

THE JOHNSONIAN



Winthrop's philanthropic future

Due to the hardships of 2020, Winthrop University has not been able to give back to the community as much as they would have liked, but with the ushering in of the new year, the university makes plans for philanthropy

Chase Duncan
staff writer

As the abnormal Fall 2020 semester comes to an end, the Winthrop administration plans ahead to future semesters where they will revitalize efforts towards providing financial and humanitarian support to the university and Rock Hill community as part of the next step in the "Winthrop Plan" initiative.

"The Winthrop Plan" was launched five years ago, so we now have five years worth of data, which is great," said Interim President George Hynd. "As part of our yearly report and accreditation standards, we are expected to go back and review plans to revise them as necessary to make new plans and fine-tune what we have. I will be asking the chairs of the action groups to reignite and reconstitute their associated committees to take a deeper look at the five goals we have in the Winthrop Plan.

"If we're moving towards the direction we hoped, that's great. If we're not, we need to ask what seems to be working and, more importantly, what seems to not be working to see if we need to redeploy some of our resources to, say, drive up our enrollment and retention rates. It should be viewed as a positive thing; we're not seeking to redo or significantly change it, but it's definitely time to revisit it."

According to Hynd, Winthrop had launched at least two philanthropic campaigns in the past; the first ranging from the late 1990s to the early 2000s and the second campaign beginning in 2012 and concluding in 2015. Hynd stated that now is the opportune time to begin rebuilding a comprehensive fundraising campaign.

"As a university, we build natural relationships all the time," Hynd said. "It's up to us to reach out to those people we already have relationships with such as corporations, businesses and schools to start solidifying those relationships to make sure that those we have partnerships with feel that they are gaining from our relationship.

"As part of that relationship, we hope that they can support the university. Despite the fact that we're in the middle of the COVID pandemic, in my view, we have a terrific opportunity to start reaching out towards people and our supporters with maybe a little more intention than we had in the past."

Hynd outlined some of the partnerships that members of the Winthrop community could participate in and benefit from.

"Right now, we have partnerships with at least 10 school districts and more than 50 individual schools," Hynd said. "The College of Education at pretty much all universities I've been at typically does a really good job in forming productive partnerships.

"I also know our College of Business Administration under Dean P.N. [Saksena] has a number of relationships with local businesses and industries where that relationship is such that they could provide us advice and consulting, but also they're willing to take some of our business students and give them internships or co-ops to give them some kind of work experience so that when they graduate, they already have some experience in business. Frankly, we need to reach out to the city of Rock Hill and York County to build on the relationship we already have with them."

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Adrienne McCormick, also commented on some of the philanthropic efforts the newly organized Winthrop Plan could generate.



President Hynd outlines plans to give back to the Rock Hill and York community in the coming semesters.

"Areas where we can apply funds that we raise through donations and gifts are unlimited," McCormick said. "Donors often want to support students, so they fund scholarships. Another frequent area where we rely on donors is in supporting faculty through named positions and funding for special initiatives.

"Public institutions across the country are increasingly seeing larger gifts as well, that may help with big capital projects or initiatives that require more substantial investment. Whenever you see a named scholarship, room, or faculty chair position, there is a proud donor behind that name who believed in Winthrop enough to invest in the work we are doing to educate students."

Both Hynd and McCormick see local small businesses and community outreach as primal real estate for Winthrop to aim their philanthropic efforts towards.

"Other areas where you will see activity in the future is in community partnerships," McCormick said. "We believe strongly in preparing students to work and live engaged lives in the community. Local employers often partner with us and invest in initiatives that help prepare students for their area of the workforce.

"We want to see more partnerships in that regard, so we have students who graduate career-ready and employers and communities who benefit from hiring and attracting our skilled graduates."

Hynd announced through email on Oct. 13 that the university would be transitioning into the third phase of the Winthrop Return to Work Plan. Though students, staff and faculty will still be expected to follow CDC guidelines to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the transition heralds the gradual return of a more intimate and interactive Winthrop campus environment.

"I think we need to be doing more community engagement, more engagement here on campus, and more volunteering," Hynd said. "Right now, we're locked down into the doldrums of 2020 dealing with COVID. I think as we move into 2021, we're moving into an era where if we can just get through the Spring semester, continuing to do as we're doing and staying safe, we'll see a light at the end of the tunnel."



Maggie Claytor/The Johnsonian

Police Blotter

A round-up of crime reports on campus, 11/08-11/20

Sarah Hassler
hasslers@mytjnow.com

On Nov. 8 a reporting officer was dispatched to the Good Building to respond to a report of an assault that occurred around 8:14 am in the Phelps Hall Laundry room. The officer made contact with the Complainant who claimed that the Victim had been hanging out with her friend, the Accused. The Complainant stated that the victim had wanted to do her laundry by herself and had told the Accused to leave her alone. The Complainant then stated that the Accused became angry and hit the Victim on the back with an open palm. After the assault had occurred, the Complainant received a phone call about it. The Complainant informed the officer that the Victim's roommate was a potential witness, and that her roommate had observed a red mark on the Victim's back. The Complainant did not receive any photographic evidence of the red mark on the Victim's back. The officer informed the Complainant that an incident report would be initiated and that the Accused would be referred to the Dean of Students.

On Nov. 11, a reporting officer was conducting patrol at the intersection between Cherry Road and Richmond drive. The officer observed a blue Chevrolet truck driving in the rain with no headlights on. The officer initiated a traffic stop and came to a stop at Cherry Road and Deas street. The officer made contact with the Suspect and informed him that he did not have his headlights on. When the officer ran the Suspects licence through NCIC it came back as suspended and the officer informed the Suspect of this. The officer then observed a butane lighter on the Suspect's seat and asked him for permission to search his car. The Suspect consented to the search and the officer detained him with double locked handcuffs. The officer searched the vehicle but did not discover any contraband, he then informed the Suspect to call someone to come and get the vehicle and he removed the handcuffs.

The officer observed that the reason for the Suspect's licence suspension was due to failure to pay for traffic tickets. The officer contacted dispatch and asked them to run a criminal history to see if the Suspect had any prior convictions for driving under suspension. Due to the Suspect failing to pay the traffic tickets, the officer decided he should be taken to Rock Hill City jail and booked for driving under suspension 1st offense. The Suspect's mother arrived and took possession of the vehicle and the Suspect was taken into Custody.

