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Academic Plan to Benefit GWU Transfer Students

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Office of University
Communications

October 5, 2015

University Approves Revised Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Students who transfer to Gardner-Webb University from a North Carolina community college stand to save both time and money in completing a four-year degree, thanks to an updated education agreement approved by GWU and other college leaders across the state.

A revised version of the Independent Comprehensive Articulation Agreement (ICAA) 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. In addition to authorization by North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) and presidents in the N.C. Community College System, the updated ICAA was recently approved by Gardner-Webb leadership.

“The old agreement had no provisions for guiding the community college student through a curriculum—other than the graduation requirements of the program,” explained Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU provost and executive vice president. “Under the new agreement, the four-year institution can specify many of the courses that a student should take while still at a community college. This encourages the student to plan an entire associate degree with the four-year institution in mind. Thus, students should be even better prepared for their last two years of study than they have been previously.”

The ICAA allows Gardner-Webb to offer program completion plans for every traditional undergraduate and Degree Completion Program (DCP) major available at the University, Leslie shared. Over the past several years, GWU has enrolled about 100 total transfer students each semester in the undergraduate and DCP programs who entered with the assistance of the articulation agreement.

“The agreement makes good sense for North Carolina community college students,” Leslie offered. “Because it cuts down on student enrollment in courses that do not count toward graduation, it helps keep down the cost of education. And whatever keeps down the costs of education and increases the number of graduates is good for the student, good for the institution and good for the North Carolina economy.”

In addition to the ICAA, Gardner-Webb has formed Pathways agreements, named for the structured paths of study, with several of the state's community colleges to help students complete degrees in certain programs. Without the articulation and Pathways agreements,

the process for students to complete a degree through multiple institutions would take longer, while some students would not finish at all.

“An enormous amount of energy is being focused nationally on the so-called ‘completion agenda,’ which is the unfortunate situation we have with far too many students starting a college career without bringing it to completion,” Leslie shared. “Articulation agreements are one of the best tools we have to assist students who get lost in the ‘swirl’ of moving from one major to another or one institution to another, piling up course credits, but never having a degree to document their accomplishments.”

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them for professional success and for productive citizenship.