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### **Gardner-Webb, Isothermal Community College Partner to Help Students Complete Degrees**

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# Gardner-Webb, Isothermal Community College Partner to Help Students Complete Degrees

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Office of University  
Communications

August 24, 2015

## *Institution Leaders Sign Agreements to Make Transfer Process Easier*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb

University and Isothermal Community

College (Spindale, 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, entrepreneurship, healthcare management, criminal justice, human services, elementary education, nursing and religious studies students who begin their studies at Isothermal (ICC) and finish them in the University'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 GWU and ICC.

"Both institutions have the same mission, and that's improving people's lives," shared ICC President Walter Dalton. "In North Carolina today, 67 percent of jobs are going to require some type of skills beyond high school. That's why educational opportunities are so important to our students. I've always said we don't need just Pathways, we need highways, and that's what this agreement creates."

Students will save time and money thanks to the partnership, which aligns Pathways-associated major courses at GWU and ICC 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 ICC and GWU.

"Higher education is getting more and more critical for our citizens," offered GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner. "We are hearing a great deal about making higher education easier for citizens to access, and that's certainly what this Pathways agreement does. Gardner-Webb and Isothermal have had a long-standing relationship, and I believe it's even better now."

Gardner-Webb has also formed Pathways partnerships with Cleveland Community College (Shelby, N.C.) and Western Piedmont Community College (Morganton, N.C.) in the past year, 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.

“So many students today attend many institutions and transfer, not once, but as many as four times before completing a degree,” said Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU provost and executive vice president. “Whatever we can do to decrease the enormous inefficiency that’s 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.”

*Isothermal Community College, a member of the North Carolina Community College System, is a comprehensive, two-year, public institution that serves the individuals in Rutherford and Polk counties.*

*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.*