

# THE JOHNSONIAN



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

Tenured professors can qualify for the voluntary separation offer.

## 'Voluntary Separation' offered to qualifying tenured faculty

Winthrop University is offering the option for voluntary separation for full-time tenured faculty, who have worked at the university for 10+ years

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Qualifying university faculty have the option to participate in a voluntary separation and first heard about this option from Winthrop's Department of Human Resources on Feb. 24. Qualifying faculty were informed that the deadline to apply is April 10.

Opting for voluntary separation means that one would retire and not return to the university next academic year and would receive a specific amount of paid leave according to how long they have worked at the university.

In order to qualify for voluntary separation, one must be a tenured faculty member who has worked at the university for ten or more years. Qualifying faculty would receive a week's worth of pay per year that they have served at the university. For example, someone who has worked at the university for ten years would receive ten weeks worth of pay.

"The faculty who were offered voluntary separation are not eligible for annual leave, so there is no pay out upon separation. They do accrue sick leave, but according to state law, sick leave balances upon separation are not paid out to any employee," said Lisa Cowart, vice president for human resources, employee diversity and wellness.

Offering voluntary separation for qualifying faculty members is another stride the university is making towards returning to a sustainable budget.

"The university continues to realize savings from the furlough plan that began in September 2020 and runs through the end of June 2021. The plan is on schedule to generate the \$3 million that we targeted," said President Hynd in an email sent to faculty and staff on Feb. 26. "We also expect additional savings next budget year as we trim our workforce through a voluntary separation plan that was recently approved by the state in which eligible faculty members are currently weighing their participation. These cost-saving measures will hopefully help us avoid additional furloughs and/or a Reduction in Force (RIF) in the 2021-22 budget year."

University officials are eager to get Winthrop back to its pre-pandemic budget.

"Getting this institution on solid ground following post-pandemic will not be easy or quick, but in the long term, it will help us save jobs, fund future compensation initiatives, and keep our university the

unique and wonderful place that we know it to be," Hynd said.

Along with the option for voluntary separation comes concerns regarding the overall quality of Winthrop's faculty, the intentions of the university towards its most experienced faculty members and the amount of work to faculty member ratio should a significant number of faculty participate in the buyout.

"This is a concern that some have expressed," said Dr. Guy Reel, chair of the Department of Mass Communication. "I certainly think the loss of that expertise could affect the quality of teaching in some cases. On the other hand, some might argue that new perspectives can bring a different kind of learning into the classrooms."

There are a number of impressive faculty members who have had a positive impact on the university and its students, and it would be a major loss to the university and its students if such faculty members were to opt for voluntary separation, however, offering voluntary separation brings the university closer to a budget that would allow for it to lift its hiring freeze.

It is not expected that the option for voluntary separation alone will enable Winthrop to lift its hiring freeze, however, it does serve as a positive strategy for improving Winthrop's financial standing a bit. Making such strides towards a healthier budget can lead to an elimination of the hiring freeze in the near future, which will bring about opportunity for the hiring of new faculty members with new insights and teaching strategies that could benefit the institution.

There is concern that the presence of a buyout could be indicative of a lack of appreciation towards longtime faculty at the university.

"I've heard about some of my colleagues feeling deeply and personally wounded by these voluntary separation offers," said an anonymous tenured faculty member. "I personally find them offensive and tone deaf, in a time when administration should be doing everything they can to express gratitude and support for their hardworking faculty who have willingly put themselves in harm's way to continue to serve the students we love... I find any move to single out faculty in these ways frustrating, when what we need is rallying and moral support."

The initial communication of the buyout came from the Department of Human Resources and not Hynd, which left some qualifying faculty feeling underappreciated for their years of service to the university.

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## Hynd announces in-person commencement and Fall semester, McMaster declares in-person faculty/staff return quickly

Winthrop University makes plans to have an in-person graduation this May as well as a Fall semester free of COVID-19 regulations



Kaily Paddie/The Johnsonian

Students will only be allowed to have two people attend their graduation ceremony.

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Winthrop University will have an in-person commencement for graduates this coming May as well as an in-person Fall semester free of COVID-19 regulations, according to President Hynd, however, Gov. McMaster on March 5 declared that "remaining state employees [return] back to the workplace on a full-time basis." Therefore, normal operations are coming to campus sooner than expected.

As COVID-19 vaccines become more widely available, Winthrop officials made plans to transition back into traditional in-person learning at a relatively slow pace compared to what McMaster has now ordered, which is for state employees to return to work at a full-time, in-person capacity as soon as March 15.

"Late Friday the Department of Administration sent word that state agencies must immediately expedite the transition back to normal operations. While we heard your concerns during the town hall meeting on returning to phase 3 too quickly, this is a decision we no longer control," said Hynd in an email sent to faculty and staff on March 6. "The expectation is that most all state workers, regardless of caregiving responsibilities for school-age children or for vulnerable adults, must be back in the workplace full time very soon."

Even though vaccines are becoming more widely available, many faculty members are not able to receive the full dosage of the vaccine before having to return to work. According to CNN, President Biden expects every United States adult to have the vaccine available to them by the end of May, which does not coincide well with McMaster's plan for everyone returning to work this month.

"The Governor's decision is premature," said an anonymous faculty member. "I haven't even gotten my first vaccine yet."

Despite the Winthrop community generally feeling that McMaster's executive order has come too soon, both the faculty and staff as well as Hynd and other Winthrop officials are confident in the Winthrop

▶ see [COVID-19](#) pg. 2





### ◀ Separation from front

“Many faculty members felt like the first communication about this should have come from the president rather than from HR, and that more context should have been provided for faculty members so that they didn’t feel like they were being asked to leave or that their contributions to the institution were not valued. It seemed like an example of miscommunication,” said an anonymous tenured faculty member.

