

THE JOHNSONIAN



Remembering Nicholas Paul Firimonte

Bryn Smyth
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Nicholas Paul Firimonte, a senior music composition major at Winthrop, passed away on Dec. 17, 2020. He was both admired and beloved by his friends and professors and was an integral part of Winthrop's community.

"He twice made the dean's list while at Winthrop and was in the honor's program," wrote Interim President George Hynd, and Vice President for Student Affairs Shelia Burkhalter, in an email sent to students on Dec. 20, 2020.

"One of Nick's favorite Winthrop experiences was attending a composition festival in Italy. His favorite composer was Morton Feldman. Nick was also a member of Winthrop's military-connected community, having taken a brief semester hiatus from his studies in fall 2019 to join the South Carolina National Guard."

Firimonte had the respect of the professors with whom he worked and learned under.

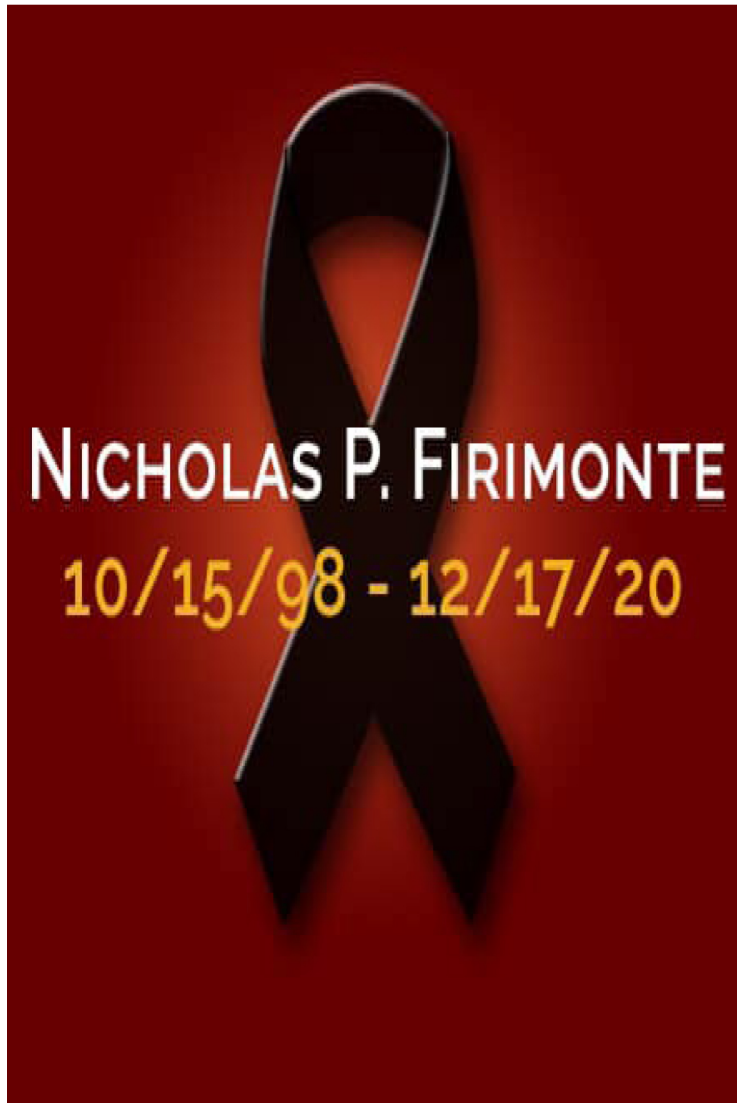
"I remember Nick as one of the students who had raw natural talent and instinct in composing music. I was very impressed at his first composition jury. He had written beautiful melodies that were well paced, had good rhythm and texture, and an overall a well thought out form, which is a difficult thing to do as a freshman composition student," said Dr. Tomoko Deguchi, a professor in the Department of Music.

"Over time, his compositions have become more adventurous, and it was a rewarding experience for me to witness that Nick was finding his individual voice as a budding composer. I also had him in several of my music theory and aural skills classes. He always sat quietly, always concentrated, absorbing all information. I am saddened that I don't get to hear his music anymore, but we will continue our conversation when I meet him again."

Firimonte was a pleasure to encounter for many reasons, one of the most prominent being his humor.

"Nick will be missed by all who knew him. He had a great sense of humor and was very witty. As the area coordinator for music composition, I worked very closely with Nick and he was among my favorite students I have taught in my nineteen years at Winthrop," said Dr. Ronald Parks, a professor in the Department of Music.

"Dr. Lewis and I meet weekly with all students studying music composition for a repertory class and to share our work. Once we were watching a video of a performance of a piece for piano and cello. A few minutes into the video Nick asked, 'Dr. Parks, why are we watching Bernie Sanders and Tommy Chong playing this piece?' Everyone cracked up because the



Nicholas Paul Firimonte, a Winthrop senior, passed away on Dec. 17, 2020.

players really did look like Bernie Sanders and Tommy Chong! It took Nick to make the connection, such was his wit and sense of humor."

Firimonte was a very creative individual whose personality and individuality were often evident in his compositions.

"His original music expresses an exploratory voice using a depth that is usually found in composers well beyond his years. You will also find music composed by Nick named after his favorite foods... That was our Nick! He will be missed," said Dr. Leonard Lewis, a professor in the Department of Music.

"Nick was extremely intelligent, talented, and an all-around lovely person. He was very witty and quick with a joke. He was a vital member the Composer's Ensemble as a saxophonist and composer. We all loved working with him and just having him around."

Firimonte touched the lives of many other students at Winthrop as well.

"I honestly don't know if I can name many composers that were as intelligent as Nick. He thought in ways that completely baffled my mind. There was never a day in class where he wasn't talking about his love for Morton Feldman or why atonal music was superior to its tonal counterpart. Each Friday for years, all the composers at Winthrop would take part in a 'composers' ensemble' class, and without a doubt, Nick was the life of the class," said Winthrop alumni, Joshua Leyda.

"Every day he came in with jokes and a smile, and I'll never forget those amazing moments I spent with him."

For those mourning Nicholas Paul Firimonte and finding it difficult to navigate life in the wake of such a great loss, Winthrop University's counseling center is available to help. Please call the staff at 803-323-2206.



Wren Brooks/The Johnsonian

Trigger warning: mentions sexual assault and rape

WUPO statistics show increase in reported rape cases

WUPO released its annual report of criminal activity analyzing the past three years, showing an increase in the number of reported sexual assault cases

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According to the 2020 Annual Security Report, data accumulated from the 2017 to 2019 academic semesters displayed an increase in the total reported cases of rape. The document cites one report in 2017, six reports in 2018 and eight reports in 2019, making rape Winthrop's most reported crime.

Under the federal law known as the the Clery Act, Winthrop is required to report certain crimes such as rape or criminal sexual conduct.

"In 2019, we had eight listed. That doesn't necessarily mean that of those eight that we have listed [that] they were reported to the police department for an active investigation. We may have only done an active investigation on a handful of those if they were reported to us because the victim wanted to pursue criminal charges," Assistant Chief of Police Charles Yeara said.

Victim Service Coordinator Itali Jackson said, "When it comes to reporting, that's a sticky situation. You don't know if crime is going up or if victims are just more willing to come forward because you have sexual assault especially in a college setting, you have maybe 20% of people who report sexual assaults and you're talking about one in four women will be sexually assaulted while in their college years between the 18 to 23 range.

"It's kind of tricky to put your hand on whether or not it's assaults that [are] actually happening or if it is the [Office of Victims Assistance] seeing more students willing to come in to us and get services they need."

There is an official procedure and protocol that is taken by both Winthrop Police and the Office of Victims Assistance when a sexual assault is reported.

"Whenever a sexual assault is reported through either campus police or through Title IX or student conduct code, as the victim advocate, I reach out first via email and then also through a follow-up text message just to see if the student would like to meet with me," Jackson said. "If the student does not respond, in that email all of the information is available as far as my contact information."

Sarah Powell, a freshman business administration major, said, "I feel that it's important for the Winthrop