On Nov. 20 two officers were near

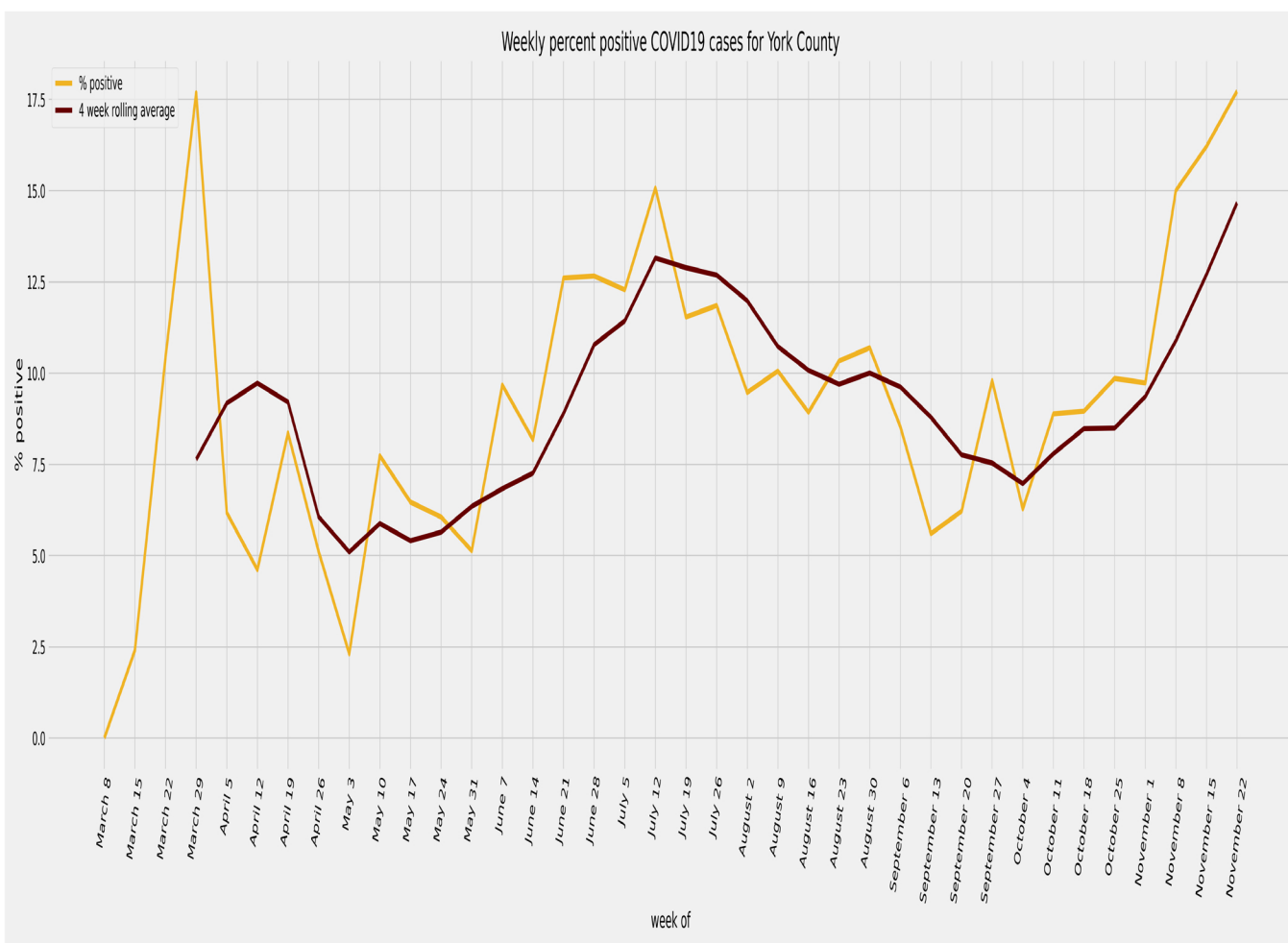
▶ see WUPD pg. 2



December 2, 2020

COVID-19 data

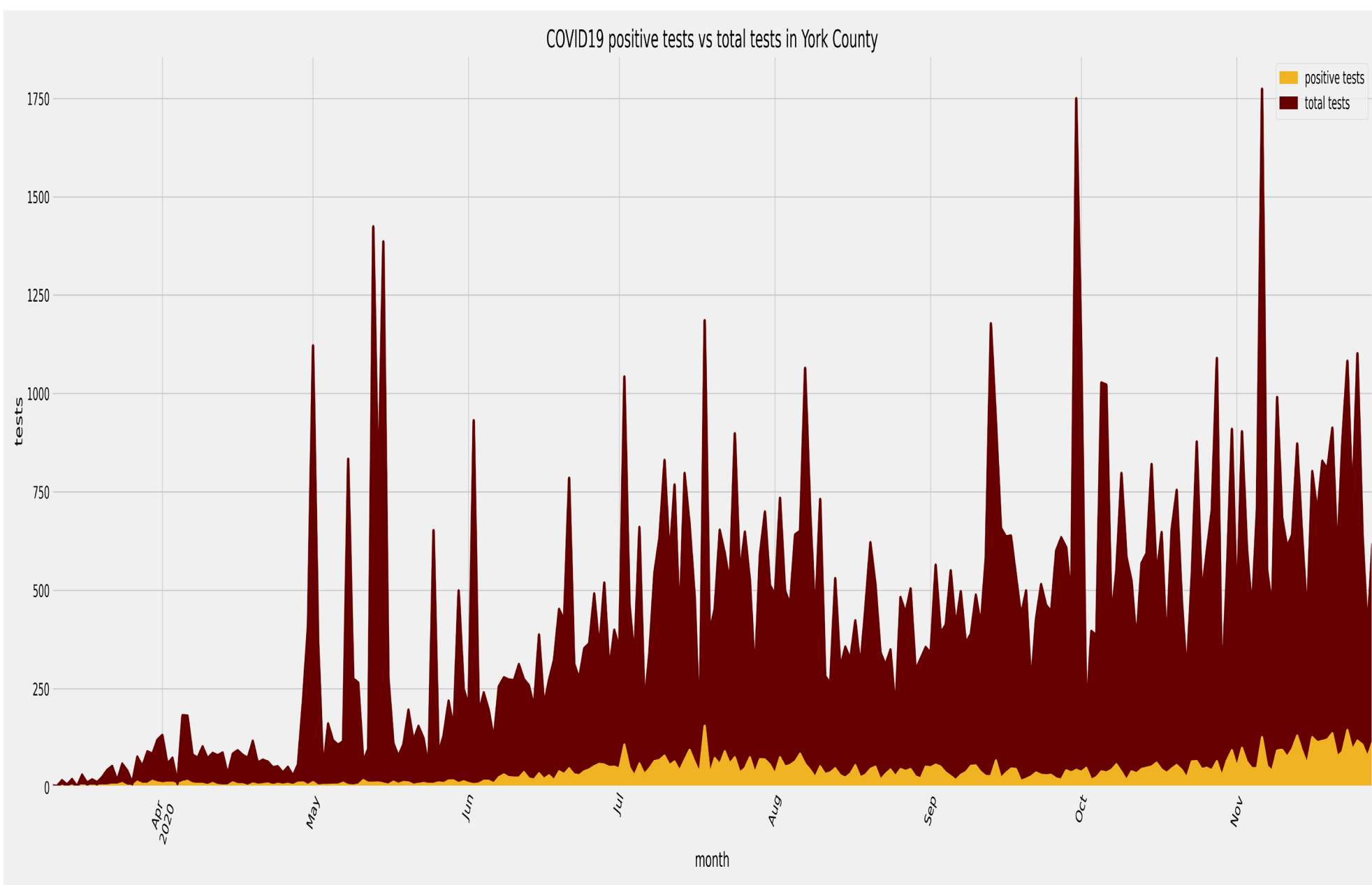
During the pandemic, The Johnsonian wants to keep you up to date with the number of positive cases in the York County area. Each week we will have weekly data charts informing you of what is new



◀ WUPD from front

Celanese road and Mount Gallant searching for a Subject that ran from a Rock Hill Police Department traffic stop when he noticed a vehicle with no headlights coming up from behind him. The officer activated blue lights and initiated a traffic stop. While the officer was asking the driver for her credentials, he was notified by dispatch that the plate on the vehicle was suspended. The officer asked the owner of the vehicle if she was aware that her plate was suspended, to which she informed him that she did not know that her tag was suspended since everything was up to date on her registration. The officer explained to the Subject that her tags were suspended due to an insurance drop on her vehicle, and she informed him that she had just paid her insurance. The officer then asked her for her licence, and after running a check, he discovered that her license was suspended as well. Both of the suspensions were enacted the day prior, and the Subject explained that she did not know.

Since the license and tags had only been suspended the day before, the officer explained to the Subject that he was not going to issue a citation but he would have to take both the vehicle and the licence because they were suspended. The officer escorted the vehicle back to the Bronze lot by the Courtyard where he seized her tag. The officer explained to the subject what she would need to do in order to get her tags and licence reinstated, and she explained that she understood. Both the license and the vehicle tags were turned over to RHPD so they could be turned over to the DMV. The officer issued the Subject a warning for driving without headlights on.



Philip Nelson/The Johnsonian

About The Johnsonian

The Johnsonian is the weekly student newspaper of Winthrop University.

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December 2, 2020

State of the University Address

Winthrop Interim President George Hynd shared Winthrop's plans to move forward in a pandemic

Sarah Hassler
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This school year has been a huge adjustment for all students and faculty. Winthrop Interim President George Hynd addressed the university in a half-hour YouTube video that went over how the pandemic has impacted the semester and how the university plans to move forward with the rest of the year.

Before the pandemic, Winthrop made several notable accomplishments. "Among other accomplishments, I would note that you launched the bachelor's of professional studies program targeting adult learners, raised \$6.5 million in cash and pledges in the 2019 calendar year, won the men's Big South Conference basketball championship and we even had an alum, Camm Wess, make it to the finals of The Voice," Hynd said.

In addition to the accomplishments made before the pandemic, there were also many that occurred during it as well. "Two of our college's accreditations were extended, the College of Business Administration was reaccredited by the

cited in their reaccreditation. We also introduced new programs in data science and analytics, applied software development and educational studies." Hynd said. "We were noted a First-gen Forward institution, and, of course, just last week we celebrated all of our first-gen community members. TRiO received continued funding for five more years to the tune of \$1.4 million and, reflective of the times, of course, DHEC came to campus to provide testing to our community."

Winthrop has a strategy to become a national model for a student-centered university experience. "One of our most important aspirations, of course, is to increase our six-year graduation rate. We have made progress, having achieved a 64% graduation rate for first-time, full-time freshmen. With the pandemic this year, it might be a challenge, but it looks like some of our actions have had the desired impact on improving this metric at least through 2019," Hynd said. "Improving our graduation rate is in large part highly dependent on improving our freshmen to sophomore retention rate. Unfortunately, it appears that our retention rate, while still better than some of our peers, has migrated downward to 70%."

Due to the pandemic, this has been a challenging year financially. Higher education has yet to be restored to pre-Great Recession funding levels. "Over the last few years, we have been fortunate to see a gradual increase in allocation for operations and a larger amount in capital funding to support our facilities infrastructure from the state of South Carolina. We have been fortunate to have strong support from our legislative delegation and certainly from our board of trustees, but we continue as an institution to be heavily reliant on tuition. The board of trustees has been intentional in keeping tuition at a minimum of late, with modest to no increase in the last two years. However, traditionally approximately 65% of Winthrop's operating revenue comes from tuition,"

Hynd said. Overall, 80% of Winthrop's revenue comes from tuition and student fees.