Hynd addressed this concern at the virtual faculty and staff town hall meeting on March 2.

“The voluntary separation program [was] not introduced through an announcement by the president. The reason is that there were only 118 faculty on campus that qualified for this program. So, it just seemed more appropriate to contact them directly. This is an individual decision for everybody who was contacted and qualified for this voluntary separation program. That’s the simple reason,” said Hynd. “We just thought it was more appropriate to contact the individuals by themselves because they need to think about this and if they’re interested, of course, they are to follow up with HR.”

In other words, being that relatively few faculty members qualify for voluntary separation, university officials thought it more appropriate and efficient that qualifying faculty be contacted independently, and the president reiterated that their method of communication was not indicative of a lack of appreciation for the dedicated longtime faculty members who qualify.

“We’re not encouraging people to take this as a message that they should be thinking about leaving. This is simply an option, should people be considering it for other reasons. Some people may want to retire, and some people may want to take a position at another university, or they may have other opportunities available. So, it is just simply an option we’re providing. It is not a message to targeted faculty, so I want to make sure that’s clear,” Hynd said.

On top of frustrations regarding how the buyout was announced are concerns regarding a potential discrepancy between workload and the amount of faculty working at the university as well as the possibility of similar financial circumstances next year.

“There’s not a link between the voluntary separation program and a reduction in force,” said Hynd. “Those are just different approaches to try and control our budget. There is currently no conversation among the leadership about doing reduction in force. This fiscal year, we’re working hard to make sure that that doesn’t happen and there’s no conversation at this moment about it happening next year either. So, we’re working as hard as we can not to get to that landscape.”

University officials are hoping for a smoother fiscal year next year where they will not have to resort to hiring freezes, furloughs or voluntary

separations, however, university officials are still seeking out ways to recover from pandemic-related hits to the budget.

“We’re having a voluntary separation program for the faculty and that’s the beginning stages. We look at other opportunities, or maybe other programs to maybe offer down the road, but right now, we started with a voluntary separation for faculty that qualified... and that’s a start that will save us money for next year,” said CFO, Justin Oates, at the March 2 virtual meeting. “Again, we have to balance continuing to support those courses and programs... each VP is looking at their areas and determining which vacant positions we might be able to eliminate, vacancies that have been used to balance the budget.”

Because applications for voluntary separation are not due until April 10, the university is unable to gage exactly how much money the voluntary separation program will save. Some faculty doubt that many will opt for voluntary separation, so it is possible the university will save very little money from the program.

“I actually haven’t heard of anyone considering it, but that doesn’t mean they haven’t,” said Reel. “Realistically you’re probably talking about only a few who [qualify], and who are close to retirement age anyway, who could take advantage of this and I haven’t actually heard anyone express thoughts about the fairness or generousness of it... One reason is that given current conditions, we don’t actually see many faculty members in person these days.”

On March 5, Gov. Henry McMaster issued an executive order for “remaining state employees [to return] back to the workplace on a full-time basis.”

Although many faculty members are distraught by McMaster’s order, the announcement does not sway qualifying faculty to partake in the buyout even if they are not ready to return to work.

“I wasn’t offered this voluntary separation, but I wouldn’t have been interested, and as dangerous, irresponsible, and poorly planned as McMaster’s plans are, they wouldn’t have swayed me either way,” said an anonymous faculty member.

“The governor’s decision is premature,” said another anonymous faculty member. “I haven’t even gotten my first vaccine yet. However, I will not leave the university to avoid having to return to campus.”

Winthrop University officials have implemented multiple money-saving programs in an effort to benefit the budget which took a significant hit from the pandemic. Offering voluntary separation for qualified faculty was just another strategy to steady the budget, however, it is unlikely many faculty will participate, so it may be necessary for the university to implement similar strategies in the future.

### ◀ COVID-19 from front

community’s ability to still enforce a safe campus.

An anonymous faculty member called McMaster’s plans “dangerous, irresponsible and poorly planned,” and said “the Winthrop community has done a pretty great job of keeping risk/numbers low, and I think we’ll maintain that. This has everything to do with our students, who’ve proven to be exceptionally responsible and conscientious, even in the face of public threats to health and safety like our governor has made.”

Hynd also believes that the Winthrop community is equipped to handle the risks entailed in in-person learning at this point in the pandemic and is confident that an in-person college experience will be worthwhile to students.

“I think it’s important to know that we want our students back on campus so that they can experience everything that college offers such as the opportunity to go to class in person, the opportunity to meet personally and get to know their faculty members, and form lifelong relationships, not just with their faculty members, but with the staff [and] friends that they’ve made,” Hynd said at the virtual faculty and staff town hall meeting on March 2. “This really is a place of transformation and preparation for career and preparation for life, so we’re looking forward to moving forward with the aspiration that this Fall, everybody will be back on campus, we may be wearing masks, but we’ll still have to see how that goes. Maybe socially distancing, but we want to really provide that academic experience and college experience that our students and the citizens of the state of South Carolina desire.”

Preparing for a traditional 2021 Fall semester entails significant efforts from all departments and offices at the university, particularly the Office of Residence Life.

“On the residential side, the university will likely shift back to the campus residency requirement for first- and second-year students. Waivers were provided for students who chose not to live on campus during the 2020-21 academic year,” according to News and Media Services Manager Judy Longshaw.

There have also been significant efforts made by Winthrop officials in preparing for an in-person commencement.

