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For immediate release

GREAT CHOICES LEAD TO HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Gardner-Webb University Becomes North Carolina's First Private Co-ed University to Adopt 100 Percent Tobacco-Free Campus Policy

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. — Gardner-Webb University President Dr. Frank Bonner today announced that the university will adopt a policy banning tobacco use by anyone, anywhere and at any time on the university's campus.

The policy, which takes effect Aug. 6, 2007, will make Gardner-Webb the first private co-educational university to adopt a 100 percent tobacco-free policy under the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) college cessation initiative. This initiative is designed to promote smoke-free environments and encourage cessation among college-aged tobacco users.

"In recent years, studies have shown that reducing tobacco use can greatly decrease the incidence of cancer, stroke, heart and lung disease, and other health related conditions," said Dr. Bonner. "By implementing this tobacco-free policy, Gardner-Webb University is seeking to make our students, faculty, staff and visitors healthier. We hope to set an example for other universities nationwide that are considering implementing a similar initiative."

For the past several months, a university task force has been studying the possibility of a 100 percent tobacco-free campus, with financial assistance from HWTF. The task force looked at campus surveys and research examining tobacco use trends, tobacco-health-related issues and campus wide interest to be tobacco free.

HWTF Chair Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue said that Gardner-Webb's approval of this new policy sends a strong message that the health of the entire Gardner-Webb family is a top priority for the University.

"This is a critical step for Gardner-Webb as we continue to find ways to reduce the number of college students who use tobacco products," said Lt. Gov. Perdue. "If more policies like this are implemented, North Carolina could have the lowest middle school, high school and college smoking rates of any state in America."

Gardner-Webb is a leader in the movement to ban tobacco products on all of North Carolina's college campuses and follows the tobacco-free guidelines established by HWTF. The policy prohibits the use of all tobacco products — including cigarettes, cigars, pipes and smokeless tobacco — by anyone on school campus.

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Policy statement signage will be posted throughout campus, and the University will create brochures, posters, banners and other promotional materials with the “Great Choices – Healthy Futures” campaign tagline. The materials will help make the transition to a tobacco-free campus smoother.

“We understand that going tobacco-free may be difficult for some in our university family.” said Dr. Bonner. “That is why Gardner-Webb will be going to great lengths to offer support for those who choose to quit using tobacco. We will offer free classes designed to assist students, faculty and staff in this process. In addition, the University will provide nicotine replacement therapy to those who wish to stop using tobacco,” said Bonner.

Located in Boiling Springs, NC, Gardner-Webb University is home to nearly 4,000 students from 34 states and 33 foreign countries. Founded in 1905, Gardner-Webb provides exceptional educational opportunities within a Christian environment.

About the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund:

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$127 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program. For more information, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

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