▶ see WUPO pg. 2



Sports

Baseball ranks 40th in pre-season poll

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A&C

Artist Spotlight: Theatre triple threat

•pg.8



Opinion

Trump's phony coup will not stop Biden's inauguration

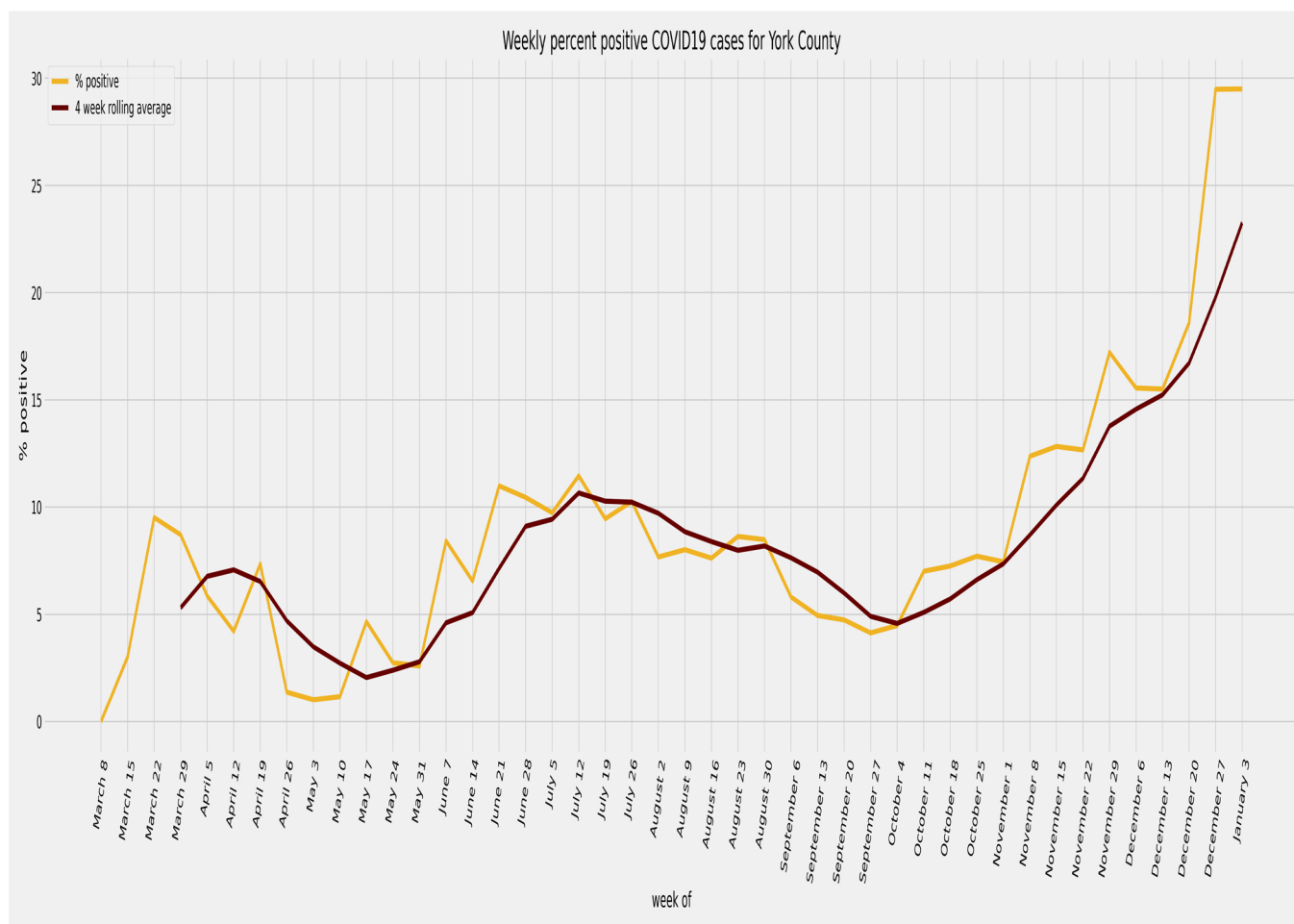
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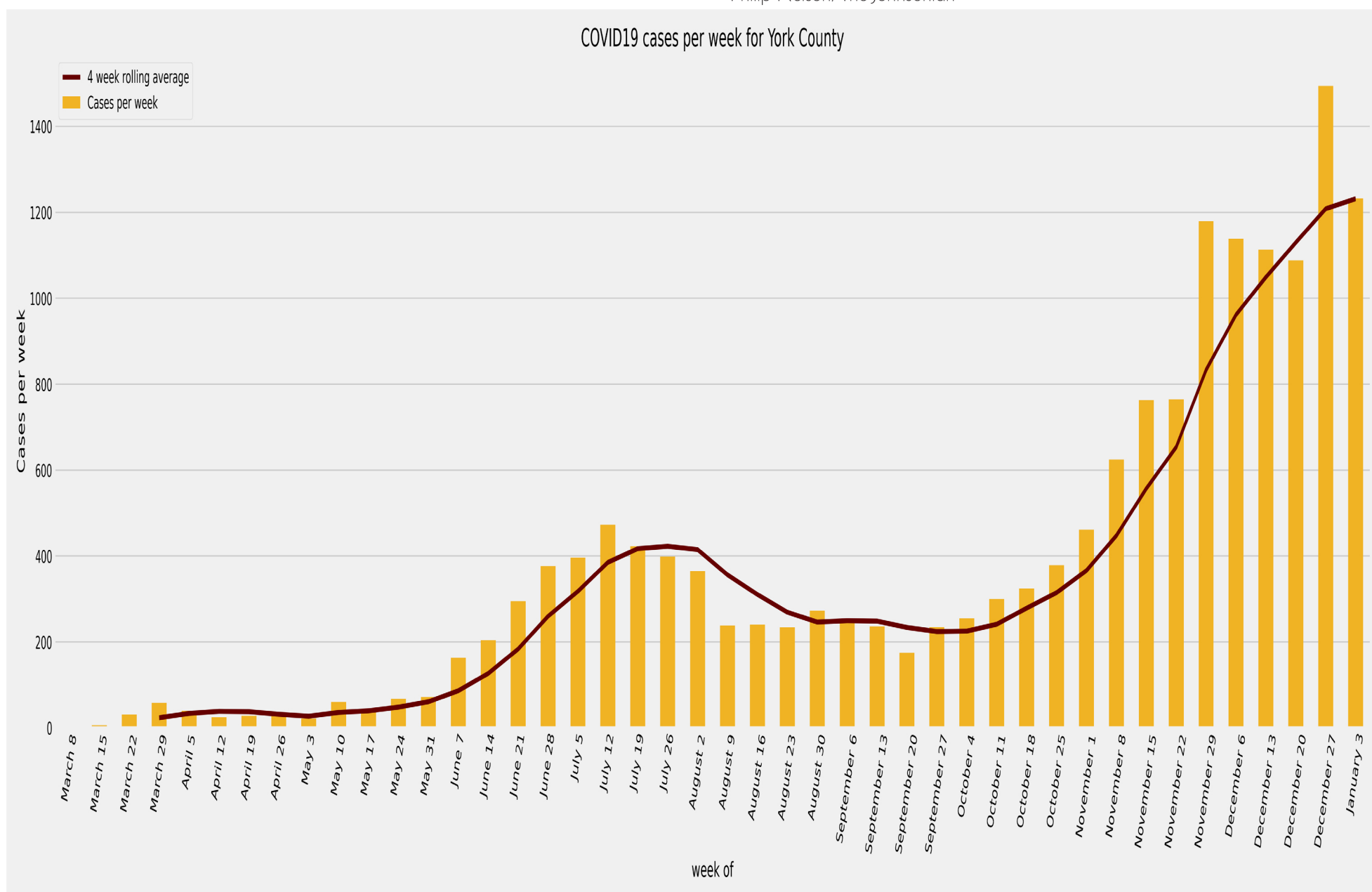
January 13, 2021

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



Philip Nelson/The Johnsonian



◀ WUPO from front

staff to take the offense seriously, regardless of the circumstances. You never know what past trauma people have experienced. Something that seems minor to one could tremendously impact someone with a history of being sexually assaulted.”

Each year, preventative steps are taken to ensure the safety of Winthrop students, especially from acts of sexual assault on campus.

“The prevention and education part comes in a variety of steps throughout the semester, various organizations, the police department, the Office of Victims Assistance, Residence Life, the Dean of Students. Those main characters do educational programming to make it available to students,” Yearata said.

Morgan Turner, a junior conservation biology major, said, “Winthrop, or more specifically WUPO, needs to be taking better measures to ensure the safety of their students, whether male or female that are being assaulted. In a perfect world, assault wouldn’t happen at all on our campus, but I definitely think Winthrop could do better in addressing their students’ needs and concerns.”

“The good thing about interacting with our office is that you have support. I’m there for you fully whenever you’re doing investigations, I’m there for you whenever you make the first report, and also we have counselors so they are there for the mental health support,” Jackson said. “I just advise students to get engaged with our office just so they can just have that information so that if they do choose to go down those paths, they have the correct support they need.”

About The Johnsonian

The Johnsonian is the weekly student newspaper of Winthrop University.

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LETTER POLICY

Letters and feedback can be sent to editors@mytjnow.com or by mail at The Johnsonian, 104 Campus Center, Rock Hill, S.C. 29733. Comments submitted online at www.mytjnow.com may be printed as letters and may be shortened for space and edited for clarity. Please include

your name, major and year if you are a student; your name and title if you are a professor, or your name and profession if you are a member of the community. Letters, cartoons and columns reflect the opinion of the authors and are not necessarily the opinions of The Johnsonian Staff.

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January 13, 2021

President Hynd receives pay raise

George W. Hynd, interim president of Winthrop University, received a 7% pay raise this year

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In 2020, Winthrop University President George Hynd, as well as the entire Winthrop community, experienced many hardships due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The university's budget was stretched rather thin, placing the university in a position where it had to furlough faculty and staff.

In an interview with The Herald on Aug. 25, 2020, Hynd said, "The furlough was a way for us to close the gap in terms of the distance between our anticipated revenues and expenditures... there are benefits to the university and to the employees for furloughs... everybody that is furloughed, for whatever days they are furloughed, they are not receiving any income on that day... The advantage is that, number one, they keep their job, and, number two, their benefits continue even during the days that they are not being paid."

Regardless of taking furlough days, workloads seldom lessened, and many Win-

throp professors and other employees experienced an increase in responsibility as a result of adapting to life during a global pandemic. Enduring a pay cut amidst navigating nuance online classrooms proved extra challenging and taxing on professors.

According to an article published by The State on Dec. 9, 2020, Hynd received a 7% increase in pay as a result of Agency Head Salary Commission's decision to increase the minimum pay band for certain college presidents in South Carolina "in order to be more competitive with other states" and to "account [for] increased job responsibilities."

The minimum pay band for a university president like Hynd has been raised from \$183,313 to \$195,229.

Hynd did indeed experience an increase in responsibility as the virus continued to sweep through the surrounding areas, however, only he received an increase in pay

while other faculty and staff, who also experi-

enced an increase in workload as a result of the pandemic, were furloughed.

Judy Longshaw, a news and media services manager at Winthrop, said, "This pay raise was not based on Dr. Hynd's performance or work to date on Winthrop's behalf. It was simply a recognition by the Agency Head Salary Commission that our category's minimum pay band should be increased."

"It is important to note that Winthrop did not initiate this pay raise, it is not linked to Dr. Hynd's performance, and Winthrop's presidential salary now, as it was under Dr. Mahony, is limited to the minimum pay of the band."

Winthrop is not the only organization that is suffering through such a discrepancy in pay between heads and employees.

According to The State's article, "Base teacher pay was increased to \$35,000 in 2019-20. But legislators held off on further efforts to increase state employee and teacher pay in the last session because of the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic."

While millions of Americans have suffered great financial strain as a result of events in 2020, including teachers, many others, such as major department heads and university presidents, received pay raises.

