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Gardner-Webb School of Divinity Appoints Three Faculty Members to Endowed Positions

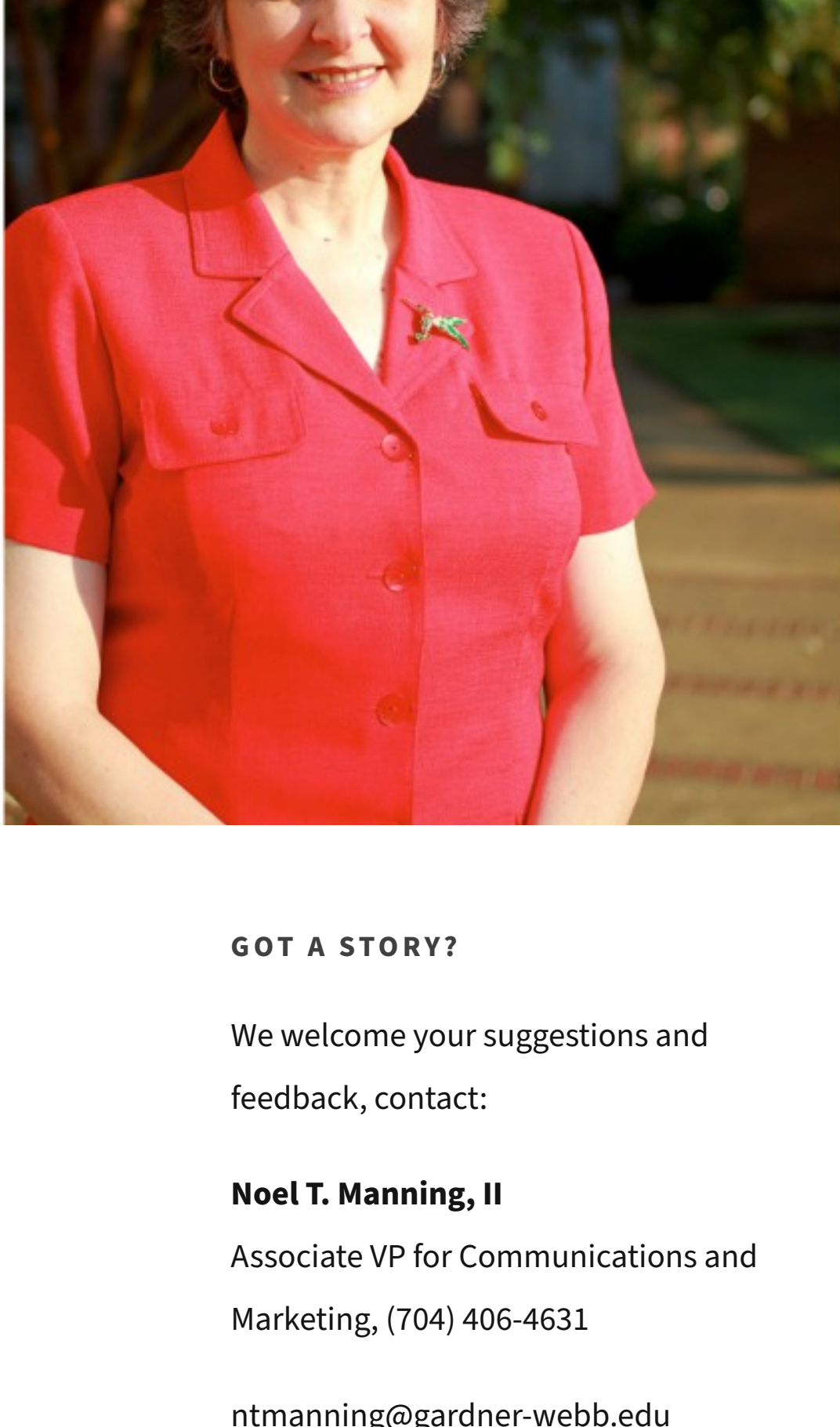
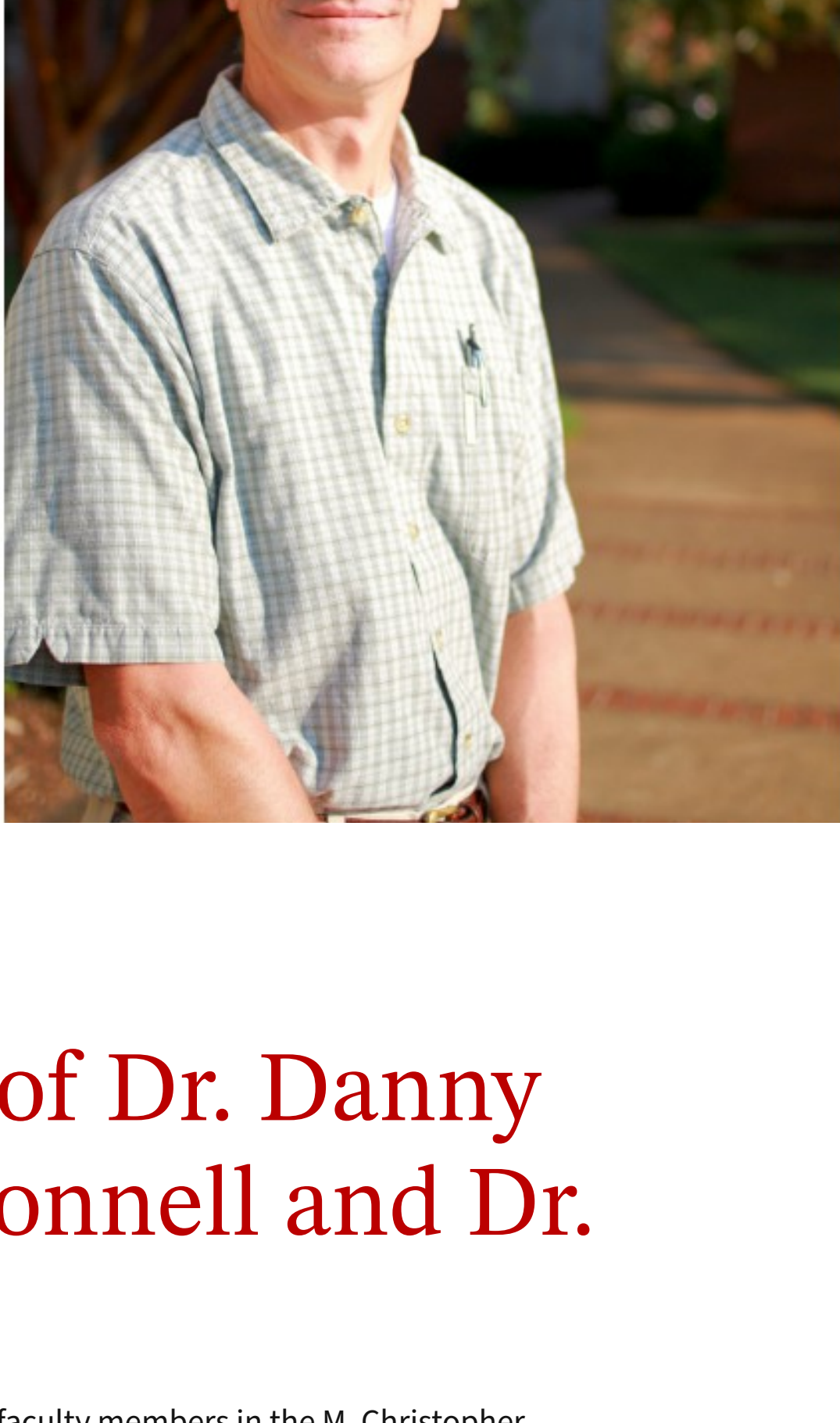
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FACULTY

