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GWU Faculty Approves Reduction in Undergraduate Hours Required for Graduation

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ACADEMICS

GWU Faculty Approves Reduction in Undergraduate Hours Required for Graduation

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON NOVEMBER 12, 2020



Credit Hours Reduced to 120, Lowering Costs and Providing Expanded Transfer-Friendly Pathway



▲ Dr. Ben Leslie

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University faculty has taken another bold step to make a Gardner-Webb education more affordable and accessible to students. They recently approved a reduction in the number of undergraduate credit hours required for graduation from 128 to 120. This change encompasses the restructuring of the University's general education requirements, which was announced earlier this year. The result benefits traditional undergraduate students and provides a more transfer-friendly pathway for students transitioning to Gardner-Webb from other universities. The revisions will go into effect in the 2021-2022 academic year. Students already enrolled at Gardner-Webb may elect to apply the new requirements to their academic program.

"The new streamlined general education curriculum allows the faculty to reduce the graduation requirement," stated Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU Provost and Executive Vice President. "Now easier to navigate, it will also open up opportunities for students to make more choices and design a curricular pathway that best meets their needs."

Reducing the time to completion can also lower costs, which is good for students and their families. "Finish in Four" is standard encouragement at many universities across the country," noted GWU President Dr. William M. Downs. "With few exceptions, most undergraduate degree programs are now structured to enable students to complete all requirements and graduate after four years (8 semesters at 15 credit hours apiece). I am delighted—and I am sure prospective students and their parents—are delighted that Gardner-Webb is deconstructing barriers to timely degree completion. With our improved general education curriculum now coupled with the normal expectation of graduation after 120 hours, we are positioning ourselves to be that much more competitive for new students and sustained enrollment growth."



▲ Dr. William Downs

Dr. Melissa McNeilly, assistant professor in the School of Nursing, and Dr. Elizabeth Amato, associate professor of political science, served as co-chairs of the faculty committee that created the new general education curriculum. McNeilly said the change in requirements allows students to have more choice in their educational pathway. "A beneficial aspect to having additional choice is the ability to double major and minor," she asserted. "Graduating with more than one major makes our students more marketable and better equipped for professional careers. The reduction in graduation hours permits students the ability to complete degree requirements at a faster pace and begin impacting their communities at a higher capacity."

In the new general education model, students will take between 32-33 credit hours in "The Foundational Experience," and 12-16 hours in "The Exploratory Experience." The Foundation courses—such as English, math, history, the arts, languages, religion and science—provide the skills and knowledge for the Exploratory classes, which examine areas of interest, such as business, foreign languages, literature, sciences, fine arts and performing arts.

"The changes in graduation hours and our general education curriculum truly helps both first-time freshman and transfer students looking to complete their degree at Gardner-Webb University," observed Julie C. Fleming, assistant vice president for Undergraduate Admissions. "It demonstrates our commitment to degree completion and student success, which are important factors in the college search process."



▲ Julie Fleming

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.

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We welcome your suggestions and feedback, contact:

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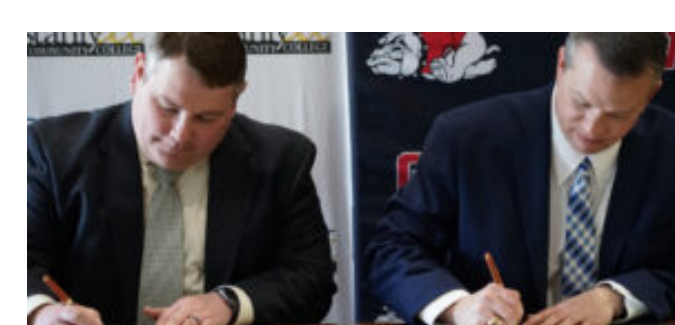
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