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GWU Graduate School of Education Unveils New Doctoral Degree

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Office of University Communications

February 28, 2014

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership Set to Begin First Cohort in August 2014

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – The Gardner-Webb University Gayle Bolt Price School of Graduate Studies is unveiling a new doctorate within the education department, which officials believe will offer substantial leadership training to individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds. The Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (DEOL) will initiate its first cohort in the fall semester of 2014. University officials are excited about the addition and believe the changes will help Gardner-Webb provide quality leadership education that will address the needs of a wide range of modern professionals.

“This addition to our Ed.D. offerings is a logical extension of the School of Education’s commitment to cultivating transformational leaders in communities, schools, law enforcement, and businesses through its Center for Innovative Leadership Development,” said Dr. Jeff Rogers, dean of the Gardner-Webb University Gayle Bolt Price School of Graduate Studies. “The degree program is new, but the vision behind it and the expertise it harnesses have been years in the making.”

Dr. Douglas Eury, dean of the School of Education agreed wholeheartedly. “Gardner-Webb University is in the forefront of leadership development,” declared Eury. “We aim to inspire change through educating and motivating our students and clients to assume leadership roles in professions that will enhance and enrich the lives of individuals and communities. This doctorate embodies the scholar-practitioner model of professional training and prepares students to seek out leadership roles in a variety of settings.”

Like the existing doctoral programs within the School of Education, the organizational leadership doctorate is designed to provide practical leadership skills with a strong theoretical foundation. Structured with the working adult in mind and utilizing a cohort model, candidates will contribute to their organization throughout the course of study. Dr. John Balls serves as assistant professor within the Graduate School of Education and is the director of the GWU Center for Innovative Leadership Development (CILD). He envisions a collaborative environment within the classroom.

“One of the major benefits of the cohort model is not only do you learn and appreciate the skills of your fellow classmates, but you’re able to build on their experiences as well,” Balls offered. “To me, that’s half—if not more—of the educational process. Participants are out

there day in and day out on the job and then can bring their experiences back to the classroom to discuss what's working and what's not working. This program will absolutely blend theory and practical application."

The CILD at Gardner-Webb has worked with groups from various employment sectors, including governments and municipalities, non-profit organizations, healthcare, education, and more. Balls believes the new doctoral program will offer excellent training for individuals outside of the public school setting.

"Our current doctoral degree programs in educational leadership and curriculum instruction are principally, if not exclusively, focused on K-12 education," Balls explained. "Through the Center for Innovative Leadership Development, we conduct leadership seminars and workshops and we've received feedback from many participants who desired for us to offer a leadership degree outside the field of public school education."

The DEOL program will consist of nine semesters totaling 63 credit hours, including the consultancy-capstone project. Core course modules will address concepts such as cultural development in organizations, change management, ethics, conflict resolution, and more. Specialized course modules will include policy development, business law, and self and collective efficacy, among others. An online component may be utilized for some of the classes, with other classes set up as hybrids (a combination of face-to-face and online). Officials hope to be able to offer the program at the both the Gardner-Webb main campus in Boiling Springs, N.C. as well as at the Charlotte, N.C. satellite campus. An open house is planned for March 31 (Charlotte campus) and April 7 (Boiling Springs campus) from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Special presentations will be made at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. during both events.

"The timing is right to do this," Balls said. "We're really excited about it and we know from the early returns that the community at large is excited about it as well."

Dr. John Balls discusses the new Doctor of Education in Organizational Management in this WGWG.org interview:

For more information, including admission requirements and specific course curriculum, visit the program's web site at Gardner-Webb.edu/DEOL. Materials can also be requested via email to Dr. John Balls (jdb0114@gardner-webb.edu).

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University blends a liberal arts core curriculum with more than 55 major and minor professional programs of study, a comprehensive academic experience that flows from our Christian commitment to intellectual freedom, service and leadership.

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