The university held off on an in-person graduation for 2020 graduates

because of the pandemic, however, even before McMaster’s executive order, Winthrop officials were making plans for a more traditional ceremony in May 2021.

“I hope you are as thrilled as I am with the prospect of the first, large in-person indoor events to be held on campus in more than a year,” said Hynd in a Feb. 25 campus-wide e-mail. “As long as we continue to do the right things as far as our campus safety protocols for the remainder of the Spring semester, we will be able to once again host these long-awaited ceremonies.”

According to President of the Council of Student Leaders Brandon Jackson, graduating students very much value the opportunity to have an in-person graduation ceremony. It is expected that 760 undergraduate students and 235 graduate students will be graduating this May.

On the other hand, some students fear that it is too soon to have an in-person commencement and feel that other options should be available for students who are not comfortable with an in-person commencement.

“I appreciate the effort to make everything feel normal again for graduating seniors,” said Jarismary Polo, a senior Psychology major. “However, I feel like it would be best to accommodate all students, especially since most students do not feel comfortable having a physical graduation because of Covid. In a way, it can make them feel singled out for protecting their own health or their families by not attending.”

Despite such feelings from some graduating students, university officials still believe that hosting an in-person commencement will not be a significant risk to the Winthrop community.

“Winthrop has made the health and safety of the campus community its top priority, and that will not change,” Longshaw said.

There are significant strides made by the Winthrop community towards adhering to McMaster’s executive order to return to work in a safe manner as well as towards providing a fulfilling in-person college experience for students graduating this May as well as students returning to campus in the Fall.

\*To see the Spring commencement plan outlined visit our website at [mytjnow.com](http://mytjnow.com)\*

## About The Johnsonian

The Johnsonian is the weekly student newspaper of Winthrop University.

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## New round of stimulus checks will include adult dependents

The next round of stimulus checks will be available to college students who were claimed as dependents in the previous tax year

Taylor Sallenger  
staff writer

College students who were previously excluded from the first two rounds of stimulus payments will now be eligible for the next round of stimulus checks under the American Rescue Plan Act passed by Congress March 10, 2021.

The American Rescue Plan Act is a \$1.9 trillion COVID

pandemic in the form of financial aid.

The stimulus checks will be issued to taxpayers claiming dependents. The checks will not be issued to the dependents themselves. College students who are claimed as dependents are encouraged to be sure their

2019 taxes and will not be in 2020, like college students who graduated last year, it's possible to claim the \$1,800 on your 2020 taxes with the Recovery Rebate Credit."

Winthrop University students are excited to be

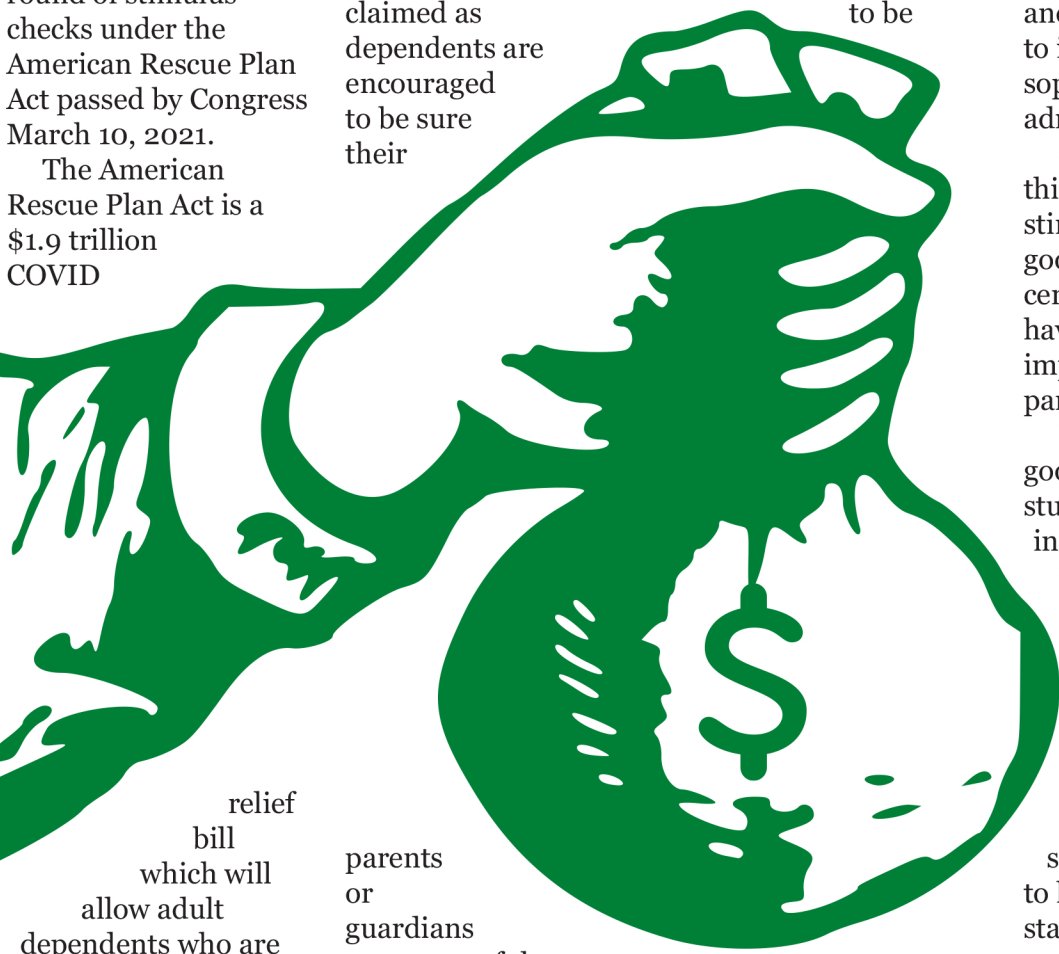
pandemic has not been good to any of us, especially us college students. By setting my expectations low, I'm actually fairly excited for this round of stimulus. I think I'm going to just put it in my savings though and try and hold on to it," said CJ Wiley, a sophomore business administration major.