There is hope, however, that Hynd's and the Finance and Business Affairs Division's plan to stick



Photo courtesy to Winthrop University

Hynd

to a three-to-five-year budget, will bring about financial recovery from the pandemic, thus filling in the now increased gap between the president's pay and the faculty's pay.

"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," Hynd said in his State of the University Address on Nov. 18. "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."

Police Blotter: 12/04-12/22

A round-up of crime on campus

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On Dec. 4, a reporting officer was approached by the complainant at the Winthrop Police Department building. The complainant informed the officer that they had recently been a victim of fraud. The victim explained that they had been told about a paid-remote internship with a company called Health Care Without Harm. After checking and confirming that the company was real, the victim applied for the internship and received an email a few days later asking if they could do a Google Hangout interview. The victim was hired the next day and was provided a training schedule, how much pay she would receive and emailed an employment agreement to sign. A week later, the victim was offered a full-time position and a computer to work remotely and was told that she would receive a check that would require a money order to receive her computer from the company. After sending the first check, the victim was told that she would need to send another to pay the cost of the remaining materials. The victim stated that both transactions went well and that they did not notice any abnormalities until Dec. 3, when they discovered that their bank account was showing a negative balance. Their bank informed them that the negative balance was likely due to receiving

fraudulent checks from HCWH. The victim visited the HCWH website and contacted the person they believed they were interacting with through email, who informed the victim that they had not been contacting them and the person they were receiving emails from was an impostor and not affiliated with HCWH. The victim provided the reporting officer the impostor's email alongside the name and address of the person they sent the money order to. Assistant Chief Yearta informed the victim of the investigation process and told them the process would take at least a couple of months.

On Dec. 7, a reporting officer was dispatched to the Lee Wicker parking lot in response to a report that a vehicle had been broken into. The officer made contact with the victim at the scene, who explained that they had begun moving items into their car around 4 p.m., after which they left their vehicle unlocked. The victim stated that he did not return to his car until approximately 9 p.m., upon which they noticed papers from their glove box thrown into the passenger seat and 40 dollars missing from his wallet that he had left in the vehicle. The officer did not observe any damage to the vehicle. The officer advised the victim to try to remember to always lock their vehicle's doors and to never leave any valuables inside the car for an extended period.

On Dec. 22, a reporting officer spotted three suspicious individuals in the alleyway of the Crawford Building whilst performing a property check. Upon spotting the subjects, the officer attempted to make contact with the group, but the subjects fled the area. The officer pursued the group on foot between the Bancroft and the Margaret Nance Hall but lost sight of the subjects. The officer patrolled the entire campus but was unable to further locate the subjects. Afterward, the officer performed a property check on the Crawford Building, Bancroft Hall and Margaret Nance and did not observe any signs of property damage. While conducting the property check, the officer had reason to suspect that the subjects may have been driving a red Jeep that had been parked in the Margaret Nance parking lot. The officer ran the plate of the car and obtained information relating to the vehicle owner's identity and address. The officer then left the area to perform another property check around the campus. When the officer returned, the vehicle was no longer seen in the parking lot. The officer observed that the address associated with the vehicle was close to campus and drove to the house and spotted the red Jeep, but did not attempt to make contact and returned to the campus. The officer used the Axis camera station to observe footage of the



Maggie Claytor/The Johnsonian

incident. One of the camera angles showed the subjects driving onto campus and parking their vehicle, a red Jeep, in the Margaret Nance parking lot. The three subjects were then observed exiting the vehicle and walking toward Margaret Nance. The group attempted to gain access into the building through the main entrance but was unsuccessful. The subjects were then observed walking around the building and attempted to enter through the side entrance but were also unsuccessful. The camera then showed the officer spotting the subjects fleeing. The camera later showed one of the subjects entering the vehicle and driving off with the other two subjects not seen returning to the vehicle. With the evidence observed on the camera footage, the reporting officer suspected that the subjects were attempting to commit a burglary.

Winthrop partners with chatbot company EdSights

The chatbot is used to communicate with students via text

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The conclusion of the socially distant Fall 2020 semester sparked the beginning of a well-earned break for the hard-working students and faculty of Winthrop University. Yet, for many Winthrop students, the strangeness of the previous year followed even into winter break as students were unexpectedly messaged by an inquisitive chatbot calling itself “Big Stuff.”

“Hey [First Name], this is Big Stuff the Eagle on behalf of Winthrop,” said the chatbot through an automated text message. “Congrats on completing the semester. In an effort to better support you, I will check in on you over the next few weeks, share important info, and helpful resources ... Enjoy your break, you deserve it.”

The message

provided Vice Provost for Student Success Jamie Cooper’s email address for questions relating to the chatbot’s use, as well as an option to opt-out of receiving the messages by responding with the phrase “#PAUSE.”

The bot’s message also stated that each month students who interact with the bot could win a chance to receive a 25 dollar Amazon gift card.

Throughout the break, students received various messages from the chatbot ranging from survey questions regarding the Fall 2020 semester and students’ individual wellbeing to informative reminders on academic deadlines to even requests for music suggestions to compile into a comprehensive Winthrop playlist on the music streaming application Spotify, which currently contains over 28 hours of assorted music.

“Hi [First Name]!

We’re excited to welcome you all back for the spring semester. Reminder that classes start this Monday, January 11th and that all classes this week are Virtual. Be sure to check your Winthrop email and log into Blackboard for info,” said Big Stuff the Chatbot.

Cooper stated that the chatbot had been a project that had been in the works throughout the fall semester, and is intended to provide a vehicle for university interaction with students during the break.

“Winthrop has partnered with EdSights for use of their chatbot product to help us communicate with students and to connect students to campus resources,” Cooper said. “The chatbot launched on Friday, December 11th. We worked through fall to get the chatbot set up and had the goal of launching by winter

break, to help keep students connected to Winthrop and to be a resource if they had questions during break.

“We have had good engagement from students thus far. The student responses gathered by the chatbot help us better understand the areas where students have questions and need more support, so we can use that information to improve our services to students.”

Meredith Frick, a freshman and undecided major, said that she has interacted with the bot a couple of times throughout the break.

“I believe that it is an interesting concept and provides a good way to spread helpful information to the students,” Frick said.

According to Cooper, the EdSights chatbot will continue to be used throughout the Spring 2021 semester and summer break.

<https://media.giphy.com/media/WtJILcH2Dvkw277ug0/giphy.gif>

Hey this is Big Stuff the Eagle on behalf of Winthrop. Congrats on completing the semester 🎉

In an effort to better support you, I will check in on you over the next few weeks, share important info, and helpful resources.

I am just a robot 🤖 so sometimes if I’m not the best one to assist I may ask a human helper at Winthrop to reach out to you ❤️

Questions about this program? Email cooperj@winthrop.edu. Text #PAUSE if you no longer want to receive my check-ins.

Oh, I almost forgot... Every month I will randomly select a student who engages with me and send them a \$25 Amazon gift card 🎁

Enjoy your break, you deserve it ❄️



The successes and failures of institutional democracy

Trump supporters storm the Capitol as their party racks up losses

Elijah Lyons
copy editor

The electoral victories in Georgia in contrast with the insurrectionist siege of the Capitol on Jan. 6 displayed to the world the strengths and weaknesses in American democracy.

On the morning of Jan. 6, the first of Georgia’s two Senate run-off elections had been called for Raphael Warnock, who would become the state’s first Black Senator.

Senator-Elect Warnock, also the senior pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church attended by John Lewis and led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., recognized the historic significance of the moment in his victory speech.

“My mother, who as a teenager growing up in Waycross, Georgia, used to pick somebody else’s cotton. But the other day, because this is America, the 82-year-old hands that used to pick somebody else’s cotton went to the polls and picked her youngest son to be a United States Senator,” Warnock said. “So I come before you tonight as a man who knows that the improbable journey that led me to this place in this historic moment in America, could only happen here.”

While democracy ran its course in Georgia, challenges arose in the capital.

The Constitution denotes Jan. 6 as the day when a joint session of congress counts the previously certified electoral college votes and formally declares the victory of the president-elect. Though the Constitution allows for objection to these certified results, a majority of both houses of Congress is required in order to overturn the results of any individual state. As such, this process has previously been carried out with little fanfare and is most often viewed as a ceremonial formality.

After weeks of President Trump making claims of election fraud, for which there is no evidence, a group of Republicans, primarily led by Senators Josh Hawley and Ted Cruz, planned to raise objections.

Outside the White House, Trump appeared at a rally for his supporters whom he urged to travel to D.C. to protest the certification process.

“We will never give up. We will never concede,” Trump said. “We will stop the steal. We’re going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue, and we’re going to the Capitol... We’re going to try and give our Republicans, the weak ones...the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country.”

As Trump supporters began to march the two miles from the White House to the Capitol building, the results of Arizona failed to be certified and the joint session broke up and each house proceeded to

their respective chambers to begin debate.

On the Senate floor, a surprising reckoning within the Republican party began to play out, as a longtime ally of President Trump and Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, spoke out against the effort by his colleagues to overturn the election and outlined the bastardization of Constitutional doctrine that was taking place.

“The Constitution gives us here in Congress a limited role. We cannot simply declare ourselves a national board of elections on steroids. The voters, the courts, and the states have all spoken... This election actually was not unusually close... If this election were overturned by mere allegations from the losing side, our democracy would enter a death spiral. We would never see the whole nation accept an election again,” McConnell said.

Shortly after, Senator Ted Cruz spoke in defence of those with electoral objections.

“Recent polling shows that 39% of Americans believe the election that just occurred ‘was rigged.’ You may not agree with that assessment. But it is nonetheless a reality for nearly half the country,” Cruz said.

Soon after, thousands of rioters stormed the capital building. Maskless insurrectionists blew past police barriers and began to engulf the steps of the capital. Vice

President Pence was quickly rushed off the Senate floor and House members were told to shelter in place.

Over the next several hours, insurrectionists staged photo-ops inside the Capitol, desecrated sacred symbols of American democracy and stole materials from members’ offices, including that of House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi.

