association of Governing Boards Institutional Strategies program for expert assistance in implementation of key strategic objectives. And, as I have indicated, we are thoroughly reviewing operations for cost effectiveness, including the

voluntary workforce reduction.

Our objectives are to continue to increase excellence in academics and student life as well as affordability and opportunities for students. These will be brought about through careful strategic planning and increased efficiencies and cost effectiveness.

All institutions and businesses must adapt to a changing environment and increasing competition. Some adapt successfully, some fail, and some actually get out in front with innovation and increased quality. Higher education overall is not exempt from such evolution and challenge, nor is Gardner-Webb. Responding effectively from our current position of strength, Gardner-Webb will be among those institutions who respond aggressively and innovatively and lead the field.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers for Gardner-Webb University.

Dr. Frank Bonner

President, Gardner-Webb University

March 13, 2017