Factors that have impacted Winthrop's budget include:

- total fall 2020 degree-seeking enrollment declined by 1.3% or 68 students, undergraduate enrollment declined by 222 students or 5.0%, graduate-seeking enrollment increased by 154 students or 18.5% and, including the Courtyard, fall 2020 housing occupancy is down from 91% in fall 2019 to 63%.

"I've asked our finance and business affairs division to work on a dynamic budget model that will allow us to implement a 3-5 year budget plan that is based on realistic assumptions. This budget model will consider undergraduate, graduate, and graduate online enrollment and tuition rates, retention and graduation rates by class, housing occupancy, and meal plans purchased and other revenue resources: state funding, grant indirects, contract courses, athletics, etc." Hynd said. The plan will be updated annually to ensure that each future year is forecasted accordingly.

"The purpose is to balance the budget each year, address persistent needs such as the classification study, free up capital for investments in new program areas and support faculty and student research, travel and professional development."

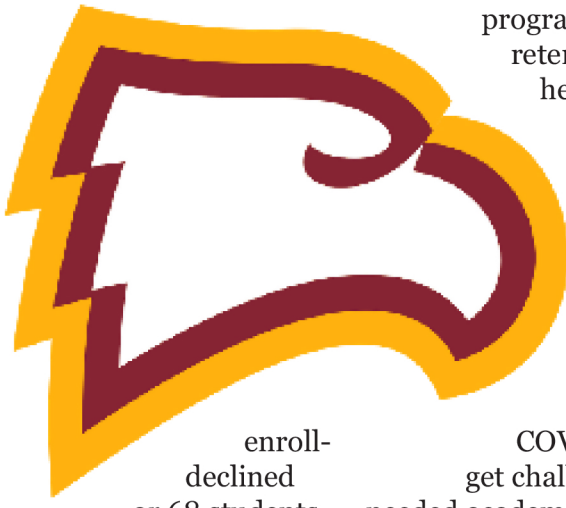
This year, Winthrop will implement an Academic Master Plan. The plan will include programming health metrics to give an annual platform for evaluation and monitoring, aligning program health

to budget allocation, which will provide incentive for performance improvement. Increased improvement will lead to revitalized programs, improved retention, and financial health. Low performing programs are replaced by transformed programs and/or new programs that are aligned to market demand and strategic goals.

"Despite the COVID pandemic, budget challenges and much needed academic master plan, we have other positive initiatives that will excite our engagement as we move into 2021," Hynd said. "We will be launching a campus-wide master planning initiative once we have a consultant in hand and launch a visioning process that the whole campus can participate in. We will need to determine how we are going to look different in five or ten years from now [and] most importantly what new facilities do we need to build or renovate." This work will provide the opportunity for the involvement of everyone on campus, including students, faculty, and staff as well as alumni.

An additional initiative will be campus beautification. "We truly have an extraordinarily beautiful university campus. But the toll of weather, humidity, and scarce resources have really extracted their toll. I will be reaching out to the campus community for the launch of the campus beautification initiative," said Hynd. Another initiative will be building toward a Winthrop campaign that will help raise money for the Winthrop community.

In closing, Hynd said, "Thank you for everything you do to make Winthrop the distinguished university it is today. Seeing how our university community has raised up and met the challenges associated with COVID, I have great faith that we can move forward with these plans and initiatives."



To watch the State of the University Address visit winthrop.edu or scan the QR code above

AACSB and the College of Education had no areas for improvement

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TRiO receives \$1.4 million in funding

“This program was the third in a series of educational opportunity programs that originally came out of the Higher Education Act of 1965. There are currently eight TRiO programs,” said TRiO Achievers Program Director, Rose Gray

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During Interim President George Hynd’s State of the University address on Wednesday, Nov. 18, he said, “TRiO received continued funding for five years to the tune of \$1.4 million.”

TRiO Achievers Program is an educational program that was a part of the Higher Education Act of 1965 intended to increase graduation rates amongst college students who are considered to have academic disadvantage.

“The TRiO Achievers program is designed to increase the persistence and graduation of program participants. All services are specifically designed to meet this mission. Services offered include intensive academic counseling, intrusive advising, academic supports such as tutoring and workshops, financial literacy, career development, exposure to cultural

events such as those offered in Charlotte at the Blumenthal, and leadership development (through our Leadership Council and our LEAD 120). Our 3-day early orientation program, TRiO CONNECT, and 3 sections of TRiO ACAD, are also designed to ease the transition for our students,” said TRiO Achievers Program Director, Rose Gray, M.A., M.S.

Many Winthrop University students are a part of the TRiO Achievers Program.

“We currently serve over 180 students who meet one or more of the following criteria: 1) first-generation; 2) meet specific income guidelines; or, 3) are a student with a disability,” Gray said. “There are over 1,000 similar programs in colleges and universities across the US. While the formal name of these programs is Student Support Services, you’ll find TRiO under different names on different campuses.”

Because of the 1.4 million dollars

in funding TRiO has received, the program will continue to foster and serve a wide array of Winthrop students.

“[With this funding], we will continue to operate the TRiO Achievers program as we have in the past, except making adjustments for COVID. All services are primarily the same, with the addition of more intensive career development services during this 5-year cycle,” Gray said. “Funding has increased since 2005. We always keep our eye on the federal budget appropriations process each year and are thankful for our TRiO supporters in the House and Senate.”

Receiving funding during a global pandemic is very fortunate, and TRiO, with this funding, is now better equipped to adjust to performing their services amidst this new reality. Like many programs on campus, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on TRiO.

“TRiO has moved to primarily remote services. Students meet with their Academic Counselors and tutors, attend ACAD and LEAD classes, and attend Leadership Council meetings and workshops all virtually,” Gray said.

Winthrop is very fortunate to have TRiO be a part of the campus community for at least the next five years.

“TRiO is a federally funded grant program, funded through the US Department of Education. All TRiO programs, including Winthrop’s, must apply every 5 years for a new funding cycle. TRiO grants are extremely competitive and proposals with less than a perfect score are rarely funded,” Gray said.

With now having funding to last for the next five years, TRiO will continue to be able to operate on Winthrop’s campus and further help students to reach their academic and personal goals.



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Winthrop Active Minds raises awareness about pandemic-related racism

In the midst of the pandemic, minority groups have had to deal with racism

Mari Pressley
staff writer

Winthrop Active Minds broadcasted a pre-recorded panel discussion originally hosted by the National Active Minds organization on Nov. 19. The event was provided to raise awareness about what minority groups have faced this year in regards to both the pandemic and racism.

Senior chemistry major Sophia Stefanov started the Winthrop Active Minds chapter here at Winthrop and is passionate about mental health advocacy.

The panel featured six students of different minority backgrounds.

“They each kind of shared their story about what they’re going through, what it’s really like with COVID and the pandemic but also racism and how both of those [are] two pandemics in a way. They basically referred to racism as like another pandemic basically.”

Stefanov describes the target audience in mind when speaking about this subject.

“If there can be a platform where education can be distributed then ... anyone who sees it I think can benefit because we don’t know what we don’t know until someone brings it up to us or until we are called out or until something dawns on us and I’m like ‘oh yeah, I gotta think about that in a different way,’” Stefanov said.

“I enjoyed listening to the panelists’ personal experiences and perspectives on the outreach to BIPOC students at various institutions,” said Juliet Isaacs, a senior environmental studies major and geography minor. “As a white female, it was a truly enlightening experience and really makes me want to be a part of helping BIPOC students balance the mental health impacts of the pandemic related racism.”

Isaacs shared her opinion of

how Winthrop can further raise awareness about the mental health impact of pandemic related racism.

“I believe that Winthrop should definitely address this issue more upfront, just as they have with previous racism-related occurrences, so that the entire Winthrop population can begin thinking about this under-reported issue,” Isaacs said. “If the entire Winthrop community learned about this struggle, either through a high authority figure or even through fellow students, it may urge them to do something about it. The Winthrop family has the amazing ability to stand up and come together as a whole, to face these challenges head-on.”

Stefanov shared the overall effect that she would like for the event to have on students.

“At least someone who might be struggling silently ... at least now they know. If someone cared enough to make a club, I’m

obviously not the only one struggling with this, and just like feeling accounted for and thought of,” Stefanov said. “I hope that even if the people who need to hear it aren’t hearing it, at the very least, the people who are talking in the panel are getting an opportunity to spread their message across.”

“I think everyone needs to give each other, and themselves, a lot of grace,” said Elizabeth Tate, an advisor for Active Minds, as well as a staff counselor and telehealth coordinator. “Everyone is struggling and while we’re all in the same storm, the kinds of boats we are in are different. Some people are paddling around okay and others are sinking, depending on the other struggles we may be living with (racism, sexism, transphobia, poverty, mental illness, etc.).

“We have to be kind to each other and ourselves as the pandemic exacerbates all our other struggles.”