Despite promising his supporters he’d follow them to the capital, the president retreated to the White House and later released a video instructing his supporters to go home while still making claims of election fraud, for which there is no evidence.

“So go home. We love you; you’re very special,” Trump said.

Four people were killed in the struggle, including a woman who was shot as she tried to climb through a window and a capitol police officer who was beaten with a fire extinguisher by rioters and later died from his injuries.

In the midst of the chaos, Democrats gained control of the Senate as Georgia’s second run-off election was called for Jon Ossoff, who would become the state’s first Jewish Senator.

President Trump’s controversial actions over the last four years have cost the Republican party control of the House of Representatives, the Senate and the presidency, and has eroded the trust of many in the United States’ democratic system.

January 13, 2021

AT Y. W. C. A. SERVICE
The weekly meeting of the Y. W. C. A. was held last evening.

"HAMILTON" WILL BE PRESENTED TONIGHT

Prizes of \$100, \$75 offered for The

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among the students of the world. This fact is a good omen for the future."

Methodist Episcopal Church by Ada Faulkner, Thomas Jefferson by A. C. Haselden, and the letter to Miss Washburn

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many positions are available for the spring semester

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SPORTS the Johnsonian

January 13, 2021

Women's basketball still working out the kinks Randall-Lay says players must 'trust the process' after starting from scratch

Lily Fremed
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Women's basketball has opened the 2020-2021 season with a new coach, new players, and a new sense of determination.

"Coming into this year with a lot of new faces, we knew this whole process we are in would take us some time. It's been a big mixture of everybody just getting used to personalities [and] expectations for this program," Head Coach Randall-Lay said.

Currently the Eagles are 2-7 and on a five game losing streak that includes back-to-back losses to High Point, back-to-back losses to Campbell, and a loss against USC Upstate.

Randall-Lay frequently reminds her team to "not get caught up in the scoreboard or wins-loss column," and to "be patient with [her] and be patient with the program." With just five returning players and eight newcomers, this season has been an adjustment for everyone.

"When you have a significant amount of people leave, you are starting back over again. We are all new, trying to establish the culture and reestablish this program, so that's where we have had some really great moments and some growing moments," Randall-Lay said.

Returner Anika Riley played all 30 games in the 2019-2020 season and completed the season leading with 207 total rebounds and 188 points. She has begun her senior year just as strong, having already collected 53 rebounds and maintained an overall shooting percentage of .413.

Sophomore Myra Strickland is destroying the score boards with a total of 79 points, 24 of which she scored in the season's opening match against Wofford. Strickland scored almost half of her team's points that day despite the Terriers defeating the Eagles 65-50.

"Right now we are trying to see who can manage and handle playing at that level and what is required to be a starter or to be just a key player coming off the bench and contributing," Randall-Lay said.

Before arriving at Winthrop, freshman guard J'mani Ingram was a three-time state champion and a two-time all-state player. With a .536 shooting percentage and a total of 37 points, Ingram is off to a steady start to her first collegiate season. In a close match ending in USC Upstate's favor on Dec. 18, she scored a personal best of 11 points.

Returners Sydney Hunter, a sophomore forward, and Maleeah Langstaff, a junior guard/forward, are more determined than ever to contribute to their growing team.

Hunter already has 65 rebounds, exceeding the 45 that she secured throughout 19 games during the 2019-2020 season. Leading the team in rebounds, her personal best was 13 on Dec. 17, when the Eagles defeated USC Upstate 59-54.

Langstaff has racked up a total of 66 points so far this season, including a season-high of 18 points against College of Charleston on Dec. 8. She also leads the team with six blocks and twelve steals.

"I think the biggest thing is continuing to trust the process. I know we live in a world where we



Photo Courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

are result driven. When you are part of building or reestablishing things you have to go through some really really tough times," Randall-Lay said.

Although fans are unable to join in on the fun around the court, Randall-Lay does not believe this has interfered with the performance and outcome of games.

"I always believe you create your own energy. I'm sure our student-athletes would appreciate their parents and friends being there to give them that extra oomph, but it has been an adjustment," Randall-Lay said.

Randall-Lay is thankful for

ESPN's choice to televise the games on ESPN+ so families can watch from home and the team can use the film to reflect on games and help improve their performance.

"We are in a place where we just have to be grateful for the little things and this college program for us, just being grateful to have that opportunity to play," Randall-Lay said.

The Eagles will play next at Longwood on Jan. 15 and 16 at 6:00 pm. Their next home games are against Charleston Southern at 6:00 pm on Jan. 29 and 4:00 pm on Jan. 30.

Baseball ranks 40th in preseason poll

Eagles hope to pick up where they left off after a short but promising 2020 season

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After beginning the 2020 season at the top of their game, the baseball program is "anxious to get out there, compete, play and put that uniform on against someone else" once again.

On Dec. 21, 2020, The Collegiate Baseball newspaper preseason poll ranked Winthrop baseball 40th among the top 50 NCAA Division I teams. Known as the oldest college baseball poll dating back more than sixty years, the ranking is not surprising to Head Coach Tom Riginos.

"We want to be in the rankings at the end of the season, that's when it really matters, but I think it just lets our guys know the hard work they put in last year going into this year acknowledges that we have a chance to be a very good team this year," Riginos said.

Last year the team's unexpected final game was a loss at Clemson on March 11, but the Eagles still finished the short season with an excellent record of 11-4.

Although Riginos said he

believes the poll is "not a big deal" in the long run, he appreciates that the national story is beneficial for recruiting new players.

"We've added a couple pieces to the puzzle after last year. A couple transfers and a couple key freshmen, so on paper we feel really good where we are right now," Riginos said.

Aside from gaining new players, six athletes are returning to the field for a fifth year after the NCAA granted 2020 seniors the chance to play one more collegiate season on scholarship.

With academics being a top priority as well, the program finished out the fall semester with an overall GPA of 3.34, which Coach Riginos is "more proud about than anything."

"Our academic coordinator and her staff had done a great job helping us navigate through these last two semesters. [The players have] done a really good job staying on top of their work and staying locked in on what they have to do," Riginos said.

Seniors Cody Whitten and Dillon Morton, along with freshmen Carson Beavers and Parker

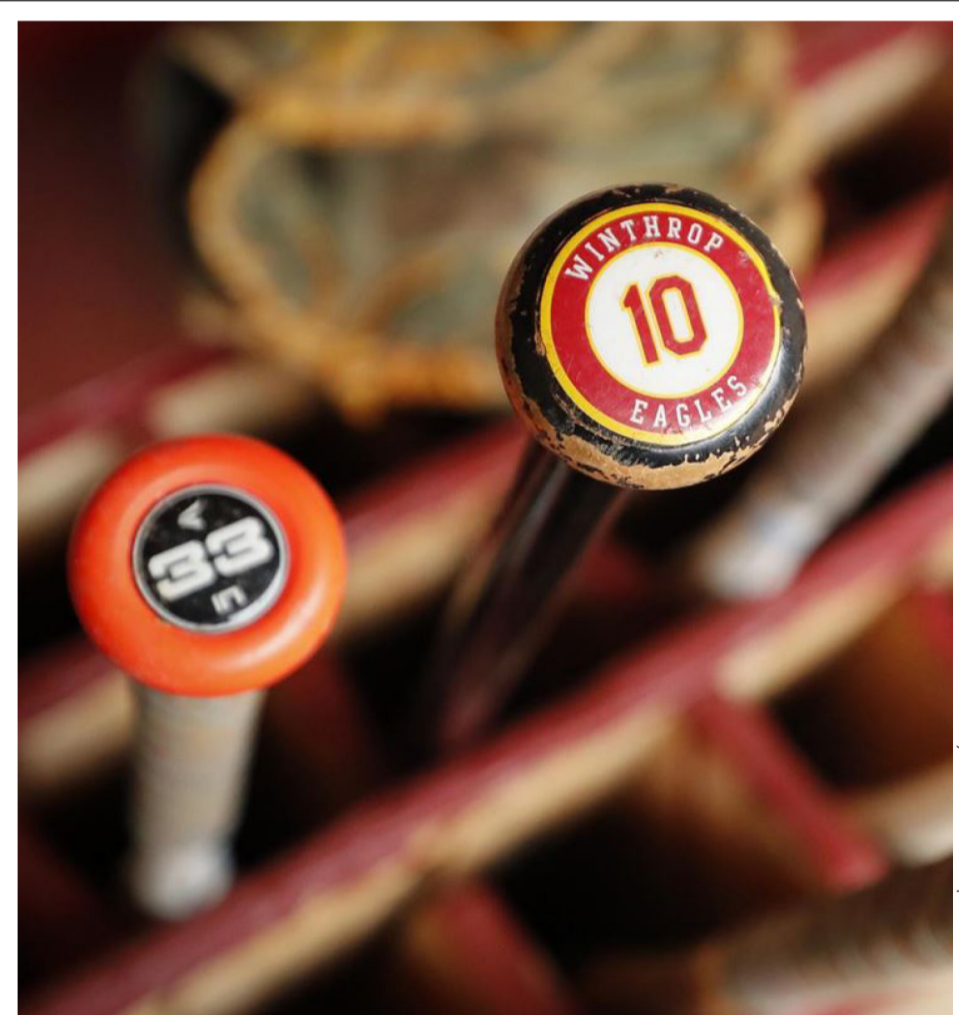


Photo Courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

Whittle, all earned a 4.0 GPA in the fall semester.

"Our number one goal is to graduate. More than championships and preseason rankings, that means more to me than anything," Riginos said.

Riginos has been working diligently over the holiday break to ensure that 2021 games are scheduled, although none of the plans are set in stone. That being said, the Eagles are set to hit the field for the first time this year on Feb. 19, but the opponent is still unofficial as it has already switched a couple of times.

"We are really excited and hopeful that we are able to keep [the University of] South Carolina on the schedule and they're

coming to Rock Hill. In the eleven years I've been here that's never happened," Riginos said.

Whether or not fans will be allowed in the stadium remains undetermined, but Coach Riginos is hopeful since the stadium is large and outdoors.