Some students think that the stimulus checks are good especially with certain career fields having been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

"I think it is really good that college students are involved in the stimulus this time around,

because college is the time where you learn how to be an adult and learn how to be on your own so it is good to give college students something to help aid them starting their adult life, especially during the pandemic when certain career fields have limited opportunities," said Ashley Brown, a junior musical theatre major.

College students are excited to be included in this round of Covid relief because it will help those who are struggling prepare for the future and provide some much needed relief for this stressful period.



relief bill which will allow adult dependents who are 17 years old or older to be able to claim \$1,400 as long as the taxpayer who claimed them as a dependent makes less than \$75,000 a year (or \$150,000 for couples who filed jointly).The American Rescue Plan Act also will be allocating about \$40 billion for higher education institutions with the requirement that at least 50% of the funds go to students greatly affected by the

parents or guardians are aware of the changes made in this round of stimulus checks.

Students who filed their own tax returns for the 2020 tax year are also eligible to claim the first two rounds of the pandemic relief through a rebate program.

According to an article published by Business Insider on March 10, "For people who were claimed as dependents on

included in this round of stimulus checks and are already planning what they are going to do with their checks, but many believe they should have been included from the beginning and that the government did little for people most affected by the pandemic.

"I didn't even realize that we were going to get anything at all. This government during this



## Police Blotter 02/19-02/26

A roundup of crime on campus

Sarah Hassler  
staff writer

On Feb. 19, the Reporting Officer (R/O) met with a victim and a witness at the Winthrop University Police Department to report an assault. In an interview with the victim, he stated that on Feb. 18 he was invited to a friend's house for a small gathering. He said that Subject #1 also lives at the house, but was not at the residence during the time of the gathering. The victim stated that on the next day, he saw Subject #1 at his fraternity house when he was pulling into the driveway and that once Subject #1 saw him, Subject #1 stopped him and began yelling at him, asking him, "why were you at my house last night?" Subject #1 then began to threaten the victim by saying, "You're a b\*\*ch and a p\*ssy, you know how easily I could drag you out the car and make you have to go to Piedmont hospital?" The victim then explained that Subject #1 was yelling and spitting on him. When the victim told Subject #1 to stop spitting on him, Subject #1 then spit directly into the victim's face. The victim stated that Subject #1 aggressively said, "I know where you live and I know where you sleep," and then walked away. While Subject #1 was walking away, the victim stated "I know where you live too." The suspect then came back to the victim's car and said, "do something then." The victim told Subject #1 "No," at which time the victim parked his car.

The victim advised the R/O that he wanted to press charges on Subject #1. The R/O had the victim write a detailed statement of the altercation and issued him a Victim's Notification form. The R/O then met with the witness to discuss the situation. The witness told the R/O that he and the victim both reside

at the same house. The witness stated that on the day in question Subject #1 arrived at their house, aggressively knocking on the door. When the witness opened the door, Subject #1 began asking "Where's [Victim]?" Subject #1 then tried coming into the residence, but the witness told him "we need to stay outside." Subject #1 then stated that he did not want to put hands on him and that he just wanted to talk to him. Soon afterwards, Subject #1 saw the victim in the driveway so Subject #1 stuck his middle finger up at the victim and began yelling repeatedly, "p\*ssy." The witness heard the suspect say, "he's scared of me. He's probably laughing right now. I can make this sh\*t real funny. I know where he sleeps. I'll camp out at that bitch and make it real funny." The witness stated that he observed Subject #1 shaking in anger and was verbally aggressive during the incident. The R/O advised the witness to write out a detailed statement of the incident. The victim stated that he believes this altercation may have happened because of an incident that occurred between the two of them a year ago.

On Feb. 24, Sergeant Gerald's completed an Arrest Warrant on Subject #1 for Assault and Battery 3rd Degree. On Feb. 25, the R/O was able to locate the subject at his last known address and take him into custody. The subject was handcuffed, double locked, and searched for the incident to arrest. The subject was then transported to the Rock Hill Law Center where he was booked. During this time, Sergeant Gerald's then served the Arrest Warrant for Assault and Battery (3rd Degree) on Subject #1.

A year prior, on Feb. 21, 2020, the Reporting Officer (R/O) met with the victim, and several witnesses

## SC General Assembly honors Winthrop trailblazers

The South Carolina House of Representatives passed a resolution honoring four Winthrop African American trailblazers

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The S.C House of Representatives passed a resolution recognizing and honoring four female African American Winthrop alumni for their courage as academic trailblazers during the beginning of racial integration in schools.

The resolution

honored Winthrop alumni Cynthia Plair Roddey, Delores Johnson Hurt, Sue Frances Meriwether and Arnetta Gladden Mackey, al of whom were a part of the first generation of female African American students at Winthrop after the elimination of racial segregation.

The resolutions were brought forth by S.C. Rep. Kambrell Garvin, alongside support

from Winthrop alumni state representatives such as S.C. Rep. Gary Simrill, S.C. Rep. Chandra Dillard, S.C. Rep. Brandon Newton and S.C. Rep. Chip Huggins. Garvin presented the framed resolutions to the women and their family members alongside S.C. Rep. John King during a brief ceremony held on the Winthrop campus, according

to Communications Coordinator Nicole Chisari.