Gardner-Webb School of Divinity Appoints Three Faculty Members to Endowed Positions

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2020



BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Three Gardner-Webb University faculty members in the M. Christopher White School of Divinity received honors recently. Dr. Danny West, Dr. Jim McConnell and Dr. Sophia Steibel have been appointed to endowed chair positions.

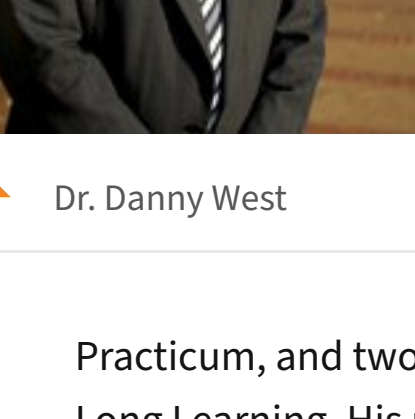
“Selections are based on a distinguished record of scholarly or creative accomplishment, a strong record of teaching, exemplary leaderships and service to their school or University, and their promise as a productive scholar,” said Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU provost and executive vice president. “The holder of the chair is also provided with funding to support projects of research or teaching innovation.”

Gardner-Webb has four faculty endowed chairs at the University. In addition to three in the School of Divinity, the Goldbold College of Business has the Dover Endowed Chair of Business, established by the Dover Foundation in 1999 to promote quality of instruction. Dr. Anthony Negbenebor, professor of economics and international business and assistant vice president for business development and partnerships, was named Dover Chair in 2005.

Following is more information about each new appointment:

W. Randall Lolley Chair for Pastoral Studies—Dr. Danny West

The W. Randall Lolley Chair for Pastoral Studies was established to honor Dr. W. Randall Lolley, long-time pastor and Southeastern Seminary President in recognition of his commitment to congregational ministry. The Endowed Chair is awarded to West, who serves as the director of the Doctor of Ministry Program, director of Ministry Leadership Development and professor of preaching and pastoral studies.



Dr. Danny West

“Dr. Danny West has distinguished himself as a scholar and as a leader among the faculty within Gardner-Webb’s School of Divinity,” Leslie affirmed. “He is also one the finest preachers in our region. We are honored to have Dr. West occupying the Lolley Chair and are excited by the prospects of supporting his work that in turn will support the preparation of so many young men and women seeking to enhance their abilities to lead Christian congregations.”

West holds a Bachelor of Arts from Carson-Newman College and the M.Div., Th.M. and Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He joined the School of Divinity faculty in 2002. West teaches the Introduction to Theological Education for Ministry, Introduction to Preaching, Preaching Practicum, and two Doctor of Ministry seminars—the Ministry of Preaching and the Ministry of Life-Long Learning. His primary area of research is preaching and story. West’s articles on the subject have appeared in publications including “From Our Christian Heritage: Hundreds of Ways to Add Christian History to Teaching, Preaching, and Writing”; “The Minister’s Manual”; “John Killinger: Celebrating 75 years”; “Next Sunday Resources”; and “Preaching Magazine.” He has written a compilation of published newspaper columns in a book entitled, “This, That, and Other Kingdom Stories.”

Prior to joining the faculty of the School of Divinity, Dr. West was the Regional Vice-President of the Tennessee Baptist Children’s Home Inc. He taught for almost a decade at Carson-Newman University as an adjunct professor of religion. West has a background steeped in the local church. He has served as a pastor, and guest preacher/teacher in numerous churches in Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, Indiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina. He is currently serving his 14th interim pastorate where he focuses on conflict mediation, reconciliation, and vision. He is a trained S.T.E.P. (Strategic Transitional Educational Program) through the Center for Healthy Churches.

In recent years, West has researched the intersection of preaching and story as an effective means of communicating the gospel. He is a regular attendee of the National Storytelling Festival in Jonesboro, Tenn., and is currently working on a research project that engages the idea of organic preaching and story. He is a native of Gloucester, Va., and is married to Jeanne Burklow West. They have three grown children, and three spectacular grandchildren.

Bob D. Shepherd Chair of Biblical Studies—Dr. Jim McConnell

The Bob D. Shepherd Chair of Biblical Studies was established to honor Dr. Bob Shepherd. The Shepherd Endowed Chair in Biblical Studies was the first of its kind at Gardner-Webb University and was established in 1998. It honors Shepherd’s service as pastor, university administrator and Gardner-Webb University Trustee. The Endowed Chair is awarded to McConnell, who serves as the associate dean of the School of Divinity and associate professor of New Testament Interpretation, teaching classes in all areas of New Testament as well as biblical Greek.

“Dr. Jim McConnell has distinguished himself as a faculty leader, a scholar, and most importantly as an outstanding educator for men and women preparing for Christian Ministry,” Leslie observed. “We are proud of Dr. McConnell’s many accomplishments and looking forward to seeing further contributions in the near future.”

A native of Indianapolis, Ind., McConnell joined the Gardner-Webb School of Divinity faculty in 2009. He is the author of “The Topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts” (Pickwick, 2014), as well as other articles and essays. He focuses especially on Luke-Acts and Paul. He also serves as the associate editor of the journal Review & Expositor.