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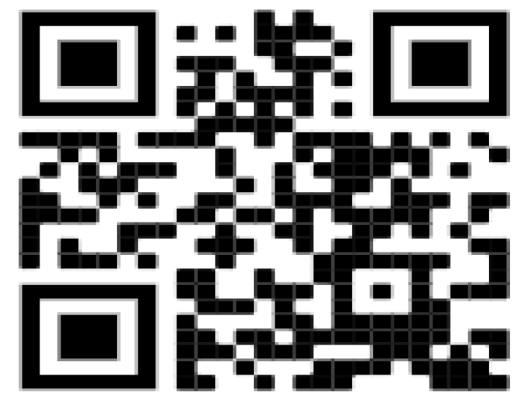
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SPORTS the Johnsonian

December 2, 2020

Men's basketball disrupted by COVID-19

After being forced to quarantine, the men's basketball team is ready to compete

Alex Romano
staff writer

After members of the Winthrop University men's basketball team and coaching staff tested positive for COVID-19 on Nov. 11, the Eagles' season opener against Seton Hall University was canceled.

Winthrop Athletics announced the positive tests on Nov. 12 — a day after Seton Hall announced its men's basketball program had also paused team activities due to positive COVID-19 tests.

All members of the team were placed under quarantine and the season opener, which was scheduled for Nov. 25, was eliminated as a precautionary measure against spreading the virus.

"Basketball is classified as a high risk sport, which means that if there is a single positive case, the entire team and all personnel must be quarantined for two weeks," said Winthrop Athletic Director Ken Halpin.

Although the season opener was canceled, the men's basketball team remains unfazed by this setback and is still optimistic regarding the rest of the season.

"They're great; they're ready to play," Halpin said. "They have followed every school policy, they have followed every NCAA regulation, and they have had a great attitude about it."

Along with its game against Seton Hall, Winthrop was scheduled to play Southern Illinois University on Nov. 29. The Salukis withdrew from

the multi-team event in Louisville, Kentucky due to COVID-19, leaving Winthrop with two fewer games than the team was expected to play at the KFC Yum! Center.

"We're trying to do everything we can for our student athletes and our staff, and we'll still be able to get three games out of it which we're very happy about. We have a very talented team on the men's side this year and they are excited to play," Halpin said.

According to Halpin, the team began practicing again on Tuesday, Nov. 24 and traveled to Louisville on Friday, Nov. 27 after conducting more COVID-19 testing.

Though the men's team was required to be isolated because of multiple confirmed positive cases, the women's team was able to prepare for their season opener without many problems due to COVID-19.

"We had a close contact on the women's team, but no positive cases, so they get to tip off this Wednesday, and I just want to commend our student athletes for showing the responsibility to socially distance and wearing a mask and not doing anything to spread the virus," Halpin told *The Johnsonian* prior to the women's game against Wofford on Nov. 25.

In addition to giving credit to the student athletes and support staff, Halpin is also extremely grateful for the help that Winthrop has received for testing through various partnerships.

"We're so lucky that we have [the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control]



Coach Pat Kelsey talking to basketball players.

partnering with us, and so all of our student athletes have been going through DHEC whenever they need to be tested, and we've also been relying on Affinity that has been helping us with tests as well. I also need to give our staff a ton of credit, because we've been able to come this far without spending any additional money on testing," Halpin said.

The men's basketball team was most recently set to begin its season on Nov. 29 against UNC Greensboro, but the game was postponed just hours before tipoff. A statement issued by Winthrop Athletics read:

"Out of an abundance of caution

due to issues related to COVID-19, both the UNC Greensboro and Winthrop men's basketball programs have postponed tonight's contest and agreed to reschedule to a future date during the 2020-21 season. Both schools are following the NCAA's Core Principles of Resocialization for College Basketball to ensure the safety of all staff and student-athletes."

The Eagles are still scheduled to take on The University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Dec. 2 and Duquesne University on Dec. 4 before returning to Rock Hill. Make sure to stay up to date on all Winthrop athletics by following @WUEagles on twitter.

25 strong

The story behind a new Winthrop basketball motto

Matthew Shealy
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If asked to identify a phrase that relates to Winthrop University basketball, most people would probably say "Rock the Hill." Those three words are chanted throughout Winthrop Coliseum on game days and shared on Twitter by head coach of the men's team Pat Kelsey when an important recruit commits to joining the Eagles.

But a new slogan — one that recognizes the value of a team that expands beyond the court — has quietly made its way into the basketball program. '25 strong' is a saying that Kelsey began using to describe his team after he read "Above the Line," a book written by retired football coach Urban Meyer.

"I think [Meyer] is one of the great coaches in the history of American sports myself, and [I've] really studied his leadership style," Kelsey told listeners during a video chat that was a part of Winthrop's virtual homecoming festivities.

According to Kelsey, Meyer's book discusses having a clarity of purpose and an identity as an

organization. That identity has become '25 strong' inside the men's basketball program, symbolizing the strength that comes when all members of the program, including players, coaches and others, work their hardest and put forth their best effort all the time.

"In a certain year, we keep two more walk-ons or if we have one more [graduate assistant], it might be 30," Kelsey said. "It doesn't matter if it's 30, 31. We just use the significance of 25 strong so that it stays consistent, and the 25 strong refers to how every one of those pieces in that 25 strong is as important as every other piece."

"It doesn't matter if you're the student manager; it doesn't matter if you're the head coach; it doesn't matter if you're the thirteenth guy on the roster; it doesn't matter if you are the academic advisor. We are asking for a championship, elite, above-the-line effort in everything we do, every single day. And if we get that type of contribution and that effort and that mentality from all 25 people in our organization...we're [going to] win championships."



Photo courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

After reading Meyer's book, Kelsey discovered during a conversation with his dad that a family friend had been Meyer's roommate during their time as students at the University of Cincinnati.

"This guy connected me to Urban Meyer, and he's been unbelievable since, to be honest with you," Kelsey said. "He's a coach's coach, and coaches want to pay things forward; That's [kind of] what we do. Anytime I've reached out to him, he's replied. He's spoken to our team on several different occasions."

While Kelsey praised Meyer, he often downplays the praise he

receives from others, calling himself "Harvey Sweatsocks" and "Joe Bag of Donuts." His humble attitude is a perfect fit for the '25 strong' ideology.

"When you say '25 strong,' that tells the student manager that how he folds the towels [and] the amount of ice that he puts in the water bottles is as important as the plays that I call at seven o'clock and two o'clock on Wednesdays and Saturdays," Kelsey said.

The phrase '25 strong' also appeared on the Big South Championship rings that the men's basketball team received on Nov. 25 to commemorate their exceptional 2019-20 season.

Women's basketball defeated in season opener

Strickland scores 24, Eagles lose to Wofford by 15

Matthew Shealy
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The Winthrop University women's basketball team played its first game of the season last Wednesday in Spartanburg, losing to Wofford College by a score of 65-50.

The Eagles got off to a slow start offensively, scoring just four points in the first five minutes. Those points came at the hands of two Winthrop newcomers: junior transfer Jaelyn Royal and sophomore transfer Tori Hall.

While Wofford shot 0-for-7 from 3-point range in the first quarter, the Terriers appeared dominant inside the arc, driving to the basket often and earning five trips to the free throw line. Winthrop's early struggles left the Eagles facing an eleven-point deficit at the end of the first quarter.

Winthrop began the second quarter with a bit more offensive urgency, scoring four points in the first minute with a layup from junior Maleeah Langstaff and two free throws by sophomore Myra Strickland. Though Strickland started the game 0-for-9 from the field, she began to heat up as the clock ticked down toward halftime, scoring six of Winthrop's last seven points of the second quarter.

Despite Strickland's efforts, the Eagles were unable to narrow

the gap during the first half, as Wofford's nine offensive rebounds during the second quarter (compared to Winthrop's one) allowed the Terriers plenty of second-chance scoring opportunities. With a good 3-point shot for Wofford at the buzzer, the Eagles went to the locker room trailing 36-24.

As the second half got underway, the Eagles looked to be playing their best ball so far. Winthrop's 12-4 run to start the third quarter reduced the team's deficit to just four points.

Just as it felt like the momentum may be shifting, Winthrop went cold. The Eagles made just one shot on their final nine attempts to close out the third quarter. Still, Winthrop entered the fourth quarter only down by eight points, meaning a win was not out of reach.

While Winthrop hung around for a few minutes, the fourth quarter was Wofford's knockout punch. The Terriers outscored the Eagles 19-12 during the game's final ten-minute frame.

Strickland tallied eight points during the fourth quarter, lifting her to a career-high 24 points. The next highest scorer for the Eagles was Langstaff with eight total points.

Sophomore Sierra Hunter recorded team-highs in rebounds



Maleeah Langstaff playing at Winthrop's Coliseum.

(eight) and assists (three), while her twin sister Sydney Hunter recorded seven rebounds.

Perhaps the biggest area of concern for Winthrop on Wednesday was turnovers. The Eagles gave the ball up 21 times, while Wofford turned the ball over only 14 times.