"These ladies were courageous during the civil rights era in helping bring change and equity to all South Carolina citizens," said Garvin. "They took advantage of the chance to further their education and made all of us proud in what they accomplished. Not only did they stand out in their fields,

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## ◀ Police from pg. 3

at the Winthrop University Police Department in reference to reporting an assault. The R/O then began to interview each individual separately.

The R/O began by interviewing the victim first. On the night of the incident, the victim stated that he was at his fraternity house for a small party when he attempted to talk to Subject #1 about Subject #1's girlfriend. The victim stated that he went up to Subject #1 to inform him that his girlfriend was "eyeing" him and other brothers and that he "doesn't think she is who he thinks she is." Subject #1 then told the victim to go outside. The victim stated that as soon as they got outside, Subject #1 pushed him up against the wall, choked him, and started punching him in the face several times. The victim stated that he overheard Subject #1 say "If you ever talk sh\*t about me or my girl again, I will kill you." The victim stated that after the assault he went unconscious. When the victim regained consciousness, Subject #1 was on top of him, continually punching him in the face. The victim stated that various individuals finally pulled Subject #1 off of him.

The Victim then advised the R/O that after the incident, he suffered a broken nose and a fractured bone in the face. The victim said that he had to go to the Emergency Room the next day for

treatment. The victim then informed the R/O that he had to undergo reconstructive surgery on his nose on March 3, 2020. During this surgery, the victim was under general anesthesia. The victim stated that would be able to provide photos of his nose from the night of the incident and various medical records. When asked if the incident was previously reported to police, the victim stated that he did not report it because he believed that the fraternity's chapter president would handle the situation. The victim even mentioned that he told the various medical professionals who treated him and his family members, that he sustained the injuries as the result of a snowball fight. However, after the incident on Feb 19, 2021, the victim decided to proceed with pressing assault charges on Subject #1 due to the ongoing aggression displayed by Subject #1. The R/O then advised the victim to provide medical records from various medical facilities that treated him after the incident. The R/O then had the victim fill out a Witness Statement form

detailing the incident and issued the victim a Victim's Notification Information form.

After speaking with the victim, the R/O met with Witness #1 who stated that on the night of the incident, he was on his way back inside the fraternity's chapter room when

someone told him to go outside and check on what was going on. In doing so, he witnessed Subject #1 on top of the Victim, punching him several times with a closed fist. The witness observed the victim going limp and was not fighting back or defending himself. The witness further stated that he and two other friends were able to break up the fight by physically restraining Subject #1 and pulling him off the victim. Witness #1 stated that after the fight was broken up, the suspect was yelling out "I'll kill that motherf\*\*ker if I ever see that motherf\*\*ker again." After talking with Witness #1, the R/O had him to fill out a Witness Statement form detailing the incident.

The R/O then met with Witness #2 and Witness #3, both were interviewed separately, but had similar stories of the incident. The witnesses stated that on the night of the incident, they received a phone call from a friend that the victim was at the fraternity house, bleeding very badly. At that time, they both drove over to the fraternity house. They observed the victim, inside the bathroom, bleeding from the nose and that the victim had to have his nose reset in place. Shortly after, the victim, Witness #2 and Witness #3 all drove back to their dorm room. The witnesses stated that the victim was very shaken up and in a lot of pain throughout that night. Witness #2

then stated that she drove the victim to the Emergency Room the next day. After interviewing the victim and witnesses, they all were advised to no longer make contact with the suspect and to notate any further calls or text messages from the suspect. They were also advised to report any incident going forward.

On Feb 22, 2021, the victim responded to the Winthrop University Police Department and met with Assistant Chief Yearta. During this time, the victim supplied all of the medical records related to the incident to Assistant Chief Yearta. The medical records indicated several items, including a broken nose and a surgery to repair a fractured bone in the victim's face.

On Feb 24, 2021 Witness #4 responded to the Winthrop University Police Department in order to speak with Sergeant Gerald about what he observed the night of the incident. Witness #4 recounted the same incident and afterwards Witness #4 tried to talk to Subject #1 about what had caused the incident, However, Witness #4 said that Subject #1 kept screaming at the victim. Witness #4 then arranged to have two other individuals escort Subject #1 away from the fraternity house, while other individuals helped the victim who was still lying on the ground bleeding. According to Witness #4, the victim "had taken a

beating and was just lying on the ground crying." Witness #4 then contacted the victim's girlfriend and advised her of the incident, at which point she responded to the fraternity house. Witness #4 then helped clean the blood from the victim's face, at which time he and the Victim realized the extent of the injuries to the victim's face area.

On Feb 24 2021, Sergeant Gerald completed an Arrest Warrant on Subject #1 for Assault and Battery (2nd Degree). Later in the day, Sergeant Gerald responded to the City of Rock Hill Law Center and spoke with a City of Rock Hill Municipal Judge about the incident. After speaking with the City of Rock Hill Municipal Judge and detailing what the investigation had already uncovered, Sergeant Gerald was issued an Arrest Warrant (M-455440) for Assault and Battery (2nd Degree).

On Feb. 25 2021, the R/O was able to locate the subject at his last known address and take him into custody. The subject was handcuffed, double locked and searched. The subject was then transported to the Rock Hill Law Center where he was booked. During this time, Sergeant Gerald then served the Arrest Warrant for Assault and Battery (2nd Degree) on Subject #1.

