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Office of University
Communications

November 9, 2015

Institution Leaders Sign Agreements to Ease Transfer Process in Several Programs

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University and Gaston College (Dallas, N.C.)

announced a partnership that will further ease the transfer process for students who complete degrees in certain programs with coursework at both institutions.

Officials for both schools signed agreements to create a seamless degree track for accounting, business administration, criminal justice, elementary education, entrepreneurship, human services and nursing students who begin their studies at Gaston College (GC) and finish them in GWU's Degree Completion Program (DCP). The agreements, called Pathways to reference the structured paths of study between the two schools, formalize a degree partnership that already exists between the University and the community college.

"The Pathways are just one more example of the many ways that Gaston College and Gardner-Webb University have partnered together over the years to provide our students with a variety of opportunities to expand and achieve their educational goals," offered Dr. Ben Leslie, provost and executive vice president at Gardner-Webb. "Over the years, Gardner-Webb and Gaston College have shared not only students but also faculty and staff, so we know and trust each other as institutions. It only makes sense that we would expand this relationship in a way that mutually benefits our students."

Students will save time and money thanks to the partnership, which aligns degree courses at the College and the University to reduce instances of course repetition and loss. A streamlined major program allows students to enter the workforce sooner and with less financial debt from college costs. Additionally, Pathways allows students entering major programs to begin planning their educational path during their high school years, with academic advising assistance from both GWU and GC.

"This agreement provides the most cost-effective and time-efficient way for prospective college students in Gaston and Lincoln counties who want to complete a bachelor's degree at Gardner-Webb," asserted Gaston College President Dr. Patricia Skinner. "Pre-determined academic pathways have been negotiated so that transfer students will be at exactly the same place as students who started their college career at Gardner-Webb."

In the past year, Gardner-Webb has also formed Pathways partnerships with Cleveland Community College (Shelby, N.C.), Western Piedmont Community College (Morganton, N.C.) and Isothermal Community College (Spindale, N.C.), and GWU leaders continue to examine additional opportunities to formalize similar transfer agreements with other community colleges in the state. The University maintains an active relationship with many community colleges, including DCP sites on several campuses such as Gaston College.

From left, GWU leaders Dr. Bobbie Cox, Dr. Van Graham, Dr. Earl Leininger and Dr. Sharon Starr are pictured with Gaston College President Dr. Patricia Skinner and Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Don Ammons. (Photo courtesy of Gaston College)

This fall, GWU leaders approved an updated Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (ICAA) that will provide further planning and support to guide students through the required curriculum to complete a bachelor's degree program with courses at both a community college and a four-year institution.

“So many students today attend many institutions and transfer, not once, but as many as four times before completing a degree,” Leslie related. “Whatever we can do to decrease the enormous inefficiency that is happening in our country now with students taking unnecessary courses is in our best interest as institutions, our students’ best interest, and the best interest of our economy and community.”

Gaston College is a public community college, located in Gaston and Lincoln counties, that has for more than 50 years promoted student success and lifelong learning through high-caliber, affordable and comprehensive educational programs and services responding to economic and workforce development needs.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University provides exceptional educational opportunities within a Christian environment, preparing students to think critically, to succeed professionally, and to serve faithfully as members of their local and global communities.