"Just to play any game is going to be exciting. We're just excited to get out there and practice because it's been a tough year on everybody," Riginos said.

Still Undefeated

Eagles set record for best start to a season in school and conference history

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With a win against Campbell on Dec. 30, Winthrop moved to 6-0, the best start to a season in program history. Six days later, the Eagles set a record for the best start to a season in Big South Conference history, moving to 9-0 after defeating Charleston Southern.

There are many factors that have helped contribute to Winthrop's success, but the team's greatest strength is simply depth. With twelve players who see significant playing time, there's always someone ready to sink a big shot or secure an important stop on defense.

"This is a special group," Assistant Coach Brian Kloman said. "Selfless. Different. They trust us; they trust each other. They just want to win basketball games. They don't care who gets the credit."

With Winthrop as the clear favorite to win the Big South, fans have already started scanning March Madness bracket predictions to see where the Eagles are projected to be seeded in the NCAA Tournament. For ESPN, Joe Lunardi's latest predictions show Winthrop as a 12-seed squaring off against the Missouri Tigers. Jerry Palm, a bracketologist for CBS, also has Winthrop as a 12-seed, but this time facing the Minnesota Golden Gophers.

Regardless of predictions, the players and coaches know that winning the Big South

Tournament is almost certainly the only way Winthrop secures a spot in the NCAA Tournament. That means they must keep their focus to one game at a time.

"Every coach in this league is very good and there's talent. You saw [Charleston Southern's] Phlandrous Fleming. He can beat anybody at any time," Kloman said.

"There's nothing that we can take for granted, nor would we want to. We've got a healthy respect for every single opponent that we play because they all have good players, good coaches, and they all want to win basketball games."

Limiting your focus to the next game on the schedule becomes increasingly difficult when the schedule is rapidly changing. With COVID-19 temporarily shutting down teams left and right, Winthrop's next opponent could change overnight. The Eagles have already rescheduled several conference matchups.

"Coaches will work 25, 27, 34 hours on one scout, and then boom, it's on to the next one because it got canceled," Kloman said. "And now we're playing this game and we stay up until... to be honest with you, I don't know if [Coach Kelsey] sleeps more than two hours a day."

"Guys are watching film in and out of these offices all the time, but preparation is the same in terms of we're trying to be great at the next thing we do, no matter what that thing is."

The Eagles themselves have faced issues related to COVID-19. Two weeks before the season was



Olivia Esselman/The Johnsonian behind another Vaudrin triple-double (10 points, 10 assists, 13 rebounds). While Vaudrin continuously puts up impressive stats, he provides even better leadership to the team.

"If Coach Kelsey got two technicals, I wouldn't be shocked if Chan coached the team," Kloman said.

"I think what he brings to the table, that selfless energy, becomes synergistic. One becomes two and two become four and four become eight, and it starts with him. Because he is so willing to make a play for somebody else, other people are willing to make a play for somebody else. He's our engine, and we've got a lot of parts."

With their latest two victories over Gardner-Webb, the Eagles boast an 11-0 record, making them one of less than ten undefeated teams remaining at the Division I level this season. Winthrop's 16-game winning streak (dating back to last season) is tied with Gonzaga for the longest active winning streak in the country.

Winthrop will tip-off next on Thursday, Jan. 21, and Friday, Jan. 22 in Winthrop Coliseum against the Longwood Lancers. Both games are at 6 pm and can be viewed on ESPN+.

set to tip-off, Winthrop paused men's basketball activities due to multiple positive cases of COVID-19 within the program.

Winthrop was originally scheduled to play five non-conference games in Louisville, but with the Eagles and some of their opponents having to pause, the number diminished to two. Once in Louisville, sophomores Russell Jones Jr. and Chase Claxton were unable to play due to COVID-19 protocols.

That setback didn't stop Winthrop from defeating two respectable opponents in the Little Rock Trojans and the UNC Greensboro Spartans. Those wins, along with a 16-point victory over the Furman Paladins at home, make up Winthrop's entire non-conference resumé.

The Eagles began their conference slate with two convincing wins over USC Upstate. In the second victory, senior Chandler Vaudrin recorded a triple-double (his first of the season and sixth of his collegiate career) with 13 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds.

In Winthrop's next conference doubleheader, the Eagles narrowly escaped Campbell the first time around, but easily took care of business the next day

Eagle of the week: Adonis Arms

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If you search the nation's college basketball rosters for athletes who are 6-foot-6, you'll likely struggle to find someone who isn't capable of dunking. However, out of those people, you'll also likely struggle to find one who can dunk as majestically as Adonis Arms.

On the receiving end of a lob from his teammate Chandler Vaudrin (one of the nation's leaders in assists), Arms almost touched the rafters in Winthrop Coliseum on his way up to throw down a dunk against Campbell University on the last day of 2020. Later that night, the play appeared on ESPN's SportsCenter Top 10.

"As soon as it came on, I was number nine and I just started screaming," he said. "I couldn't believe it. There's so many kids that want to be on SportsCenter and I actually made it. I've got to get back on there."

Born in Milwaukee, WI, Arms was just a kid hoping to one day appear on SportsCenter himself not too long ago. He started playing basketball when he was around 4 years old and remembers watching Kobe Bryant as a child.

"He's been my favorite player ever since – rest in peace," Arms said. "That's really how I got into basketball... just watching him play and watching him just dominate people and take over games, and showing that passion that he had."

Arms also played football and

baseball when he was younger, but decided basketball was his greatest passion. He attended Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, AZ before starting his collegiate basketball career at Mesa Community College.

After two years of playing in the Arizona Community College Athletic Conference (part of the National Junior College Athletic Association), Arms enrolled at Northwest Nazarene University, a Division II school in Nampa, Idaho.

In 2018-19, his only season at Northwest Nazarene, Arms started all 28 of the team's games, averaging 20.6 points per game, 5.4 rebounds per game, and 3.3 assists per game. He was named the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year.

"Division Two, it's a great level. It's a lot of good guys that could play [Division] One for sure. But being there was like an eye-opener," Arms said. He said he thought to himself, "This isn't where I want to be. I've got bigger goals and aspirations for myself."

After entering the transfer portal, Arms garnered interest from a lot of Division I schools. He received offers from Portland State, Weber State, Fresno State and other schools, but ultimately he decided Winthrop was the best fit for him.

One reason Winthrop stood out to him was because of Head Sports Performance Coach Eli Foy. Arms knew that transferring meant he would have a year to bulk up before playing, and he had seen what Foy had done for

Deandre Ayton (now a member of the NBA's Phoenix Suns) during their time together at The University of Arizona. He also liked that Winthrop doesn't lose a lot.

"Winthrop had a winning tradition, and I want to win like nobody's business," he said.

Arms also noted the importance his mom and sister had in the process of choosing where he would play. He said he always trusts their judgment, and they felt like Winthrop was the best spot for him to grow and achieve his goals.

And his goals are quite ambitious. For starters, he wants his team to finish the regular season undefeated.

"I don't want to lose one game," Arms said. "Then I want to go to the Big South Tournament and win that thing again. Then go to the NCAA Tournament and make some noise."

"There's a lot of teams out here that sleep on us because we're a mid-major or whatever, but they don't really want that if we want to be honest. We're not afraid of [anybody]. We'll go at anybody."

His goals don't just stop at this season. Arms is determined to make it to the NBA.

"Not just make it, but be in the league and stay in the league, and take care of my mom and my little sister," he said. "Whatever we've got to do here to make those dreams possible – come true – I'll do it for sure."

One way Arms is chasing those dreams is by training with Desmond Howard (older brother to Markus Howard of the Denver



Photo Courtesy to Winthrop Athletics

Eagle of the Week, Arms

Nuggets) every time he returns to Arizona through Howard's company LEAGUE ME. Arms said Howard trains big-time players including Doug McDermott of the Indiana Pacers, and he appreciates everything Howard has done for him.

On a team that consistently plays twelve guys, Arms is making the most of his opportunities. Through eleven games this season he's averaging 11.5 points per game, 5 rebounds per game, and 1.9 assists per game for the Eagles despite averaging just 17.4 minutes of playing time per game. He gives all the glory to God.

"I just want to keep working and keep pushing and keep praising God," he said.

As Winthrop continues to garner national recognition as one of the last remaining undefeated teams in the country, Arms should get his opportunity to prove why he is NBA material. It's just one more step to climb in his basketball journey.

January 13, 2021

Honoring the fallen

Artist Leo Carson announces reconstruction after repeated vandalizations of Breonna Taylor bust

Wren Brooke
staff writer

Though it sent a shock through the Oakland, California community when a recently erected bust of Breonna Taylor was found vandalized just after Christmas, even worse fortune three days later when the broken monument disappeared entirely.

Ms. Taylor, 26, was a Black woman and emergency room technician in Louisville, Kentucky. In March 2020, Louisville police erroneously carried out a no-knock warrant on her home, and after sustaining a gunshot wound during the ensuing struggle, she passed away. Soon after news of Ms. Taylor's death spread, civil rights activists paid their respects across social media. In hopes that the American people might remember her tragedy and learn from it, the phrase 'Say Her Name' was quickly adopted to be used as a way for people to pay homage to her.

According to the New York Times, on Dec. 12, independent Bay Area artist Leo Carson unveiled his work; a bust of Ms. Taylor. It was accompanied with a placard identifying her and inscribed with the phrase 'Say Her Name'. The monument was placed in a plaza near Oakland's City Hall. By Carson's reports the ceramic statue was a large under-

taking, requiring several months and around \$600 in materials to create.

When the statue was installed on that Saturday, Carson uploaded a picture of his piece to Instagram. Shortly after that, one user commented on the photo, "Pull that down, it's a source of riots."

Exactly two weeks after its unveiling, reports came in that the memorial had been damaged. Images from both the New York Times and Los Angeles Times, as well as Carson's own Instagram, depict the memorial in several different degrees of destruction, indicating that the pieces were removed over the course of multiple vandalizations.

