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School of Divinity Student Sharon Allred Decker Named N.C. Commerce Secretary & GWU Alum and Trustee Chairman Neal Alexander to Head the State Personnel Office

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Governor-Elect Pat McCrory has named the final members of the North Carolina cabinet, and Gardner-Webb University is represented by two of the appointees.

During a press conference on Thursday, McCrory announced that he would appoint Sharon Allred Decker, a former Duke Energy vice president and a student of the Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity, as Secretary of the Department of Commerce. He also tapped current Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees Chairman Neal Alexander, who retired from Duke Energy after 43 years of service, to serve as the Director of the State Office of Personnel.

According to a release from the Governor's office, McCrory is incredibly proud of the team he has assembled. "These individuals are pragmatic problem solvers and leaders that will help me run the government in the most effective way possible while seeking long-term solutions for our state," he stated.

Decker (Rutherfordton, N.C.) joins the McCrory Administration with extensive private sector and non-profit experience. She previously served as the CEO of the Tanner Company, a large textile company based in Rutherfordton, N.C. In 2004, Decker established a not-for-profit organization known as the Tapestry Group, which helps individuals lead healthier lives in mind, body, and spirit. In addition, she has served on the boards of three Fortune 500 companies including Coca-Cola and Family Dollar. Her more than 17 years of experience with Duke Power Company, now Duke Energy, eventually led her through the ranks to become the youngest and first female vice president in Duke Power's history. Her contributions at Duke Power led to the creation of the company's first 24-hour customer service center, which still serves as a model for the industry. In 2009, Decker enrolled in the Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity, where she has been working on her Master of Divinity degree with a concentration in Spiritual Formation.

In 2011, Decker was interviewed for the University publication "Gardner-Webb The Magazine," where she discussed possibilities for her future. "Whether I go back into the corporate life or whether I continue doing what I'm doing, I just want to be open to God's

call, because I know he has a sense of humor,” she reflected. “I also know he has a perfect, beautiful plan.”

Alexander (Denver, N.C.) joins Governor-Elect McCrory’s leadership team with more than 40 years of experience at Duke Energy in a variety of human resources roles. Most recently, he served as Vice President for Human Resources for Duke Energy’s US Franchised Electric and Gas Service. He is the recipient of several awards and accolades for excellence in human resources including the Duke Power William S. Lee Leadership Award and The Employers Association Babcock Award. He currently serves as chairman of the Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees and has served as a member of the board since 1990. He first attended Gardner-Webb as an undergraduate student during the 1965-66 school year, but left before graduation when he was called into active duty. In 1984, he successfully completed the G.O.A.L. (Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners) program and graduated from Gardner-Webb University with a Bachelor of Science in Management.

“It (GOAL) opened many doors for me at Duke, as well as other things in life,” Alexander recently shared. “If you have the determination to complete the goal, the program provides a way.”

Governor-elect McCrory will be sworn in on Saturday, Jan. 5 at the State Capitol in Raleigh. Following his swearing-in ceremony, he will administer the oath of office for his cabinet secretaries.

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.