However, with just five players on the roster who returned from last year's Winthrop squad, it should not come as a huge surprise that the team lacks the chemistry needed to protect the ball. Fans can expect to see this improve over the course of the season as Interim Head Coach Semeka Randall-Lay

determines which players work better together.

One bright spot for the Eagles during their loss to Wofford was that they held Jamari McDavid (who was named to the Southern Conference Preseason All-Conference Team) to just six points and five rebounds.

Winthrop travels to Orangeburg next to take on South Carolina State University. The game is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. South Carolina State also has a record of 0-1 after suffering an 88-56 loss to Coastal Carolina University on Saturday.

Eagle of the week: Chandler Vaudrin

This article originally appeared on The Johnsonian's website

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Chandler Vaudrin had quite the growth spurt in high school. From 5-foot-10 as a freshman to 6-foot-5 by his junior year, he quickly realized he had the potential to play basketball at the next level.

"My junior year I kind of realized, maybe this could be something that I pursue," Vaudrin said. "The height and the skills of being a guard when I was younger kind of molded together and it was really good for me."

While his physical growth came naturally, Vaudrin said as a kid his skills always grew when he played around his older brother, Chaese, who became a 1,000-point scorer at Geneva College.

"Growing up with him, a brother that's three years older, I'm constantly playing dudes that are older than me," he said. "I'm either going to lose every time or I'm going to man up and try to beat 'em."

Now standing at 6-foot-7, Vaudrin is a senior on the men's basketball team at Winthrop. However, with no Division I offers coming out of high school, he started his collegiate career at Walsh University in his home state of Ohio.

After a solid first year, Vaudrin averaged 15.5 points per game, 9.3 rebounds per game and 7.5 assists per game as a sophomore. He also recorded four triple-doubles that season, which was the most by any player at any level in the nation.

"The goal was always to play in the NCAA Tournament," Vaudrin said. "After that second year I just sat down with the coaches... it was a tough decision. They were losing a really good player and I'm losing a really good situation where I had done really well, and I was going



Eagle of the Week, Chandler Vaudrin

to do good and probably be All-American for the next two years.

"I just kind of bet on myself and I told [my] coaches I wanted to transfer. Got my waivers, went through the process. Boom. A bunch of [Division I] coaches started hitting me up."

Vaudrin said Assistant Coach Brian Kloman was the first person from Winthrop to reach out to him.

"Coach Kloman hit me up on Instagram and was like, 'Do you like winning games?'"

Vaudrin said he told Kloman he did like winning, to which the coach replied, "Well we win a lot here."

"From then on, I just messaged him, came on a visit and it felt like home," Vaudrin said. "The warm weather definitely helps – it's a little bit hotter here than Ohio for sure – but I'm just happy I made this choice and I know I didn't

make the wrong one."

Last season, Vaudrin averaged 9.3 points per game, 5.6 assists per game and 5.8 rebounds per game. He earned All-Big South Second Team honors, and his triple-double against Longwood was the first triple-double recorded by any player in a Big South matchup since 2012. He said he hopes to continue to improve this season, which will ultimately make the team better.

"I think we are going to put ourselves in a good situation – how we've been going right now – to be in the [NCAA] Tournament again next year," Vaudrin said. "But we want to advance. It's not just about making it; it's about going deep into the tournament."

As for after college, Vaudrin said his number one goal is to play in the NBA, so he recognizes the importance of having a good

senior season. Aside from that, he said he will find his way with the connections he has made through sports.

"I'll pray about it, I'll figure it out," Vaudrin said. "As long as I keep working on my game [and] keep focusing on school, I know God will have His hand on me and put me in the right place that I need to be."

Vaudrin holds a reminder to himself that God's hand is on him in the form of a tattoo on the inside of his right forearm. Along with an image of a cross are the words "The battle is won."

"I just think it's super important to have something to show – not only to be a conversation starter – but just to show people that if we trust in Jesus, He's won every battle. He's undefeated," Vaudrin said. "I know that I've got Him on my side."

From finals to spring — looking forward

Wren Brooke
staff writer

As the end of 2020's fall semester rapidly draws closer, students will be engaging in Winthrop University's second finals week to be held remotely, and anticipate the likelihood of a similar experience next semester.

While it has been a difficult fall for most, those who have been forced to isolate themselves at home have faced an additional set of challenges. Junior theatre majors Ally Baumgartner and Emilee Kellett both said that while learning from home in online classes, rival technology is far more distracting than in a traditional class setting.

"It's so much easier to look down at your phone when you're sitting in a Zoom call rather than if you were sitting in the classroom," Kellett said.

In addition to sharing a similar story, Baumgartner noted that "having more screen time has fueled a technology addiction" that has proved difficult to break.

The plan to return online after Thanksgiving was reiterated to students in Winthrop Interim President George Hynd's letter 'Important COVID-related updates' sent out on Oct. 13. While the remote plan is being implemented to minimize exposure risk, many have mixed feelings about the modified exams.

Some, such as senior theatre education major Shane O'Reilly, are unfazed by the change.

"I feel fine about finals online," O'Reilly said. "After doing them online last semester, I kind of have a gauge of what to expect."

Winthrop faculty are also using last semester's experience to

guide finals, with many switching from multiple choice or written exams during their testing period and instead assigning papers or projects.

Not all students have been able to adapt to remote exams so easily.

"I'm not very confident with online exams," said Gray Balentine, a sophomore French major, adding that "a traditional setting helps me focus more" when it comes to testing with an attention deficit disorder.

Winthrop students were informed over the summer in a message from Provost and Executive Vice President Adrienne McCormick that the faculty and staff had been preparing with classes, webinars and workshops to improve their online teaching skills. However, McCormick did not specify how much, if any, instruction was included on accommodating student disabilities.

The Health and Counseling Services and Office of Accessibility website has resources listed for COVID-19 support and quarantine policy. However, it does not have any information on maintaining accessibility in an online setting. Therefore it is likely professors may have been left to decide allowances for inclusiveness in their courses on their own this semester.

Looking towards the spring semester, many classes will be taught in a hybrid mode instead of fully online — however, students are faced with similar fears and difficulties.

Hynd's Oct. 13 message listed a return to in-person classes being the plan for spring. Thus far, his Nov. 6 letter, which notified students that a recent negative COVID-19 test will be required to resume in-person classes, has

been the only amendment to that plan.

However, in a trend recurring through this year, Hynd cautioned that, in addition to the possibility of emergency changes, the University will not give a concrete answer until some time in December.

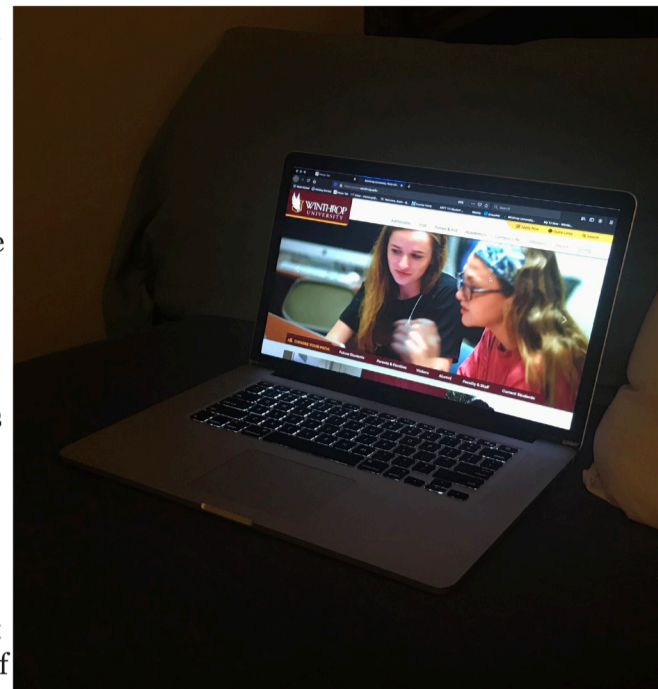
Social distancing has taken a toll on many areas of study, including the theatre and dance department. Even with the adoption of virtual shows, the inability to put multiple performers on stage at once adds an extra layer of difficulty.

Moving forward into spring, Baumgartner hopes to be able to perform more, even if it is to a virtual audience. The rest of the department seems to share the sentiment, as the vast majority of both theatre and dance classes for the spring will be either hybrid or entirely in-person.

On the other side, some areas have fared better. Junior sculpture major Lauren Baechel said that even with distancing this semester, "most of my classes were small enough that we could have the same amount of studio time as we normally would."

Many art studio classes usually cap at five to 10 students, and therefore they have been able to continue relatively unhindered; nearly the entire Fine Arts course offering list for this spring is fully hybrid.

Moving forward into the spring semester, students will need to balance safety with continuing their studies. Vigilance is key — being aware of updates from professors or the university is the best way to get a positive start to the spring semester.