On the following Sunday, Carson created a GoFundMe to fund a reconstruction of Ms. Taylor's monument, this time planning "to rebuild her in bronze." By the next day, the fundraiser had exceeded the \$5000 Carson requested for the costlier materials. That Tuesday, Carson woke to a surprise: the entire statue was completely gone.

The Oakland Police issued a statement over email that a report had been filed and the initial vandalism was being investigated, according to the NY Times. The email was sent out on the Monday between the statue's vandalism and its theft, and the police did not respond to questions about whether or when the statue was removed.



Photo Courtesy to Los Angeles Times

Shortly after the monument was stolen, Carson hosted a press conference where he denounced the attack and filled the memorial in with concrete, in hopes of preventing further loss. On Dec. 31 he added an update to the GoFundMe page, saying that "the sculpture will need to be entirely reconstructed which will significantly add to the cost and labor it will take to restore the memorial." Carson reiterated his vow to rigorously record his use of the money, and that the remaining sum will be donated to Ms. Taylor's family.

Since the page was first put up, donations to the rebuilding project have climbed to a total of over \$27,000 as of Jan. 7, which is five times the original goal. Carson maintained focus on the greater cause, concluding his update post

by asserting "We will keep fighting until Black Lives Matter."

Ratatouille: the TikTok Musical

What exactly is the Ratatouille Musical?

Allison Reynolds
staff writer

As a result of quarantining and social distancing guidelines necessitated by COVID-19 virus, many events that involve large gatherings of people have been cancelled until further notice; including Broadway plays and musicals. So what happens when people cannot go see the musicals and plays they truly love on Broadway? The second ever TikTok musical gets created.

Ratatouille the Musical was originally created back in August 2020 when Emily Jacobsen (TikTok user @e_jaccs) posted a love ballad for Remy, the leading character in *Ratatouille*, entitled "Ode to Remy." The video was seen by Daniel Mertzluft, the mind behind the TikTok musical, *Grocery Store*. One main difference between *Grocery Store the Musical* and *Ratatouille the Musical* is that for *Ratatouille* original songs were being written by TikTok users rather than a professional songwriter. TikTok user @fettuccinefettuqueen wrote a song for Remy's dad entitled "Trash Is Our Treasure," @blakeyrouse wrote "Tango for Colette and Linguini," @rjthecomposer wrote "Anyone Can Cook," and many more. Various other users used their talents to create choreography, costume designs, makeup designs, puppet designs, etc.

On Dec. 4, 2020, the heads of Seaview Productions contacted Mertzluft about doing a one-time benefit concert for the Actors Fund, and Mertzluft agreed. The Actors Fund is an organization currently providing aid to out-of-work actors and other entertainment workers during the pandemic. What was this one-time benefit concert? *Ratatouille the Musical*.

Not only did the *Ratatouille* musical feature original songs by TikTok creators all over the world, it also featured a who's who of Broadway stars. *Kinky Boots* and *Hamilton* alum Wayne Brady starred as Remy's dad, *Django*; Jersey Boys and *The Little Mermaid* alum Tituss Burgess starred as the main rat himself, Remy; Seussical, *The Addams Family*, and *Chicago* alum Kevin Chamberlin starred as Chef Gusteau; Hadestown alum André De Shields played food critic An

Artist Spotlight: Theatre triple threat

A look at one of Winthrop's most dedicated theatre students, Ashley Brown

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Performers are always working hard to hone their craft and striving for the seemingly impossible claim of mastery. For some, they seek the ability to act and perfectly portray a character. For others, it's singing in a manner where they hit all the notes just right; or dancing without fail and creating captivating images with their body movements alone. While many performers would be happy laying claim to just one of the three, junior theatre major Ashley Brown is aiming for the entire "triple threat."

Brown's performance history began when she was just two years old with dance. As a child, she practiced competitive dance, went to competitions and did "all of the dance world things."

"I remember I was like, 'I'm going to go to school for dance...I'm going to be a professional dancer,'" she said.

Then, Brown took a drama class in her freshman year of high school where her teacher convinced her to audition for Footloose.

"So I auditioned for it," Brown said, "and they said, 'You have to sing.' and I said, 'I have to sing? In front of people?'...and then I fell in love with it."

Following this performance, she realized from that point onwards, she could not just have dance without singing or theatre. Through the rest of high school, Brown dedicated the first half to

theatre and fell deeper in love with the art before balancing it with competitive dance in her latter half. This led to her choice of musical theatre as her focus in college, allowing her to study all of her passions under one umbrella.

Brown began with a snag her first semester at Winthrop University in the form of a broken leg, but she did not let this stop her. Instead, she got into working behind the scenes of productions, something she had also dabbled with in high school. She also still auditioned for shows, just to gain experience.

"I was like, 'Hi, I'm auditioning for the musical because I want the experience of auditioning... But I cannot be cast and I just want you to know that I know that because I can't walk...And [the director] told me that that... showed how passionate I was about it, because even though I knew I wouldn't be able to do those things, I was still pushing myself to go out and try and get the experience and learn from it.'"

Once her leg healed, Brown wasted no time getting into Winthrop productions and has since starred in *The Vagina Monologues* in her freshman year, *A Circular Play*, *A Play in Circles* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in her sophomore year and *Women of Lockerbie* in the first semester of her junior year. She also choreographed one of the Fall 2020 *One Acts*.

"I had always been cast throughout high school as the comic relief

character or a male." Her performances at Winthrop allowed her to experience more abstract and serious roles, in turn showing her that she could do more than she originally thought on stage.

"[*Women of Lockerbie*] showed that I could go from *Circles*, which was super, super out there, and super comical and super abstract, to this really really serious, emotionally draining show," Brown said. "I think that Winthrop offered me the chance to show this range of emotions that have helped me grow and I really appreciate that from the school."

Brown is also involved on campus as the current president of "Improv This!", a club that meets weekly for an hour and a half of destressing entertainment in the form of improv games that have participants create scenes in the moment with little to no supporting material. She said her favorite part about the position is "bringing joy and bringing happiness to these people and giving them a space where they can just feel so open. I've had members tell me, 'I really look forward to this on Thursdays because sometimes it's like just what I need when I'm having like a rough week' or 'It's something I look forward to.' And being able to create a space where people can feel that is so amazing."

When asked what drives her to perform, Brown explained that dancing, and later theatre, was like an escape. She said, "When you dance, your body can

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▶ see Ratatouille pg. 9

Disney and Diversity

The post-pandemic future of the Walt Disney Company and how inclusion fits in

Emily Curry
staff writer

The Walt Disney Company is one of the most successful entertainment industries in modern times. Its various subsidiaries have produced some of the most beloved and highest grossing films of all time; not to mention iconic characters and popular theme parks.

One of the main reasons that Disney has had so much success is their innovation. From Walt Disney himself, who created the very first animated feature-length film, to present days, with the use of advanced technologies such as Stagecraft and computer graphic imaging, Disney always appears to be one step ahead of other entertainment juggernauts. While their technology is always ahead of its time, one area that many agree Disney has struggled to keep up with is diversity.

This does not simply mean the inclusion of actors and actresses of color, but also how their characters are portrayed. In September of 2020, for instance, John Boyega, who played Finn in the sequel trilogy of the *Star Wars* franchise, came forward to discuss how, according to an article written for GQ magazine, he was “the only cast member whose experience of *Star Wars* was based on their race.”

Many fans were disappointed to see Finn, who had been heavily promoted as a main character before the release of *The Force Awakens*, was actually relegated to a lesser position to allow more focus on the stories of two white characters, Rey and Kylo Ren.

However, on December 10, 2020, Disney had its Investors

Day Meeting, webcasted for all to see. Bob Iger, former CEO and current Executive Chairman of the Walt Disney Company, made a point of expressing Disney’s commitment to diversity.

“We are redoubling our efforts to create rich, diverse content that best represents the world we live in and the consumers we’re making that content for,” Iger said. He added that “It is very important to us that when people watch our shows and movies, they see themselves and their experiences reflected in our stories.”

In total, fifty-one projects were announced for the coming years from Disney’s Animation Studios, Pixar Studios, Lucasfilm, and Marvel Studios. Of those projects, about twenty promise to include a diverse cast or incorporate themes from the cultures of people of color. So what is Disney and its many subsidiaries cooking up?

Two series that are scheduled to be released on Disney’s streaming service, Disney+, are *Iwájú* and *Star Wars: Visions*, from Disney Animation and Lucasfilm respectively. *Iwájú* is an animated series that Disney Animation will collaborate on with a Pan-African studio called Kugali. Kugali was founded by three comic book artists, Tolu Olowofoyeku, Ziki Nelson, and Hamid Ibrahim, who, according to Jennifer Lee, the Chief Creative Officer of the Disney Animation studios, want “to bring African stories by African artists to the world, through comics and animation, highlighting the diversity of cultures, history, and voices across the continent.”

Star Wars: Visions will also see the collaboration of Lucasfilm with foreign studios, namely,

anime creators. In the words of Kathleen Kennedy, the President of Lucasfilm, “This anthology collection will bring ten fantastic visions from several of the leading Japanese anime studios, offering a fresh and diverse cultural perspective to *Star Wars*.” This project seems to blend the culture of anime with the classic *Star Wars* stories, which will surely be a fascinating endeavor from its development to its release.

Other projects promise to incorporate the cultures of various regions. From Disney Animation is its next feature film, *Raya and the Last Dragon*. *Raya and the Last Dragon* was set to be released in November of 2020, but was pushed back because of the pandemic. This film is set in the South Asian-inspired kingdom of Kumandra and will feature the talents of Kelly Marie Tran and Awkwafina. Its leading lady, Raya, will be the first South-Asian Disney heroine.

From Pixar Studios is the animated feature *Turning Red*. This film will be released in the Spring of 2022, and tells the story of Mei Lee, an adolescent girl dealing with her teenage years. But there’s a catch; whenever she gets too excited, she turns into a red panda. How and why this happens has yet to be revealed, but there has already been some backlash.

Many believe that Disney has a bad habit of turning characters of color into animals or other sentient, non-human, beings. In *The Princess and the Frog*, African-American Tiana spent most of the movie as a frog. In Pixar’s most recent movie, *Soul*, the main character Joe Gardner, also black, spends time out of his own

body. While *Turning Red* is certainly an interesting concept, some wonder if this is Disney trying to claim diversity points with an Asian heroine without giving her actual screen time in her human form.

