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ACADEMICS

Campus Community Invited to 'Meet the Deans' of the GWU College of Arts & Sciences

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON DECEMBER 1, 2021



Dean Shawn Holt and Associate Dean Jennifer Buckner Host Event in Tucker on Thursday, Dec. 2

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The campus community is invited to “Meet the Deans” of the Gardner-Webb University College of Arts & Sciences (CoA&S) on Thursday, Dec. 2, from 3 to 5 p.m. in Tucker Student Center. Dr. Shawn Holt, dean, and Dr. Jennifer Buckner, recently named associate dean, will greet guests and provide information about the CoA&S. Sweet treats and warm beverages will be served, and fun crafts will also be provided.

Holt was named GWU’s first CoA&S dean in April 2021 and assumed his duties before the 2021 Fall Semester. He came to Gardner-Webb from the Richard Bland College of William & Mary (Petersburg, Va.), where he was employed as a professor of biology and the chair of the Department of Natural Science and Mathematics. Holt has a Ph.D. in genetics from Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas, and a BA in Biology from The Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colo. His interests are in science and research, and writing and reviewing scientific grants and papers.

“The CoA&S plays a pivotal role in providing a strong liberal arts foundation to all students with disciplines ranging from visual and performing arts to natural and computational sciences to the humanities, communications, and social sciences,” Holt observed. “Our faculty are devoted scholars with a passion for teaching, offering students the opportunity to become critical thinkers and effective communicators. Our ultimate goal within the CoA&S is to mentor our students to be engaged citizens and community leaders who offer lasting contributions to society and promote sustainable change on a global scale.”



▲ Dr. Jennifer Buckner

Buckner, who has taught writing since 1998, came to GWU in 2007 as the director of Peer Tutoring and Developmental Education and instructor of English. She has also served as the director of the Writing Center and is currently a professor and the chair of the Department of English Language and Literature. She has a MA in English from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and a Ph.D. in English, writing, rhetoric and new media from Old Dominion University (Norfolk, Va.).

“I am honored to work with faculty across departments in the CoA&S, helping to support the excellence of our programs,” she commented on her new appointment. “At the beginning and end of the day, I’m curious. Serving as associate dean grants me a way to learn, support, and understand how our CoA&S disciplines work together for the mission of a liberal arts education.”

The CoA&S includes the Departments of Communication, Art & Design; English Language and Literature;

Health, Sport, and Physical Education; Mathematical and Computer Sciences; Music; Natural Sciences; Public Service; Religious Studies and Philosophy; Social Sciences; Theatre Arts; and World Languages, Literature, and Cultures.

Buckner will continue teaching in the undergraduate and graduate English programs. “I may have arrived at teaching English as a third major as an undergrad, but I’m certain God meant for me to learn with students,” she noted. “I love that after 23 years of teaching writing, I still have more questions than answers, and I never get bored. Nothing beats those moments when an insightful comment hangs in the atmosphere of a class discussion, leaving us nodding and changed.”



▲ Dr. Shawn Holt

As CoA&S associate dean, her responsibilities will be to support curricular and co-curricular program development, implementation, assessment, and revision. She will also collaborate with chairs, directors, faculty and administrative support staff to design and implement professional development and training.

Holt affirmed that Buckner, with her years of teaching and leadership experience, will be an asset for CoA&S students, faculty and staff. “Dr. Buckner was at the top of a very short list,” he said. “After consultation with the president (Dr. William Downs) and the provost (Dr. Ben Leslie), it became obvious that the College needed someone like Dr. Buckner, who is thoughtful in her approach to leadership and who has the administrative experience and the respect of her peers.”

Gardner-Webb University is North Carolina’s recognized leader in private, Christian higher education. A Carnegie-Classified Doctoral/Professional University, GWU is home to six professional schools, 14 academic departments, more than 80 undergraduate and graduate majors, and a world-class faculty. Located on a beautiful 225-acre campus in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb prepares graduates to impact their chosen professions, equips them with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspires them to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.