Gwen Marten/The Johnsonian

"Wolfwalkers"

movie review

Up-and-coming Irish animation studio Cartoon Saloon's fourth film proves to be their best yet

Connor Brandenburg
staff writer

Animation studios of the past and present like Studio Ghibli or Pixar have defined the mainstream animation industry for years, but Irish animation studio Cartoon Saloon has made a name for themselves as of recent.

With their first feature film, "The Secret of Kells," the founder of Cartoon Saloon, Tomm Moore, established his talent as a first-time director. The authentic hand-drawn animation caught the attention of film critics and even the Academy Awards, where the film got a nomination for Best Animated Feature. Moore's sophomore feature "Song of the Sea" gained more traction for the studio and Moore, earning a second Academy Awards nomination for the studio. Moore then moved to work on a new project as co-founder Nora Twomey directed and produced the critically acclaimed film "The Breadwinner," which again earned the studio an Academy nomination.

Over the past few years, Moore has been working hard on his newest project, titled "Wolfwalkers," and the effort paid off.

"Wolfwalkers" is a beautiful return for Moore, and surprisingly a step-up from his previous works. The film focuses on Robyn, the daughter of an esteemed wolf hunter, who finds herself becoming friends with a Wolfwalker, a human that transforms into a wolf when she sleeps. Because of the institutionalized hatred towards wolves employed by a totalitarian regime, Robyn sets out to save the Wolfwalker and the wolves from an impending attack.

The themes align with any other children's film, tackling the concept of the 'other' and how people should accept everyone no matter their differences. However, the execution of both the filmmaking and the screenplay allows this trope-heavy narrative to succeed.

Moore has always derived most of his art style from Irish folklore and historical paintings from all over the world. The two aesthetics he chose for "Wolfwalkers" were Japanese woodblock prints and loose, expressive linework. Japanese woodblock prints were popularized

▶ see *Wolfwalkers* pg. 9

Sia's new film faces backlash over ableism

The artist Sia is facing backlash after releasing a trailer for her movie, "Music"

Jeb Bartlett
staff writer

The artist Sia has recently come under fire after releasing a trailer for her directorial film debut, "Music." The film follows the character Music, a neurodivergent teenager with a form of non-vocal autism, although this is never explicitly stated in the script, played by Maddie Ziegler.

Immediately upon the release of the trailer, Sia was met with backlash on Twitter regarding Ziegler's performance and the choice to cast a neurotypical actor, or person without a disability, in the lead role.

"This is totally unacceptable and there are no excuses," tweeted Jordana Golbourn, a freelance theatre maker, in response to the trailer. "You should know better than to allow able bodied [and] neurotypical to represent the disabled community. It's incredibly offensive as is the infantilisation of the character. Sickened. And not even captioned. Don't release this."

Many users echoed Golbourn's sentiments and have even created an online petition to cancel the film's premiere entirely. In response to the trailer's negative reception, Sia took to Twitter

to respond to the accusations of "ableism."

"I actually tried working with a beautiful young girl non verbal on the spectrum and she found it unpleasant and stressful. So that's why I cast Maddie," Sia tweeted in response to Golbourn's tweet. But many felt that more could have been done to accommodate Ziegler's predecessor.

"I do think a neurodivergent should have been cast because representation matters, and a lot of people think that being neurodivergent makes you incapable of doing things, which isn't necessarily true," said Madison Hammond, a musical theatre major who is transferring to Winthrop University from University of South Carolina-Sumter for the spring semester.

"I feel like the production team should have been educated enough to not make it overwhelming for them, but I know things happen, so I do understand why they took another route," Hammond said.

Sia also maintained that she had the best intentions when creating the film, tweeting that, "The movie is both a love letter to caregivers and to the autism community. I have my own unique view of the community, and felt it is under-

represented and compelled to make it...but my intentions are awesome."

Ultimately, this is the latest incident where a film has received backlash for casting an actor who is not a member of a certain group or community to portray a member. A recent, similar, controversy was the 2017 casting of Scarlett Johansson as the lead in the "Ghost in the Shell" movie, based on a Japanese manga.

"I know that we live in an age of social media and 'cancel culture' where a bunch of people can sit behind a screen and tweet #sia-is-overparty without fully knowing the story, but sometimes people deserve to be called out," Hammond said. "So many times, there has to be a neurodivergent role, black role, plus size role, etc. for people that fall under these categories and they are not looked at in casting."

Despite the controversy, "Music" is still set to be released in February 2021.

"Overall there just needs to be more representation in the media and every little movie counts," Hammond said. "I know the movie is going to be made and it is what it is, but I don't think I will be watching it."

◀ *Wolfwalkers* from pg. 8 in the Edo period of Japan, running from 1603 all the way to 1868. This style was utilized in the art of the main town, which is drawn similarly to how it would look on a map. By contrasting the flat, almost boring nature of the town with the more exciting and natural aesthetics of the forest through the artwork, the forest can be fully appreciated in its beauty. The expansive ecosystem of the forest is entrenched in Celtic art and folklore, creating an immersive environment.

Even the character designs mark this contrast as the town's citizens are drawn with exact linework. Lord Protector Cromwell exemplifies this aesthetic with a rectangular body and head.

The loose linework aesthetic is applied to the Wolfwalkers, the wolves and even Robyn as she comes closer to nature. Rather than utilizing exposition to establish the divide between the forest and the town, the artwork inherently distinguishes their differences.

The dynamic nature of the cinematography was an interesting addition to the already incredible technical design of the film. While the presence of a camera is impossible with animation, momentum can be used to convey similar emotions of a well-shot live-action film.

When a Wolfwalker becomes a wolf, the film transitions into a first-person perspective. The shift between calculated and still frames to energetic cinematography might be abrupt to viewers, but the execution of the movement is so fluid that the transition becomes seamless.

Both framing styles are beautifully hand-drawn, so none of the authenticity is lost no matter how experimental the film may get. There are also clever changes in aspect ratio to signify tonal shifts and thematic details. Through the creative and subversive visuals, any sign of contrivance is overshadowed.

Despite the fact that the plot in concept is derivative, the execution adds nuance to the thematic foundation. Discussing institutionalized hatred is nothing new for children's movies. Movies like the most recent "Addams Family" reboot utilize the concept of "the other" in a superficial fashion, focusing on the differences between the group rather than how such hatred can manifest. "Wolfwalkers" takes on the latter, setting the town within totalitarian rule in which wolves are demonized. To contrast the beliefs of the citizens with the audience, the very first scene depicts a Wolfwalker healing a wounded farmer outside the walls of the town.

Once Robyn becomes just as disillusioned to the demonization of wolves as the audience, she becomes the moral vehicle for the story. It still takes Robyn time to adjust to her new perspective, showcasing how deep the hatred is founded within their culture.

However, when she does fight for the wolves, the movie supports its audience to trust in not just children, but emotions themselves rather than a tyrannical force like Lord Protector Cromwell or a culture founded in illogical and imbalanced beliefs.

"Wolfwalkers" is enveloped in Celtic folklore and history, but the emotions conveyed in its art and narrative are far more universal than one would think. Cartoon Saloon continues to show how dynamic 2D animation can still be, and "Wolfwalkers" is their best exemplification of that. With wonderful animation and a nuanced narrative, "Wolfwalkers" earns a 9 out of 10.

Holidays around the world

A look into December holidays in different cultures

Emily Curry
staff writer

The holidays are a time for peace and love. A time for being with family to celebrate with traditions, food and gifts. Traditions may be one of the best parts of the holidays. They serve as reminders of who came before us and what they held dear, as well as ways for us to grow closer to our own loved ones.

Holiday traditions differ greatly around the world. Throughout December, there are several major holidays that are attributed to different cultures and celebrated differently depending on what region you come from and what traditions your own family holds.

Christmas is one of the most common holidays celebrated in December. It comes from the Christian tradition, in which the birth of Jesus Christ is celebrated on Dec. 25. It also ties in with another tradition, the Winter Solstice, which was a major holiday in the Roman Empire before the legalization of Christmas. Some historians believe that in the fourth century, the Pope changed Jesus Christ's date of birth from sometime in January, as it likely was, to coincide more closely with the Solstice to encourage its celebration.

Christmas has become a somewhat secular holiday for many people, celebrated by those who don't affiliate themselves with Christianity. In this sense, it is closely associated with Santa

Claus, who travels the world to bring presents to all the good children. Santa Claus is known by different names around the world, such as Father Christmas, Père Noel and Saint Nicholas. The traditions that go with Christmas also differ. In some places, shoes are left out to be filled with goodies. In others, evergreen trees are decorated.

Another common holiday is Hanukkah, a Jewish holiday that is also known as the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah is celebrated anytime from late November to early January, depending on the lunar calendar. This year, it will be celebrated from Dec. 10–18. Although this is a fairly minor holiday in the Jewish culture, it has gained popularity as a sort of counterpart to Christmas as it is celebrated around the same time.

Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Second Temple. The story goes that there was only enough oil to last one night, but miraculously, the oil lasted eight, giving the people enough time to prepare fresh oil. To celebrate this miracle, candles are lit on a candelabra called a menorah, one candle for each night of the holiday. During this time, gifts are exchanged, the traditional game of dreidel is played and traditional foods such as latkes and sufganiyot are eaten.

A more modern holiday that was first celebrated in the late twentieth century is Kwanzaa. This holiday was created by Maulana Karenga after the Watts riots as a specifically African-American

holiday. It takes place from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1 and celebrates the seven principles of African Heritage. The celebration includes a candle-lighting ritual and, at the end, a feast of faith, called Karamu Yu Imani. The holiday is meant as a way for African Americans to take pride in their culture and celebrate it.

As previously mentioned, the Winter Solstice is also in December, on the twenty-first, and is still celebrated in some cultures. For those who live above the equator, the Winter Solstice is the shortest day of the year, with less than ten hours of daylight. Some traditions see it as the coming of light, for afterward, the days will start to lengthen. Others believe that dark spirits roam the Earth because it is the longest night of the year.

To wrap up December and the calendar year itself is the celebration of the New Year. In many places, the tradition is to stay up until midnight in order to celebrate the beginning of a new year. There are also some New Year superstitions, such as the person you are with on New Year's Eve is the person you will spend the coming year with, or that crying on New Year's Day means a year of sadness.

It is no stretch to say that 2020 has been a particularly trying year and the holiday spirit is just what many people need. As you celebrate with your family, remember to keep in mind the hopeful message that many of the December holidays have.

Reviewing "The Subject and the Scientist"

A book with an interesting concept, but questionable execution

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Montana Stayer's "The Subject and the Scientist" is the definition of a book that a reader either loves to hate or hates to love.

The physical book has an attractive, albeit bland cover depicting grays and whites that gives away nothing of the raw emotion held within but still remains fitting of the subject material. The book is short, sporting only 225 pages in the softcover version. The text on each page is well spaced out and comes in quick paragraphs that further shorten the actual content of the story.

The short, self-published story follows the unnamed Scientist, a father struggling with grief over the death of his young daughter, Evelin, years prior. He is joined by the Subject, a child he created as an almost exact clone donor body in an attempt to save his daughter.

Following the Subject's creation, the Scientist was surprised to find she had consciousness but ultimately decided he would kill her in order to save his daughter. Unfortunately, he was too late, losing his daughter and, in his mind, getting stuck with the thing made to save her.

Years after his daughter's death, the book begins with the Scientist keeping the Subject locked in a basement room as an "experiment." He usually meets with her daily, following a strict routine of asking three questions and leaving.

Over the course of this arrangement, the Scientist has done his best to keep an objective view

on the situation, but often finds himself lashing out at the Subject. He wants to blame her for his daughter's death and reasons throughout the story with himself that his daughter should be the one alive, not the experiment he never expected to have a life.

Despite his coldness to her, the Subject consistently holds onto hope that she can build a relationship of some kind with the Scientist. She struggles with understanding why he treats her like he does, but continues to take care of her. It is made clear in the story that the Subject is still only a curious child that is searching for happiness in life.

The concept of the story itself is intriguing. It focuses entirely on its titular characters isolated from the rest of an unknown world in the woods at the Scientist's house. The dynamic of the two characters has dashes of a "will they, won't they" cliché, but in the sense of will the Subject and the Scientist find a way to live in harmony despite the pain they bring to each other or will they always hurt the other in their own way.

This is where the main problem of the story arises. The ending is very inconclusive, leaving the reader wondering what comes next. While it does fit the story that came before it, it still feels very unsatisfying and leaves the reader with the question, "what does any of it matter then?"

By the end of the story, it seems as if the Subject and the Scientist have had little growth, despite the potential for it being there throughout their numerous interactions. Every time they talk, it feels like one step forwards and

one step backwards.

Outside of this, the story has a sort of television-like quality where it tends to rerun the same ideas over and over in the text, as if reminding the reader what happened an episode ago. While this might be no issue in a longer narrative or in a weekly TV show as mentioned, for a story this short it becomes sadly redundant and takes away from the new developments that do arise in the text.

This is especially true with sections throughout the story of the Scientist recording video logs for himself that summarize everything that took place over the last few pages. These moments can make the reader wonder what was the purpose of them reading the events if they would just get a condensed version at the end of the section.

In place of this repeating focus on events the reader just witnessed, it would be nice if these summarizing spaces were used to provide insight into the background of the world of the Subject and the Scientist and answer questions such as how the Subject was made, what happened to the Scientist's wife, and how has the Scientist maintained the life he has without any known income?

Overall, the story is compelling, packed with emotional moments, and full of potential. However, the unfortunate lack of needed character growth, background information, overabundance of repeating information and lackluster ending takes away from the reading experience as a whole. Due to this, on a scale of one to five stars, this story only gets two stars.

December 2, 2020

COVID commencement: how social distancing has impacted graduation ceremonies

A look into how Winthrop's graduation ceremony will be handled this December

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

Winthrop University's plan for the December 2020 graduation ceremony is to socially distance as much as possible due to the recent spike in COVID-19 cases.

"As we continue to navigate limitations on large gatherings and with continued concerns regarding the Coronavirus, Winthrop University has decided we will not be able to hold a regular commencement ceremony." Winthrop wrote on their website. In lieu of a traditional ceremony, the university will be holding a virtual commencement ceremony on Dec. 19.

The graduation candidates of December 2020 have had very mixed feelings about the university's decision. Shannon Bradley, a senior musical theatre major, is particularly saddened by having a virtual ceremony. "I feel like there was a way around this. Academic colleges could have graduated on different days, that way everyone could [practice social distancing]," Bradley said in an interview with *The Johnsonian*.

"It's a milestone that most students look forward to — the closing of one chapter as another begins. Without a proper graduation ceremony, it doesn't feel like a proper ending to this chapter of my life," Bradley said. "It's absolutely devastating."

Commencement is a celebration of academic success and of the achievement of lifelong goals. By having this semester's commencement online, it reduces some of the excitement. Caps and gowns are traded for Zoom calls. For many students, graduation is a final opportunity to say goodbye to classmates.

Maddi Penn, a senior performance major, feels more indifferent than Bradley regarding Winthrop's decision to cancel in person commencement. "I'm personally not a ceremony person," Penn said. "I don't feel super affected by not being able to have a traditional ceremony. I'll be getting the piece of paper either way."

Students will be able to receive their diplomas via an in-person pick-up event. Winthrop has not yet released the date of this event, but is expected to soon. The university has not yet decided whether the event will be held as a drive-through, or if students will need to exit their vehicles. Students are required to bring their Winthrop ID in order to pick up their diploma. A mask must be worn at all times while picking up the diplomas.

Winthrop has stated that family members are only allowed to accompany them to the pick-up event if it is held via drive-through. If graduates are to exit their vehicles, then family members are asked to stay in the car to facilitate social distancing.



Emma Crouch/*The Johnsonian*

However, students will be able to share the virtual commencement ceremony with their families, as Winthrop will be posting it to YouTube.

Although the ceremony is not what students expected, some traditions can still be honored. Students can wear a cap and gown to the diploma pick-up event, but it is not required. While students are expected to wear a mask, they can remove the masks while taking pictures. The campus bookstore will also have tassels on sale for students who wish to have a memento.

Candidates for graduation are encouraged to regularly check their email for more information regarding the virtual ceremony/diploma pick-up.

Cliches and Christmas

Christmas movies are an easy way to lift spirits - especially in 2020

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

Christmas movies are some of the most formulaic movies ever made, and yet they manage to be one of the most popular genres during the fall and winter months.

Christmas movies nearly always rehash the same plot, with minor variances in circumstantial details. For example, a business-focused woman moves to a small town. She meets a local small business owner/single dad, they fall in love and she learns the true meaning of Christmas. Snow begins to fall as they kiss under the stars.

Until recently, Hallmark has been the be-all and end-all producer of Christmas movies. Streaming services like Netflix have begun to produce their own versions of these beloved holiday romances. American small business owners who marry into foreign royal families have become Netflix's calling card with their new batch of Christmas movies.

Despite suffering from their predictability, these movies are insanely popular. The Hallmark Channel shows almost exclusively Christmas movies from Halloween to New Year's Day. According to demographic statistics, The Hallmark Channel received a total of 72 million viewers in 2019. This made their channel the most popular channel among women aged 18 to 45 during the Christmas season.

So what makes this genre of film so popular? Perhaps it's because there is always a happy ending. The main love interests always end up together and the holiday is always saved. There isn't room in such cut-and-dry scripts for the stress of everyday life. For roughly 90 minutes, the audience can forget about the stress they may be facing.

The wholesome morals being represented are also a potential reason for the popularity of Christmas movies. True love, hard work, and family are all emphasized in these films. In a society where tension and negativity are commonplace, it's comforting to have media where every problem is solved in under three hours.

However, the cities shown in these movies reflect issues in today's so

▶ see [Christmas](#) pg. 11

Happy Holidays vs. Merry Christmas

Why do some get offended when others say "Happy Holidays" rather than "Merry Christmas"?