Marvel Studios might take the prize for greatest number of projects on the horizon. Because of the pandemic, the studio was unable to release any content during 2020, delaying the continuation of the Marvel Cinematic Universe with *Phase 4*, which would follow the climactic events of *Avengers: Endgame*. In 2021 alone, they have nine projects.

Phase 4 promises to introduce many new characters into the cinematic universe, some of which are people of color and have been so since their introduction in the comics. Ms. Marvel, for instance, is a Pakistan-American teenage girl, and is set to appear in her own series on Disney+ and will be portrayed by Iman Vellani. *Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings* is one of the films slated for a 2021 theatrical release, and will star a predominantly Asian cast, including Simu Liu in the title role.

Just as Bob Iger said, it is so important for people to see themselves reflected on the big screen. Perhaps one of the best parts of going to a movie, or in consuming any type of media, is to see yourself in the main characters, and really be able to identify with them. Disney certainly has their work cut out for them in creating content that is inclusive for all people.

◀ Ratatouille from pg. 8

ton Ego; Dear Evan Hansen alum Andrew Barth Feldman starred as Chef Linguini; In the Heights and A Chorus Line alum Priscilla Lopez played Mabel, the elderly woman whose house Remy breaks into in order to learn about Gusteau; Mean Girls alum Ashley Park starred as Chef Colette; and Wick-Ed and Chicago alum Mary Testa played Chef Skinner. The musical also stars singer Adam Lambert as Remy’s brother, Emile. The musical opened up on Jan. 1, 2021 and raised more than \$1 million in its first night. In response to the musical Burgess said, “the pendulum of good fortune swings back and forth whenever it decides, so it is up to us to pull our weight when we’re doing OK and give back.” Director Lucy Moss described the musical as “if a Zoom reading drank like 20 Red Bulls and then exploded onto the screen.” Chamberlain said the musical has inspired him to start writing more music. “Isn’t it fascinating how art is pushing through?” the veteran actor said. “Even during a pandemic, art pushes through, and is almost inspired and fed by it.” What’s next for *Ratatouille the Musical*? While a Disney Theatrical Group spokesperson said they have no current plans to bring it to an actual Broadway stage, it has already done something amazing for theater-deprived creators and fans. It has cut through the bleak year that was 2020 and brought people together despite the distance.



Graphic Courtesy to Jess Siswick

◀ Artist Spotlight from pg. 8

move in ways that you don’t get to move in natural living and you get to express your feelings through emotion and the creation of a piece.”

She also said that she just loves doing it. “I just love being on stage,” she said, “and giving people something that makes them happy. When people go to a show, I want them to leave happy.”

Despite the unpredictable nature of theatre in the current state of the world, Brown is continuing to perform. Currently, she is involved in one of Winthrop’s upcoming productions, *Hear Our Voices: Shining a Light on Diversity*. Brown has a starring role and said that the show is a “collection of songs from different musicals and a couple that are not...strung together to make a cohesive story...about diversity, acceptance, how someone is always there for you, equality, and a lot of the things that are going on in the world right now.”

“Improv This!” meets Thursdays from at 10:30 pm with SignUpGenius sign ups for in-person in Johnson J103 or via Zoom through the link found on the club’s Instagram, @wui-improvethis.

Hear Our Voices: Shining a Light on Diversity opens Feb. 18 and runs through Feb. 20 at 7:30 pm and Feb. 21 at 2 pm. Tickets for the show are available on ShowTix4U.com.



Artist Spotlight, Brown

Wren Brooke/The Johnsonian

January 13, 2021

Trump's phony coup will not stop Biden's inauguration

Donald Trump has committed seditious acts to subvert democracy and prevent Joe Biden from becoming president

Sean Miller
staff writer

At noon on Jan. 20, President-Elect Joe Biden will take the presidential oath of office, at which point Donald Trump will cease to be president, and the powers and duties of the presidency will be transferred to Biden.

Despite this reality, many of the President's supporters and GOP lawmakers have refused to acknowledge the reality that the American people have decided they do not want Trump anymore. It is extremely likely that Trump will remain defiant to the end and cause a major rift in his own party between those who still believe in fair and free elections and those who would subvert democracy in their lust for power.

An audio recording was recently released by the Washington Post revealing a phone call from President Trump to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger. During the phone call, Trump sounds like a deranged mob boss who is flattering and threatening to get Raffensperger to overturn the Georgia election results. He tells Raffensperger to "find 11,780 votes," precisely one more than is needed to beat Biden and overturn the election there. This is sedition against the constitution. Never has Trump's corruption become more appar-

ent and obvious.

Despite this evidence slapping Republicans clear across the face, they feign ignorance and support the delusion that the election was rigged. Ultimately the seditious members of Congress, namely Ted Cruz of Texas, failed in their efforts to block the confirmation of Biden on Jan. 6.

According to the Associated Press, Trump said he will not attend Biden's inauguration. Doing so would require him to publicly face the cameras and admit defeat—something that he has proven to be incapable of doing.

The events of Jan. 6 are clear proof that Trump will stop at nothing to cling to power. It is unprecedented in our nation's history that a sitting president would incite an insurrection against Capitol Hill during the peaceful confirmation of the president-elect.

If Trump is not removed from office before Biden's inauguration, via the 25th Amendment or impeachment, he will most likely unceremoniously shrink out of the public eye to his private club at Mar-a-Lago.

This has all been unprecedented in modern history as it is customary for the outgoing president to attend the inauguration ceremony of the incoming president. It sends a message to the public that there will be a peaceful transfer of power and that they have humility to the will of the voters.

From his actions taken and

words spoken, Trump has shown America—and the world—that he is not a humble man and can be accurately described as a delusional narcissist. If he refuses to concede power and leave the White House, Trump may be escorted from the White House by security. Biden has publicly said that is an option he may be willing to take if Trump refuses to leave.

It would be satisfying to the millions of voters that Trump is trying to subvert, to see him being shown the door, but it would embolden many of the dangerous conspiracy theorists among Trump supporters. Q-Anon is one of the more radical conspiracy groups that support the President and participated in the assault against the Capitol building.

It is unlikely that Trump would tarnish his image in such a public display of shame. That said, his delusions of retaining the presidency show that he is beyond shame and a ruthless demagogue.

Trump has proven he is a danger to the republic and that his supporters are just as delusional and untethered. Allowing him to remain commander in chief of our armed forces after inciting insurrection is a mistake. He cannot stop Biden from becoming our next president, but, as we have seen, he can still cause a lot of damage.



Photo Courtesy to Wikimedia

Trump at a rally.

No New Year's Eve 2021 party? What will be the consequences of those who decided to host/join New Year's Eve parties?

Allison Reynolds
staff writer

For years in, people have held parties all over the world to celebrate and ring in the new year. However, COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing guidelines prevented any New Year's parties to transition into 2021...or so some would think.

Although citizens of the United States have been told not to participate in large gatherings, some people just could not listen and hosted New Year's parties to ring in 2021. New Year's parties happened all over the U.S. despite COVID-19 cases still rising.

For example, the Los Angeles Sheriff said in a Facebook post that 90 people were arrested and over 900 people were warned for breaking California's coronavirus rules. In Houston on New Year's Day, the map feature on Snapchat showed a large indoor venue full of maskless patrons.

Social media users across Miami shared videos of crowds gathering around pools without masks after the New Year's holiday. One high school in Boston had remote instruction the week of Jan. 5 because of some students attending a New Year's Eve party. One of those students tested positive for COVID-19.

Because of all of these New Year's Eve parties, Florida broke its own record of COVID-19 cases again on Jan. 2, reaching 31,518 cases.

Not only were people at risk of catching and spreading the virus at New Year's parties, but also while traveling to and from those parties. The TSA announced that 1,327,289 people were screened for travel on Jan. 3, marking it as the busiest air travel day in the U.S. since the pandemic began.

Precautions have even been taken at Winthrop University. Interim President George Hynd sent out an email on Dec. 14, 2020, which included adjustments to the Spring 2021 calendar because of COVID-19 and the holidays. Hynd made the adjustment to have a remote start on Jan. 11, 2021 to "help mitigate virus spread as the holiday season winds down."

▶ see [New Years](#) pg. 11

Spring semester slump: how to start the new year off right

Starting a new semester is always tough, here's how to make sure you succeed

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

2020 was hard to get through academically, but 2021 offers a second chance.

There is so much happening in 2021, with the beginning of in-person classes once more. Even though COVID-19 is still a threat, the show must go on. This will be the first global pandemic the Winthrop community has endured and overcome together since the Spanish influenza in 1918.

While the upcoming semester may be daunting, there are ways to prepare for it—both mentally and physically. Preparing for the start of the spring will help students feel more in control during an unpredictable time. Being prepared will also allow students to start the semester without worrying about being caught off guard.

What are some ways to prepare for the upcoming semester?

Students and teachers alike recommend investing in a planner. Writing down assignment deadlines and professor office hours can help students manage their time by knowing when to begin an assignment and when to ask for teacher feedback. It can also help students to set up a study schedule. Knowing when to

do work helps students figure out when they will have free time.

It is also recommended that students initiate contact with their professors before the first day of class. By emailing professors to introduce themselves and ask preliminary questions, students will be making a good first impression. These small interactions can determine how students get along with professors for the remainder of the semester.

Reaching out to peers and family members is also heavily encouraged. Students can often feel overwhelmed or pressured into success, so having a strong support system can help students feel more in control of their workload. By asking others for help and emotional guidance, students can take care of their mental health while still succeeding academically.

Finding a hobby to engage with while not in classes can also help students. By having an activity to look forward to in their spare time, students can have an escape from academic stress. Relaxing hobbies can vary from playing video games to hiking—just make sure to get assignments done before the due date creeps up.

There are also plenty of tasks to check off the to-do list before the spring semester can officially start.

