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### **Gardner-Webb University Accepting Student Applications for New Pastoral Ministries Program**

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# Gardner-Webb University Accepting Student Applications for New Pastoral Ministries Program

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Office of University  
Communications

January 21, 2016

## *Five-Year Program Will Welcome First Cohort in Fall 2016, Provide Bachelor's and Master's Degrees*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University is now accepting applications for admission to its new Accelerated Pastoral Ministries Program (APMP), which will provide students called to serve as pastors with both a bachelor's degree and master's degree in five years of study.

The APMP has received full approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), and the program's Master of Divinity has been approved by the Commission on Accrediting of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS). Students may apply now for admission to the APMP for Fall 2016.

“Gardner-Webb is one of many institutions nationally that are exploring accelerated educational pathways to ministry,” GWU Provost and Executive Vice President Dr. Ben Leslie explains. “Churches benefit because a generation of pastoral leadership is arriving sooner from the educational pipeline. There's also an indirect benefit to congregations when they hire church leaders with less educational debt, which we know can be a burden on families.

“Gardner-Webb's program is designed for students who have a clear sense of their vocational calling at the beginning of their college career,” Leslie continues. “And because of the accelerated pace of study, it is intended for students with strong study skills and above-average scholastic aptitude. For the highly motivated and capable student, it's a remarkable opportunity.”

Students who enter pastoral ministry traditionally complete bachelor's and master's degrees in a seven-year period. The APMP will enable students to complete 129 semester hours at the undergraduate level in three years, while receiving program-specific scholarship opportunities, community living options, mentorship and practical ministry experience.

“This program reinforces one of Gardner-Webb's long-standing priorities: preparing men and women to serve the local church in positions of ministry,” offers Dr. Eddie Stepp, department chair and professor of Religious Studies and Philosophy. “For more than two

decades with Divinity students, and for many additional years at the undergraduate level, Gardner-Webb has mentored and prepared those who have been specially called to serve Christ's church. The APMP provides us with another option to well train the next generation of leadership for the local church."

Following the completion of bachelor's degree requirements, APMP students will enter the School of Divinity to complete 69 additional semester hours that include advanced studies in biblical languages and electives, historical and theological training, as well as courses that focus on the dimensions of ministry in the church.

"Our graduates rank alongside the best and brightest of men and women who are preparing for ministry," adds Dr. Robert Canoy, dean of the GWU School of Divinity. "We are eager to welcome the first cohort of APMP students."

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For more information on the APMP application process, contact admissions counselor Tabatha Coker at [tcoker@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:tcoker@gardner-webb.edu) or 704-406-2078, or visit [gardner-webb.edu/apmp](http://gardner-webb.edu/apmp).

*Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).*