On Feb 26 2021, Assistant Chief Yearta received a phone call from the City of Rock Hill Victim Advocate

in reference to the case. After speaking with her, Assistant Chief Yearta contacted a Solicitor with the 16th Circuit Solicitor's Office. During this phone call, the facts of the case, the victim's injuries, and what the investigation had uncovered were discussed. Afterwards and in consultation with the 16th Circuit Solicitor's Office, Assistant Chief Yearta contacted the City of Rock Hill Municipal Court and requested that the original Arrest Warrant for Assault and Battery (2nd Degree) be recalled.

Assistant Chief Yearta then completed another Arrest Warrant against Subject #1 for Assault and Battery of a High and Aggravated Nature. Soon afterwards, Assistant Chief Yearta responded to the City of Rock Hill Law Center and spoke with a City of Rock Hill Municipal Judge about the incident. After speaking with the City of Rock Hill Municipal Judge and detailing what the investigation had already uncovered, Assistant Chief Yearta was issued an Arrest warrant for Assault and Battery of a High and Aggravated Nature. Subsequently, Assistant Chief Yearta served the Arrest Warrant for Assault and Battery of a High and Aggravated Nature on Subject #1 while he was still in the City of Rock Hill Law Center.

## ◀ Trailblazers from pg. 3

but also in the content of their character."

Winthrop University Interim President George Hynd praised the four women as pioneers of diversity for the college's academic program and history as a whole.

"Today's diverse Winthrop student body looks incredibly different than it did in the 1960s and 1970s. Our students have these four women to thank who paved the way for other students of color to have the same opportunities of attaining a Winthrop education," said Hynd.

Winthrop University celebrated the four women previously in 2014 with the establishment of the Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, and Meriwether Endowed Scholarship fund to honor the 50th anniversary of Winthrop's racial integration. The scholarship currently sits at \$33,000 and is intended to provide

financial aid to state residents.

Roddey said that she was proud of the impact that she and other minority students of Winthrop have had on racial desegregation, purposeful or not.

"Only very recently have we begun to appreciate the significance of it. I didn't realize that I was taking my life literally in my own hands, because there were people who were so opposed that they were blowing up houses and churches, people were losing their jobs, political reprisals. But because I've talked to some younger graduates who told me what a difference it made to have a choice to come to Winthrop," said Roddey.

"It wasn't a conscious, political statement. It was done for practical and economic reasons. But it's had an enormous difference. And it has made an enormous impact on my life and provided me with economic security."



Photo courtesy to Winthrop University

Front row L-R: Gene Mackey, widower of the late Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67; Cynthia Plair Roddey '67; Delores Johnson Hurt '68 and Sue Frances Meriwether Steed '67 (not pictured) were honored.

“ I didn't realize that I was taking my life literally in my own hands, because there were people who were so opposed that they were blowing up houses and churches, people were losing their jobs, political reprisals.

-Cynthia Plair Roddey '67



**WE ARE  
HIRING!**

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# Winthrop to face Villanova in Round of 64

## Eagles look to pull off classic 12-5 upset against wounded Wildcats

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The Winthrop men's basketball team is slated to face the Villanova Wildcats on Friday in the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

The Eagles arrived in Indianapolis by plane on Saturday afternoon and were together on Sunday evening when it was revealed that they would be a 12-seed in the South region of the March Madness bracket.

The geographical region doesn't bear any true importance this year in terms of travel (since all games will be played in Indiana in an attempt to eliminate negative impacts of COVID-19), but which teams are in the region are just as important as ever. The top seed in Winthrop's quadrant of the bracket belongs to the Baylor Bears, who possess just two losses on their record.

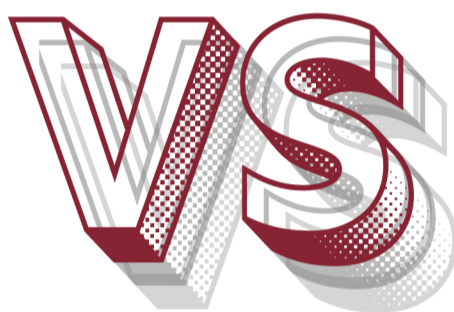
Winthrop's match against the Wildcats is already drawing

national attention for having high potential to be a classic '12-5 upset.' With Villanova's best player Collin Gillespie unable to play due to a torn MCL, the Wildcats enter Friday's contest on a two-game losing streak.

"This is as good as Winthrop could hope for," said Dave Friedman, Voice of the Eagles, during Winthrop Athletics' virtual selection show watch party. "If Chris Arcidiacono has to start because Gillespie is out, he's a non-shooter. Winthrop can play off of him and dare him to try to score."

While Winthrop head coach Pat Kelsey didn't let on that he had any knowledge of Villanova's team this year, he did acknowledge that the Eagles are facing a team with a lot of historical success.

"It's a hall-of-fame caliber coach and a national championship-caliber program. I've got a ton of respect for



what they built in the Villanova mystique," Kelsey said on

Sunday.

"We've got our work cut out for us. We're

excited about opening the laptop and diving into film [to] start preparing to play the Wildcats."

Kelsey said that even though the team is focused on winning and advancing in the tournament, he also hopes his players realize how special their time is in Indiana.

"As Skip Prosser used to say, this isn't our eighth grade trip to our nation's capital," Kelsey said. "Our guys are here on a business trip. But at the same time, I want them to enjoy and soak in everything that this experience has to offer."

If Winthrop beats Villanova on Friday, the Eagles would face either 4th-seeded Purdue or 13th-seeded North Texas in the Round of 32 on Sunday. Winthrop has never won a Round of 32 game, but should the Eagles do so this year, they would advance to the Sweet 16 and play on March 27 or 28.

