

Gardner-Webb University

Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University

Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive

Gardner-Webb Publications

12-20-2021

GWU Student Success Receives Grant from North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

Office of University Communications

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive>

Recommended Citation

Office of University Communications, "GWU Student Success Receives Grant from North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities" (2021). *Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive*. 2355.
<https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/gardner-webb-newscenter-archive/2355>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Gardner-Webb Publications at Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Gardner-Webb NewsCenter Archive by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Gardner-Webb University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@gardner-webb.edu.

ACADEMICS

GWU Student Success Receives Grant from North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

BY OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS ON DECEMBER 20, 2021



Grant will Provide iBelong, a Mentoring Program for Minority Males

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—Gardner-Webb University is one of eight schools to receive a \$5,000 Minority Male Mentoring Grant from North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU). Funding was provided by the Council of Independent Colleges and Universities and was matched, in large part, by the VF Foundation, the grant-making organization funded by VF Corporation, a manufacturer of apparel, footwear and accessories. Other NCICU schools receiving the grants are Catawba College, Chowan University, Davidson College, Guilford College, High Point University, Livingstone College, and Queens University.

With the grant, GWU Student Success Division will provide iBelong, a program that matches minority male students with mentors and peer tutors. Along with the funds from NCICU, Gardner-Webb is making a financial commitment to the program by helping to purchase Student Lingo, a tutoring software that offers a variety of information for students, such as workshops on stress management, academic skills, finances and scholarship opportunities. The GWU program will be offered to students in the Spring 2022 Semester.

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs led the initiative to apply for the grant. “We were excited to hear back in August from NCICU President Hope Williams about the possibility of some seed money to pilot new mentoring programs for our students,” Downs recalled. “With these grant funds now secured, Gardner-Webb can expand outreach to an important portion of our student body and thereby improve

their retention, persistence, and time to degree. That would be a win for our students and for Gardner-Webb.”



Dr. Carmen Butler, dean of Student Success, wrote the grant application under the direction of GWU Provost Dr. Ben Leslie and input from Downs. Edwina Rozelle, director of Student Persistence and success coach, and Dee Pettis, director of testing and tutoring services, are co-coordinators of the project. The program’s main goals are to increase persistence and retention of minority males. A significant focus will be to encourage students to choose their majors and consider careers after graduation.

“We want to enhance connections for minority students and give them more empowerment to tap into the resources we have, as well as community resources,” Butler explained. “This is also about building relationships. This grant is enabling us to meet the needs of our students and improve our services.”

Students will have access to a Student Success staff member, peer tutor and mentor. The mentors are minority community leaders with connections to Gardner-Webb. They include Dr. Anthony Negbenebor, professor of Economics and International Business and assistant vice president for Business Development and Partnerships, along with the following Gardner-Webb alumni:

- Juan Cherry—High School Counselor at Shelby; Pastor of New Creation Christian Center; Founder, Wired for Success Communications and Consulting.
- Maurice York—Chief Supply Chain Officer, Gathered Foods Corporation; GWU Board of Trustees member.
- Omar Porter—Recruiter, Cleveland Community College.
- Ricky Alston—Music teacher, 2021 Beginning Teacher of the Year for Cleveland County Schools.

Cherry will kick-off the mentoring initiative when he speaks for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day tribute at Dimensions on Jan. 18.

The first meeting of iBelong will be on Jan. 25. Minority males who are interested in connecting with a mentor, may contact Dee Pettis at (704) 406-2254 or dpettis@gardner-webb.edu

[.mailto:dpettis@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:dpettis@gardner-webb.edu)).

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.