Allison Reynolds
staff writer

The time of year defined by holidays and Christmas spirit has finally come.

The time of year when Walmart is full of Christmas trees and stores blast "All I Want for Christmas is You" by Mariah Carey throughout their stores. But it has also become the time of year when some individuals get upset and offended by cashiers and other strangers greeting them with the phrase "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas." Why do so many people get offended by this?

The reason that most people choose to say "Happy Holidays" is an effort to be more inclusive. Not everyone is of Christian faith and celebrates Christmas. Some people don't celebrate any holiday, and some practice a different religion. There are those who celebrate Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or the Winter Solstice.

Many people who celebrate Christmas believe that choosing the greeting 'Happy Holidays' is "an insult or a denigration of Christmas," according to HuffPost. NBC News also reported that the difference in how people react has to do with ideology, age and gender. They determined it would be better to say "Mer-

ry Christmas" to a 60-year-old Republican man from the South, whereas it might be better to say "Happy Holidays" to a 20-year-old Liberterian woman from the Northeast. A geographic map from Treetopia shows that the phrase "Merry Christmas" is mostly used in the South, also known as the Bible Belt.

The Philadelphia Inquirer says that saying "Merry Christmas" has gotten a bad reputation because of Fox News anchors and President Donald Trump inventing the "War on Christmas." However, according to Denise Clay, a freelance writer from Philadelphia, "When you say 'Merry Christmas' instead of 'Happy Holidays'...you are erasing the importance of experiences of people who don't share your beliefs."

Christmas does overshadow most other December holidays in America, but this doesn't mean it is okay to erase these other holidays.

You may not know when you are talking to someone Jewish, Pagan or someone who celebrates Kwanzaa. Telling them "Merry Christmas" might offend them. "Happy Holidays" also includes the celebrations that come with New Years Eve and New Years Day. This phrase also includes birthdays that are celebrated in between the plethora of December holidays. Some people even start saying "Happy Holidays" in



Kaily Paddle/*The Johnsonian*

Happy Holidays vs. Merry Christmas?

November to include Thanksgiving.

Since today's society has become more inclusive and there are people of every religion everywhere, "Happy Holidays" is a more neutral alternative phrase that includes every holiday. Christians and those who celebrate Christmas should not get offended at the "Happy Holidays" phrase because Christmas is included in this, but "Merry Christmas" does not include other winter holidays.

Choosing to say "Happy Holidays" ensures that those who celebrate holidays that are often overshadowed by Christmas are still included in today's society and culture.



Katelyn Miller/The Johnsonian

◀ **Christmas** from pg. 10
 ciety. These movies are incredibly similar in terms of plots and casts. Up until recently, there has been little to no representation of people of color in Christmas movies. People with disabilities are used as plot devices or supporting characters — often to play the part of “token minority”. LGBTQ+ characters are also pushed into the background, if represented at all.

The main romantic relationships in Christmas movies are always heteronormative, conventionally attractive, and white. While this certainly reflects a portion of the world’s population, accurate representation of minority groups is a huge point of conflict for film studios. Many viewers find issues with not being able to relate to the identities presented in these films.

Despite the homogenous nature of these movies, they instill a feeling of warmth in their audiences. With feel-good moments, families across the world can bond over their shared love or sense of community. This is especially helpful for those who cannot spend the holidays with their loved ones.

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting social gatherings, the upcoming holiday season can be especially stressful. Social distancing limits how often, if at all, families and friends can spend the holidays together. This can increase feelings of isolation and depression, which could potentially be combated with living vicariously through the families in Christmas movies.

Sure, Christmas movies are predictable and ultimately lack the representation that the media desperately needs. However, they also spread a little happiness to their viewers - something that 2020 hasn’t had happen too often. Christmas movies may be cheesy and not for everyone, but they help the holiday season feel a little more magic.

A Short History of Public Concessions

For 120 years the losing candidate of the presidential election has given some form of public concession, but will President Trump do the same?

Jeb Bartlett
 staff writer

Nearly a month after the election, President Donald Trump has still not conceded to projected president-elect Joe Biden.

While there is no legal requirement for the president to concede, Trump’s current refusal to do so, despite numerous failed lawsuits to overturn the results and several key states proceeding to certify their votes, further exemplifies the abnormality of the 2020 election.

The tradition of public concessions in American presidential politics is one with deep roots in the foundation of democracy. Presently, public concessions are all but expected from the losing candidate, signaling the beginnings of a peaceful transfer of power from one president to another, and act as a bookend to the election.

The first public concession is commonly cited as an 1896 telegram from William Jennings Bryan to William McKinley, two days after Bryan lost the election. The telegram was no longer than two sentences, but in it Bryan congratulates McKinley and asserts the results of the election.

As public concessions became the norm, and technology with the capability of reaching mass audiences continued to be developed, more candidates would begin utilizing larger platforms to make their concession speeches. Al Smith, in 1928, would be the first to make his concession speech over the radio. Later, in 1952, Adlai Stevenson would make the first public concession speech on live television.

Typically, a candidate will concede when there is a clear winner of the election, usually between the same night as the election or within a few days. But that has not been the case with the current election. The closest comparison to the unprecedented 2020 election would be the 2000 election between Al Gore and George W. Bush, where a lack of concession ultimately led the election to continue for 35 days after voting ended.

On election night of 2000, in the early hours of the morning, Al Gore called and conceded to his opponent George W. Bush, because earlier Florida had been called for Bush. However, Gore would go on to rescind his concession a few hours later when it became unclear who actually won Florida. What followed was a little over a month of litigation over the election results, coming to a head in the Supreme Court case *Bush v. Gore* in which the court sided with Bush. As the sitting vice president, Gore would have to concede twice that year.

Paul Corcoran, who studies U.S. presidential campaigns and is a professor at the University of Adelaide, told NPR that there are four basic elements of the template for a standard presidential concession speech: a statement of defeat, a call to unite, a celebration of democracy and a vow to continue the fight. These four elements can be found in nearly all concession speeches given by past candidates and each work toward the goal of a peaceful transition of power.

Because the public concession speech commonly acts as the end to an election and helps to instill a



sense of continued functionality in the democratic process, it is increasingly troubling that there has not been one given in 2020 from Trump, despite losing the election. It is clear that the longer the president drags out the election, the worse our democracy will be left in his wake. Despite presenting little to no evidence of any voter fraud in court, the Trump administration looks poised to continue litigating the results until they are legally no longer able to.

This all begs the question: Will the president ever give a public concession? And what exactly happens if he doesn’t? For the first time in 120 years, the answer remains unclear.

Lockdown Browser is bad software and should be scrapped

Lockdown browser is hard to use, has many errors, does not prevent cheating and makes it difficult for students to be tested

Autumn Hawkins
 staff writer

LockDown Browser, created by Respondus, is a secure web browser application that is used by Winthrop University and other institutions of higher learning to prevent cheating during exams. Despite the company’s claims that “LockDown Browser is the ‘gold standard’ for securing online exams in class-

rooms or proctored environments,” it does not hold up to scrutiny. The program is invasive, unreliable, prone to glitches and does not prevent cheating.

Lockdown Browser has been seen as a solution to cheating in an educational environment now dependent upon online learning and testing. When launched, the browser closes all other running applications in the background of your computer, and roots itself into your computer files. It is then able to monitor activity on the computer and enable the video camera and microphone to record.

Lockdown Browser and software like it operate in a similar way to trojan computer viruses. While running, they maintain complete control over the computer and are vulnerable to hacking or program manipulation.

The idea of handing that much access to your personal computer to a computer application like Lockdown Browser is very unsettling. It is also unsettling that Lockdown Browser uses facial recognition software and students are not given the option to opt out of being recorded while taking an exam.

Tools like the ability to monitor computer activity and even webcam recording feel superfluous when one considers the reality that many students own more than one computer, a laptop or a smartphone. A careful positioning of the camera right and a nearby smartphone are all that is necessary to cheat while using Lockdown

Browser.

A student could easily claim they were doing scratch-work or reviewing permitted notes when questioned why they kept looking down so often, should the professor even catch these subtle gestures. Without the definitive proof of cheating that could more easily be produced in a classroom environment, it is nearly impossible to prove a student was cheating. At best, Lockdown Browser slightly impairs the student’s ability to cheat.

It may be reasonable to believe that having some tool to inhibit cheating, no matter how effective, is better than no tool at all. But Lockdown Browser also fails in another way, making it significantly harder for students to take exams. It is very slow to use, frequently crashes and is prone to technical errors and glitches.

Lockdown Browser is an underwhelming and underdeveloped application that receives overrated praise. It should be imperative to educators and universities to find an alternative application that actually prevents cheating and is easier to use.

It is unfair to force students to use clunky software that is invasive and could potentially crash and ruin their grade. Students are feeling more pressure than ever in the current educational system and do not need further technological problems to contend with. Better software alternatives should be considered.



Wren Brooke/The Johnsonian

Are the Lockdown Browsers really necessary?



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