The Eagles would most likely face

Baylor if they were fortunate enough to play a third NCAA Tournament game, but their opponent could also be 8th-seeded North Carolina, 9th-seeded Wisconsin, or (highly unlikely, though never impossible) 16th-seeded Hartford, who Winthrop opened their 2019-20 season against.

Other teams in the South region of the bracket are Ohio State, Arkansas, Texas Tech, Florida, Virginia Tech, Utah State, Colgate and Oral Roberts. However, Winthrop would not face any of these teams until the Elite 8.

With a 9:57 p.m. tip-off on Friday, Winthrop fans best be ready to fire up the coffee pot and prepare themselves for a late night. However, for a guy who claims to "make coffee nervous," Kelsey won't need any extra caffeine to fire up his team for their biggest game so far this season.

# Keeping a positive outlook

## Women's Golf finished 5th in first home tournament of the season

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So far this season, Winthrop women's golf has traveled to Florida for the Amelia Island Classic on Feb. 15-16, where they ranked 7th out of 10 teams and beat out Big South competitors Charleston Southern and Presbyterian.

The Strutter Gus Invitational followed in Georgia from Feb. 21-22. Finishing just seven points behind Gardner-Webb, the Eagles ranked 9th out of 12 teams, while Valentine Savioz and Sarah Funderburg led the team with par +20.

The Eagle Invitational marked the first home game and third tournament of the 2021 women's golf season, with

junior Funderburg and freshman Savioz being two of the players to watch.

Although March 8-9 were beautiful sunny days for the tournament, the Rock Hill Country Club green remained wet from the winter rains, providing a slight obstacle for the Eagles.

"To say the least, there were shots left out on the course and putts that could have been made. Despite the higher numbers on the scorecard, I and my team learned quite a bit from this tournament. We have mastered playing in a tournament format with our teammates and can learn from our mistakes," Funderburg said.

Despite the unpredictable

obstacles over the last year, Funderburg is confident in herself and her team's abilities this season, especially as the weather warms up.

"Since we were unable to play matches in the fall, we prepared for the upcoming season and especially the conference match play event by hosting our own mini Solheim Cup. The team had tremendous fun dressing up and competing against one another," Funderburg said.

On Monday, Funderburg shot an 80 and was T16, and then led the team in Par 4 scoring on Tuesday. Funderburg and senior Alexis Brindley also tied for the most birdies by a Winthrop player with

three each in the first round of Monday's game.

Sisters Alexis and Makenna Brindley are two other teammates leading the Eagles this season. Sophomore Makenna finished Tuesday T13, the best of her collegiate career, while Alexis finished T25 as she led the team with five birdies in her final round 83.

Attending her first year of college across the Atlantic from her family, biology major Savioz is simply thankful to be on campus competing in the sport she loves.

"It was difficult to not be able to go back home to see my family in Switzerland due to the Covid restrictions, but it's a difficult time for all of us. No matter what, I feel

like Winthrop has done such a great job at making us feel safe and comfortable," Savioz said.

Savioz was T14 after a first round with 79 on Monday, and then earned a career-best finish of T9 in her final round with 78 the following day.

"I was happy with how I played, and I had a lot of fun with the team these two days. There is still so much I can improve on, and I'm really excited for the next tournament. I will take what was good during my last round and keep moving forward for the next one to try to do even better," Savioz said.

Out of seven teams, Winthrop finished 4th on Monday and 5th on Tuesday, scoring 324/+36 and

652/+76, respectively.

Even when tournaments do not always go as planned, Funderburg knows that "the smallest effort can make a huge difference," and she remembers words from Dale Shankland, her old golf coach.

"[He] always told my brother and I, 'A shank is the closest thing to a good shot.' I have found the truth in his words inside and outside of golf. Even if something is going wrong, a positive outlook will bring the good out of a tough situation," Funderburg said.

The Eagles are back at it in Johns Creek, GA for the Georgia State Women's Golf Intercollegiate on March 29-30.

# Editorial: Semeka Randall-Lay should be full-time head coach of the women's basketball team

Matthew Shealy  
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After assuming the position of interim head coach last April, Semeka Randall-Lay led the Winthrop women's basketball team to its first Big South Conference Quarterfinal appearance since 2014-15.

Well, technically, the Eagles didn't win their way into the quarterfinal; they bypassed the opening round after Radford was forced to withdraw due to COVID-19 requirements, and the tournament bracket was reseeded.

But that doesn't change the fact that Randall-Lay's team put on a strong showing against the 2nd-seeded Campbell Camels, leading by four points at halftime against a team that had brutally beaten them twice much earlier in the season.

Winthrop didn't win that quarterfinal match, but the team performed better than a lot of people probably expected it to do. As

far as expectations, Randall-Lay's squad was predicted to finish dead last in the Big South preseason poll.

Instead, the Eagles finished eighth in the conference standings (better than USC Upstate, Hampton and Charleston Southern) with a 5-15 conference record and a 6-18 record overall. That still doesn't seem too good, but here's what is impressive about it.

Winthrop lost its top two scorers from the 2019-20 season in Jah'Che Whitfield (transferred to Kennesaw State) and Kem Nwabudu (transferred to Wagner), as well as a full-time starter in Miquela Santoro (transferred to Milwaukee). After other players graduated and transferred, Randall-Lay had just six players return from last season's roster.

That would be a tough situation to be put in during a normal year, but Randall-Lay inherited this mess one month into a worldwide pandemic. Still, she found seven players

who were willing to come to Rock Hill – four freshmen to develop and three transfers to provide immediate knowledge and leadership.

Those players were big 'gets' for Winthrop, especially graduate student Madison Ervin, who played a team-high 29.9 minutes per game and finished second on the team in scoring with 158 points on the season. However, Randall-Lay relied heavily on her six returners – four of which saw significant increases in points per game and rebounds per game.