Students taking on-campus

classes are required to report a COVID-19 test to the university by Jan. 19, so it is imperative that students take this into consideration when scheduling the upcoming month. Free testing will be available at the Coliseum for the spring semester.

Acquiring textbooks is also a task that must be completed before classes begin. These books are important for students to complete research and assignments and can be used for future classes. Dacus Library has a reserve of textbooks if students cannot afford to purchase or rent a copy.

Scheduling appointments with the Academic Success Center tutoring team will help students take advantage of free resources that can help them succeed in their classes. Even if students cancel their appointment, just having this resource will allow them to ask for help when they need it, instead of waiting until the week before finals.

The upcoming spring semester is upon Winthrop University, which means that the lull of winter break will soon be over. However, that doesn't mean that students should be stressed or unprepared for their classes. By following these tips, students will be able to take charge of their semester and hopefully succeed.

◀ *New Years* from pg. 10

While Hynd did not specifically mention New Year's Eve, the holiday season began for WU students when they did not return to campus after Thanksgiving.

It is no shocker that COVID-19 cases and deaths will rise because of those who were irresponsible enough to take part in a large New Year's Eve party.

COVID-19 is legitimately life-threatening and has cost far too many lives in our country and around the world. If more lives are lost as a result of New Year's parties, will the partiers say it was worth it just to have celebrated the fact that the unbelievable year of 2020 is over?



Gwen Manten/The Johnsonian

The life and lies of an anti-vaxxer

The politicization of vaccines

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

Very soon after leaders and pharmaceutical companies began to speak of developing a vaccine against COVID-19, rumors about the yet-to-be-developed formula exploded across the internet. Yet, why are so many people against vaccines, and is this a medical issue or a political one?

By the 18th century, inoculations had a long history with India and China but were yet to be successfully used in North America or England. This changed in 1721 during the smallpox epidemic, when news of initial successes in Massachusetts spread across the British empire. Although many parents inoculated their children as a precautionary measure, it was not until nearly two centuries later that smallpox all but disappeared.

In the first stages of inoculation, without advanced knowledge of disease or having yet engineered the hypodermic needle, people used variolation. With this method, the doctor would open a wound and insert freshly gathered pus from a smallpox victim's sores.

At the end of the 18th century, variolations began to be replaced with vaccinations, using an analogous disease from cows that was soon

Katelyn Miller/The Johnsonian

Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy

Though the 1960s have ended, the Civil Rights Movement is far from over

Autumn Hawkins
staff writer

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was one of the most well known civil rights activists of the 20th century. His work paved the way for modern activists to continue the fight for equity.

A pastor centered in Georgia, King publicly spoke out against racism and the treatment of American minorities. During the Civil Rights Movement, the American South was heavily charged with racism and white supremacy. King's work to create an equitable society for all Americans was seen as controversial at best.

For his work, King became the youngest person ever to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. His same passion for civil rights was also the reason he became a national target. In 1968, King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee

King's work to create an equitable America has continued posthumously. He is often cited as one of the most influential leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. The progress he made toward ending racial prejudice has inspired countless activists worldwide to continue to fight for equity.

With the numerous cases of police brutality against people of color, it often seems as though America is still living in the 1960s. While we have progressed into the twenty-first century, the Civil

Rights Movement is still taking place because its work is not yet done.

While people of color have gained the right to vote, the fight for equity is far from over. King's legacy of protesting for social change has been carried on through the work of countless Americans. As they peacefully protest and organize charities to help their fellow Americans, they honor the memory of King and other activists who died for the same cause.

Minorities in America have received better treatment after the Civil Rights Movement. However, it is often not enough. Laws written to protect certain populations have no effect if no one cares enough to implement and enforce them.

While legislative matters such as the Civil Rights Act of 1965 protect minorities' rights, their wellbeings are still in danger.

According to Business Insider, white Americans are three times as likely to be hired than Americans of color. Their research also concluded that people of color are less likely to be hired for managerial positions.

Due to people of color being less likely to receive a well-paying job, many Americans of color fall beneath the poverty line. Living in impoverished areas increases the likelihood of children dropping out of school or not receiving enough food or medical attention. This reinforces the cycle of poverty, making it increasingly harder for adults

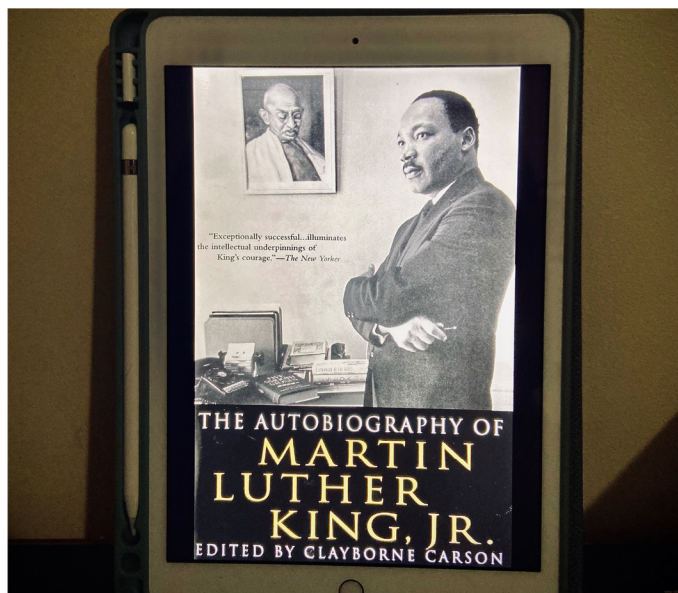
of color to have the right resources to gain well-paying jobs.

Though the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s granted rights to Americans of color, the modern Civil Rights Movement is dedicated to making sure these rights are actually respected. With the creation of organizations such as Black Lives Matter, Inc., NAACP, and the Congress of Racial Equality, Americans have become more outspoken about the injustices in today's society.

"We're here to let them know that this can't be tolerated. There will be severe consequences if they continue to kill us. This will not go on another day," a protestor told CNN affiliate WCCO at a protest in Minneapolis in May 2020. The protest had been organized in memory of George Floyd, who had been murdered by Minneapolis police earlier that year.

As the media becomes increasingly aware of police brutality against minorities, as well as the systemic racism that places benefits on white Americans, the modern Civil Rights Movement gains traction. The current generation of activists are following in the footsteps of Martin Luther King Jr. and countless other Americans who fought for equitable treatment of Americans.

Hopefully this era of protests will end the racism on which this country was founded.



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian



Photo Courtesy to Whitehouse.gov

administered via injection.

Just one year after the first Western inoculations, religious arguments against the practice began to circulate. These arguments—mostly circulated in church sermons—declared that disease was a tool of the Christian God, and efforts to prevent it was 'a diabolical operation.'

When variolation began to be replaced with vaccination, some resistance came from genuine safety concerns, but the vast majority came from a lack of understanding.

As both diseases and comprehension of them continued to advance through the years, scientists attempted using vaccinations as protection against diphtheria, tuberculosis, polio, and, most recently, COVID-19.

This practice has provided a firewall for the general population, at the cost of serious complications, usually resulting from either human error or simply absence of knowledge.

Some of the most heated arguments for and against vaccinations arose as a result of the polio epidemic. In weighing the benefits, polio devastated its victims—it left many of them partially or completely paralyzed—but continuous vaccinations succeeded in largely eradicating it.

However, in 1955, Cutter Laboratories accidentally produced 120,000 vaccine doses that contained live poliovirus and caused

a small outbreak in its own right, serving as a reminder that in the field of epidemiology, small mistakes can have massive consequences.

Today, most arguments against vaccination fall into one of two categories: either sourced from genuine concern for medical or physical safety or based on religious or political beliefs. In general, vaccinations do carry some degree of medical risk, but it is very rare for any of the adverse reactions that happen to verify any of the predictions.

The primary reason that most believed dangers are not investigated by the scientific community is that only a very small number of them have ever been published in a reputable, peer-reviewed journal or site.

One of the few cases happened in 1998 when Andrew Wakefield and 11 other authors published a paper claiming that the MMR vaccine causes autism. Although 10 of the other authors formally retracted their claims and Wakefield was proved to have deliberately falsified information, theories that vaccines and autism are linked continue to prevail.

Conspiracy theories as a whole have continued to put fuel on the fire. Many claims have arisen that recent vaccines, including the COVID-19 vaccine, contain microchips, nanobots or mind-controlling chemicals, to name a few

examples.

During 2020, accusations flew about that wealthy or influential people, such as Bill Gates, who were backing the vaccine were hoping to achieve some unspecified plan of world domination.

Although some organizations in America, such as schools and workplaces, are allowed to prohibit entrance to people who have not been vaccinated, there is no law that forces all citizens to be vaccinated, regardless of consent. Anti-vaccination believers may suffer certain disadvantages, but they still have the full choice on whether to receive vaccinations or not.

Anti-vaxxers do cause a certain degree of danger to the public on their own, but the real danger comes in the way that they have made the issue political themselves. The doubt and fear they spread through disinformation, and the legislature providing vaccinations to other groups that they have fought against, have forced vaccinations to be a political issue.

In order to succeed, the American people need to take a stand against misinformation, regardless of which side it is on. Pro-vaxxers and anti-vaxxers alike hold a duty to only use credible information in formulating their claims if they want to inform others on their cause. In a way, their beliefs may be putting other people's lives at a huge risk, and all for a small jab.

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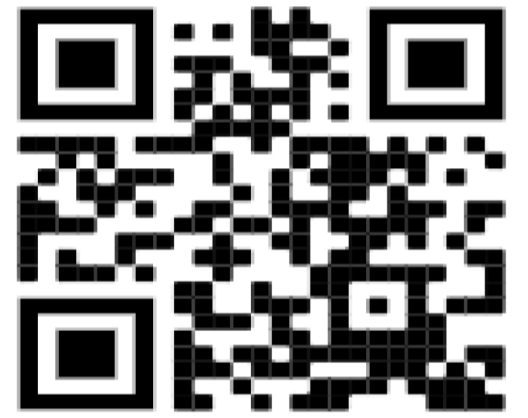
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