

NGU Board Approves Major Capital Project, Ratifies New Core Curriculum

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by LaVerne Howell - NGU

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North Greenville University trustees recognized President Gene C. Fant, Jr., and his wife, Lisa, for five years of service to the university.

In their winter meeting, North Greenville University trustees received an update on the capital building project designed to enhance and support the College of Business and Entrepreneurship (COBE). The Board of Trustees also unanimously ratified a new core curriculum for bachelor's level programs and celebrated the fifth anniversary of the election of Dr. Gene C. Fant, Jr. as the

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President Fant presented the Donnan/COBE Project details during the Feb. 17 meeting in Craft-Hempfling Missions Center on the Tigerville campus. The project will transform the Donnan Administration Building, providing upgraded high-tech classrooms, student gathering, meeting, collaboration space, and faculty offices for NGU's largest academic unit, enrolling nearly 500 students.

The Donnan/COBE Project also will yield a 25-person conference room and a new office suite for senior administrators, bringing chief executive, academic, operations, and financial officers under one roof on the university's Tigerville campus.

In October, Trustees approved naming the executive suite in memory of former board chair Don Ward, who oversaw significant improvements to the university's physical facilities. His long service as a board member spanned from 1997 to 2014.

"Don Ward's vision was central to the advancement of the university, and his family includes at least three generations of NGU graduates," said Dr. Fant. "We are so grateful for the opportunity to memorialize his leadership in this special way."

Donnan Administration building has been a campus landmark since it opened in 1955. It sits atop the highest point on the campus, overlooking NGU's central quad. In addition to the new COBE space and executive office suite, renovation of the facility will yield a new entry area and an expanded commons space for students.

"My strong desire is for our College of Business and Entrepreneurship to glorify God by transforming more and more students into innovative thinkers and entrepreneurial problem-solvers who will serve as agents of human flourishing throughout society," said COBE Dean Dr. John Duncan. "We are excited and very grateful that the NGU Board of Trustees has chosen to move forward with this project that will renovate the university's most significant building to provide a new home for COBE to better achieve this mission. This facility will enhance faculty-to-student as well as student-to-student interactions and help us accelerate the creation of a thriving learning community for our business programs."

President Fant said the Donnan/COBE Project will be the first phase in a multi-year series of steps to bolster COBE's mission.

University officials said further information about the project's capital campaign will be announced later in the spring.

The board's unanimous vote to approve a standard set of courses all bachelor's-level students are required to complete was a historic milestone, according to President Fant.

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For the first time as a university, a new core curriculum was proposed by a faculty committee, approved overwhelmingly by the entire faculty, and approved unanimously by the full board," said Dr. Fant.
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NGU Provost and Dean of the University Faculty Dr. Nathan A. Finn said the core curriculum is an essential step in North Greenville's ongoing maturation as a Christ-centered comprehensive university in the liberal arts tradition. Founded in 1892, North Greenville began offering bachelor's degree programs in 1994. As academic programs rapidly expanded, the institution operated without an overarching general education core curriculum. A task force was created in 2020 to work toward the common core of courses.

"From the beginning of this process, the Core Curriculum Task Force was asked to develop a core that would contribute to a common academic experience for almost every undergraduate student who is with us for all four years of their education," said Dr. Finn. "I am excited about the curriculum they proposed, and I could not be more pleased with the overwhelming faculty support for the new core."

Finn said the core curriculum reflects the university's ongoing commitment to academic discipleship as "a central part of our mission to glorify God by cultivating graduates to serve as transformational leaders for church and society."

"This new foundation for our academic programs will improve student learning outcomes, preparation for life and calling, and intellectual coherence among our 115 academic fields of study," said President Fant.

The new core will go into effect for the 2023-24 academic year. Academic departments are working toward that implementation over the next 17 months.

At a board luncheon following the plenary session, trustees recognized Dr. Fant and his wife, Lisa, for five years of service to the university. Board Chair Mandie Boyd presented a commemorative clock to the Fants, which noted the president's "unwavering commitment to glorify God by cultivating graduates who are equipped to serve as transformational leaders for church and society."

"I'm sure many of us could stand and talk about the impact you've made already on our university, our students, and even our board. Your legacy is far and wide. We are thankful for your wisdom and leadership here," Boyd told Fant in her remarks at the recognition. "But, more than anything, we are thankful for your walk with Jesus and your commitment to His Word."

Boyd announced that board members made personal contributions to the Donnan/COBE Project in honor of the Fants.

"Lisa and I love this board—and this community—so much. They are partners in our governance and

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ponents of both encouragement and accountability,” said Dr. Fant. “We appreciate their recognition of the five-year mark of this administration, and we look forward to many more years of working alongside each other.”
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Trustee Bill Tyler, who was chair of the presidential search committee which recommended Dr. Fant, said when the committee met with the candidate, they had confidence in his Christian character, dedication, intellect, strategic thinking, and “frankly, necessary grit to lead North Greenville.”

“And in the five years since that day, the committee’s chosen candidate has proven us to be right in countless ways on countless occasions. God graciously provided us with a high-level organizational leader like no other,” said Tyler.

Tyler said that since President Fant came to NGU, the university has experienced significant change.

“We recognize that this is a different school than it was even just five years ago. In many ways, I think this is the institution God desires for the church,” said Tyler.