Dr. McConnell began his vocational life as an electrical engineer after earning a Bachelor of Science degree in electrical engineering from North Carolina State University. After 14 years in industry, four of which were spent designing dental equipment for Siemens AG in Bensheim, Germany, he transitioned into teaching and full-time church ministry, earning a Master of Divinity degree from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, followed by a PhD in New Testament from Baylor University. Dr. McConnell and his wife Susan have two married sons and a daughter, as well as twin grandsons. In his free time, McConnell enjoys gardening, hiking and backpacking, and photography.

Bonnie Price Chair for Christian Formation and Leadership—Dr. Sophia Steibel

The Bonnie Price Chair for Christian Formation and Leadership in the School of Divinity is a new chair beginning with the 2020-2021 academic year. The Chair was established to honor Bonnie Price, long-time School of Divinity friend and supporter, in recognition of her commitment to Christian formation and ministry. The Endowed Chair is awarded to Steibel, who serves as a professor of Christian education and spiritual formation in the School of Divinity. She holds her Bachelor of Arts from Gardner-Webb University, the M.A.(R.E.) from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and earned her Ph.D. at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

“Dr. Sophia Steibel is the ideal choice to occupy this distinguished position given her career-long focus on how congregations can support the spiritual formation of their members,” Leslie noted. “Students know Dr. Steibel as one of the most caring and engaged faculty members on campus. We are excited by the prospects of supporting further development of the Divinity School’s spiritual formation curriculum, and thus indirectly, the spiritual growth programs of Christian congregations throughout the region.”

Steibel joined the School of Divinity faculty in 2001. She teaches The Christian Journey, Designing Curriculum, Leadership with Volunteers in the Church, Mission and Ministry, and Administration and Leadership. Steibel coordinates the spiritual formation curriculum for the School of Divinity, and she annually leads spirituality retreats for students. Christian education and spiritual formation are her primary areas of research interest.

Prior to joining the faculty of the School of Divinity, Steibel was associate professor of Religious Education at Gardner-Webb University. She is the former director of Campinas Baptist Theological College, Campinas, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Additionally, Dr. Steibel served on the faculties of South Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary and Baptist Religious Education Institute, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is active in the life of First Baptist Church of Shelby, N.C.

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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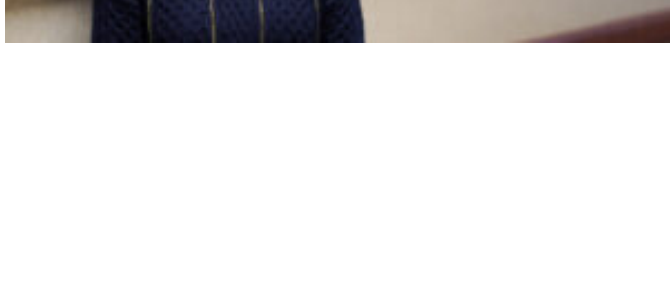
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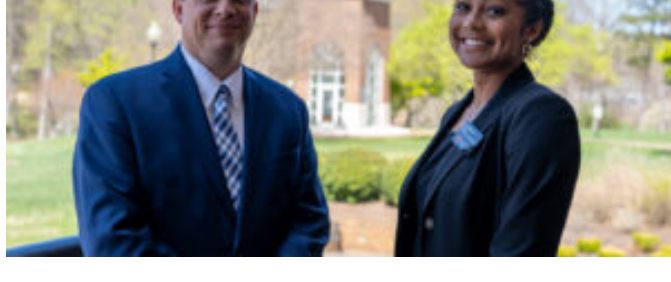


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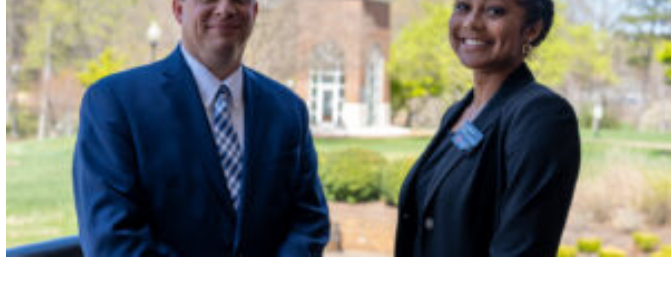


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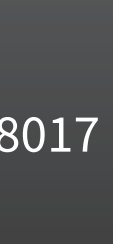

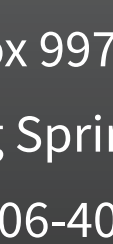
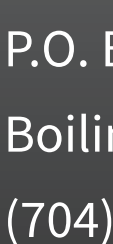
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