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### The Arts are Alive and Well at Gardner-Webb University

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# The Arts are Alive and Well at Gardner-Webb University

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Office of University Communications

September 14, 2012

## *The School of Performing and Visual Arts Expects Continued Growth*

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – A new fall semester at Gardner-Webb University brings with it new faculty, facility upgrades, and continued expansion for a brighter artistic tomorrow for the School of Performing and Visual Arts.

“We want potential students who want to make a career in the arts to be able to visit our campus and feel motivated by the people they meet and the things they see in their decision process to attend the school,” said GWU School of Performing and Visual Arts Dean and Dept. Chair, Jim Thomas. Thomas hopes a big part of that in the future will be a new fine arts building that is currently in the planning process. In the meantime, construction is taking place on an addition of a scene shop to the Dover Theatre. The shop will be devoted as a storage area for scenery and costumes. Additional renovations are also expected next year at Dover Theatre.

Five new individuals—three in music and two in theatre—have filled full-time positions in the GWU School of Performing and Visual Arts. Within music studies, **Patricia Bowes** serves as an assistant professor. Bowes has taught at all levels and was a specialist in elementary education (public and private) and choral music—even teaching in Malaysia. **Jondra Harmon**, who received her BA from GWU, was named an instructor of music. Harmon has performed in various productions, including “Showboat” with the Chicago Lyric Opera. Harmon takes over the office that belonged to her mentor/teacher at GWU, Patricia Harrelson, who retired at the end of the 2012 spring semester and was inducted into the “Faith, Service, and Leadership Hall of Fame,” an honor reserved only for faculty with at least 40 years of service. **Dr. Megan McCauley** is another assistant professor of music and will teach voice and vocal diction. She will also be in charge of the Opera Theatre. McCauley had served as an adjunct professor the past two years and was selected by students for an outstanding teaching award at GWU.

Outside of the full time faculty positions on the music side, the department hired **Sara Gaskins** as an adjunct of music survey and music history, **Dr. Tom Hildreth** as a string bass and jazz bass instructor, and **Rich Willey** was named director of the jazz ensemble.

“We feel very blessed with this group,” said Dr. Patricia Sparti, music chair. “This enables us to continue a heritage of excellence in our programs, established in the past by the likes of Patricia Harrelson. More people from all over are taking notice of our program and we want it to be the best it can be.”

In theatre studies, **Sue Fair** was named instructor of theatre and technical director. Fair believes in “providing students with a curriculum based on sound instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners and create critical thinking.” **Chris Nelson** becomes assistant professor of theatre and brings to the position a strong academic background, including a doctorate in theatre from LSU (Louisiana State University). The Theatre Department has two more productions scheduled for this semester, “Doubt” Oct. 10-13 and “Sylvia” Nov. 28-Dec. 1.

Last but not least in visual arts, **Dr. Nancy Bottoms**, assistant professor, was named interim department chair, while Doug Knotts is on sabbatical. Student art will be displayed on an ongoing basis in the new Tucker Student Center Art Gallery.

More information is available on the School of Performing and Visual Arts at 704-406-4362.