



GARDNER-WEBB
UNIVERSITY

Department for Athletics
Strategic Plan 2020-2025

I. ENROLLMENT, RETENTION, AND STUDENT SUCCESS

Commitment 1. We will make our University a destination of first choice for an increasing number of students from around the state, from across the region, and beyond.

Objective 1. We will collaborate with existing assets on the current University marketing and promotions team to aide in raising the profile of each sport through creative projects, multiplatform social media campaigns and an increase in targeted visibility in and around the state and region.

Metric 1.1. We will track engagement with prospective student-athletes through existing measurement tools (Hootsuite, etc.) to determine the impact of all campaigns.

Objective 2. We will provide student-athletes with additional opportunities for all-around success at Gardner-Webb through improved access and availability of tutoring and support services.

Metric 2.1. We will establish goals of steady improvement of graduation rates for athletics and the overall departmental grade point average. The current graduation rate for athletics is 65% and the departmental GPA for 2019-2020 was 3.3. Four-year targets will be 70% for graduation rate and 3.5 for grade point average.

Objective 3. We will provide student-athletes with improved access in the areas of mental health counseling, career counseling and job placement.

Metric 3.1. We will bring speakers to campus to address mental health issues and assist in providing comfortable avenues for student-athletes to engage counseling services as specific concerns arise.

Metric 3.2. We will identify successful Gardner-Webb alumni and representatives from area and regional businesses for career advice and potential internships for student-athletes.

Metric 3.3. We will track the number of student-athletes who take advantage of the programs offered by Gardner-Webb's Center for Personal and Professional Development.

II. STRENGTHENING GWU'S FINANCIAL BASE

Commitment 2. We will increase and diversify the sources of revenue needed to sustain the growth and strengthening of our vibrant, comprehensive University.

Objective 4. We will find new revenue streams, improve existing funding relationships and provide the framework and support necessary to accomplish proper financial development within athletics at Gardner-Webb.

Metric 4.1. We will enter into an agreement with a third-party athletics marketing sales force to create new sources of revenue and target new corporate partners for the athletics department.

Objective 5. We will secure funding for primary naming rights to available facilities on campus and seek secondary naming opportunities (i.e. offices, meeting rooms, locker rooms) for facilities where the primary naming rights are secured.

Metric 5.1. We will strengthen relationships between friends of athletics and the Gardner-Webb University Office of Advancement, as well as making introductions and serving as a conduit between those parties.

III. BECOME AND INDISPENSABLE PARTNER TO THE TOWN, COUNTY, AND REGION

Commitment 3. Gardner-Webb University is a private university with a very public mission. We will increase our positive impact in the broader community and in the region by partnering with those who share our interest in improving the quality of life in Cleveland County and beyond.

Objective 6. We will provide more fan and community engagement opportunities for Boiling Springs, Cleveland County and surrounding communities and counties.

Metric 6.1. We will invite fans to campus for specific dates during preseason activities to provide promotional materials (posters, schedule cards, etc.), meet and interact with team members and coaching staffs.

Metric 6.2. We will encourage head coaches to increase their visibility in the surrounding communities through speaking engagements.

Objective 7. We will increase admission numbers and revenue for ticketed sports (football, men's basketball, women's basketball, baseball and softball).

Metric 7.1. We will track ticket sales through the new online agreement with Glitnr Ticketing, which provides analytics for season ticket sales, individual game ticket sales and student ticket distribution.

Objective 8. We will continue to increase our community service involvement through the year.

Metric 8.1. We will continue to track hours served by each team as reported by coaching staffs and encourage increased hours through Bulldog Cup points and other incentives.

IV. RESPECT OUR HERITAGE, EXTEND OUR BRAND, AND SHARPEN OUR IDENTITY

Commitment 4. We will achieve and sustain a reputation as North Carolina's leader in Christian higher education.

Objective 9. We will win championships and raise competitive levels across all sports. We will become a constant factor in the conference title race and a regular contributor to conference strength and prestige.

Metric 9.1. We will track our success through the Big South's Sasser Cup standings annually, the number of NCAA tournament appearances, regular season trophies and rankings in national polls for applicable sports.

Objective 10. We will freshen the look and feel of the athletics department through a third-party, professional re-branding effort. Involved in this project will be the creation of a consistent and unique alphanumeric font and redesigned primary, secondary and wordmarks.

Metric 10.1. We will consult with athletics staff, alumni, other university staff and additional stakeholders to assist with a successful re-brand.

Metric 10.2. We will track increases in engagement and merchandise sales related to a refreshed brand.

Objective 11. We will provide opportunities for Christian influence and growth among our student-athlete population.

Metric 11.1. We will bring in speakers with a distinctively Christian emphasis once per year and again at the Senior Recognition Banquet to address student-athletes.

Objective 12. We will lead efforts with alumni groups to create opportunities and generate excitement for returns to campus outside of the traditional Homecoming and Hoopscoming dates.

Metric 12.1. We will continually research and seek interesting historical accomplishments, dates, contests and teams for recognition during games on campus through the academic year.