That's probably because these players (all sophomores) also saw an increase of at least eight minutes of playing time per game compared to last season. Randall-Lay gave these players bigger opportunities than they had last year under Lynette Woodard, and they stepped up to the challenge.

Speaking of Woodard, I think it's important to compare her time leading the team to Randall-Lay's first season.

In 2017-18 (Woodard's first season at the helm), Winthrop went 3-27 overall and 2-16 in conference play. Granted, Woodard also took over at a rough time (the team had gone 2-29 the previous year), but the fact still stands that Randall-Lay collected twice as many wins in her first season (with six fewer games on the schedule).

In the following season, Woodard's team showed great improvement, finishing 10-20 on the season. If Randall-Lay's squad made that big of a leap (roughly tripling their win total), Winthrop would be in contention for a spot at the top of the conference.

By no means am I predicting that Winthrop will win 18 games next season. The Eagles haven't done that since 2013-14.

What I will suggest is that unless Dawn Staley decides she's bored with perennially taking the Gamecocks to the Sweet Sixteen and beyond, the best



Photo courtesy to Winthrop University

## Randall-Lay

chance Winthrop has at winning that many games (or simply just building upon what was started this year) is with Randall-Lay calling the plays.

Not only has Randall-Lay shown that she is capable of keeping the program afloat, but she has also proven that she can bring the best out of her players and help them outperform expectations set by others.

To reference a motto that became notable several

years ago within the Philadelphia 76ers organization, "Trust the Process." Randall-Lay has quoted this phrase often, and it's what Winthrop Athletics should do by offering her the full-time head coaching position for the women's basketball team.

Trust that she can recruit quality student-athletes. Trust that she can lead Winthrop to more victories. Trust the Randall-Lay process.

# Eagle of the Week: Jayden Mace

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Tearing his ACL and meniscus in his right knee the spring of his high school senior year, Jayden Mace was not fully recovered to play in his first collegiate soccer season at Winthrop.

Back after almost a year away, the current academic junior and redshirt sophomore was eager to finally be back on the field for the team's first game on Feb. 14th against USC.

"I didn't want to believe it until the beginning whistle was blown because it had been so long. I just missed being out there on the field, and for a lot of us that go to college to play soccer, we just love the sport and love to play it, so being off for almost a year was very tough," Mace said.

The season opener ended with a tough 2-4 loss for the Eagles in Columbia, and after three more games the Eagles are 0-4 so far this spring season.

Nevertheless, Mace remains confident in his team, "looking for the spark" that will ignite their first win.

"We're in a funk. Everybody wins and loses some, we just have to understand that, and go have fun and keep working hard. At the end of the day, if we keep losing and we give everything we have, that's all you can ask for," Mace said.

Mace began playing soccer many years ago at age three with his uncle coaching him in rec ball. Throughout the years, soccer was only one of Mace's many athletic passions, as he joined travel baseball, basketball, wrestling, and even played a year of football.

"When I was in 6th grade that's when there was the cut off of baseball and soccer in the same season, so I had to choose between [them], and I chose soccer. The only one I still play for fun is basketball, but really my main focus is on soccer most of the time," Mace said.

Ever since about

third grade, Mace has been dreaming of the day he could become a professional soccer player, and is proud to have his parent's full support behind him.

"I remember in elementary school when we had the wax museum or career day, I would always be a professional soccer player. And that is still my number one dream, to be a professional soccer player, so hopefully

it'll work out," Mace said.

Mace always looked up to his grandma, who sadly passed away in 2015, for inspiration. Now he always wraps his wrist before every game and writes her name on it to honor her while on the field.

"I feel like I'm not just doing it for myself, I'm doing it for her as well. She actually was my number one fan at all

my rec games growing up and in middle school. She was always at the games. She was the only one I could hear on the field," Mace said.

Another inspiration is professional soccer player John Wilson, but Mace simply knows him as the man who tagged along to Mace's uncle's soccer practice wearing converse and jeans.

"He got out there and kicked the ball around a little bit and just fell in love. He didn't really have any big offers for soccer, but he knew in himself that he could go bigger, so he actually walked onto Clemson. After he graduated from Clemson he played professionally. He's been definitely a true inspiration for me, knowing where he came from and just being so close - he's family," Mace said.

Aside from the influential people in his life, more than fifteen years of soccer continues to shape Mace both on and off the field.

"I find motivation in my sport, and it

drives me. I think it translates over to me outside of my sport, just doing things for others, giving everything I have, even if it's not on the field, just that motivation to do good for others," Mace said.

Being closely connected to so many other people is one of the reasons Mace was drawn to Winthrop instead of larger schools around South Carolina.

"There's so many good people here. You can go on a walk and get waved at by ten people, and I really enjoy that and the community. I knew coming in that I didn't know if I would enjoy a bigger school as much. I feel like the smaller setting was perfect for me," Mace said.

Mace's dreams and family will continue to push him through this season, taking it "one game at a time, week by week." The Eagles return to the home field tonight, March 17th, against High Point at 7:00pm.



Photo courtesy to Winthrop University

## Mace

# A & C the Johnsonian

March 17, 2021

## Celebrating Women's History Month

*March is a month to remember and celebrate the accomplishments of women*



Jamia Johnson/The Johnsonian

This bronze sculpture, "Metamorphosis," was made to honor Winthrop's class of 1964.

Sam Hyatt  
staff writer

The month of March is Women's History Month and is spent recognizing, remembering and celebrating the accomplishments of women throughout history and today.

The beginning of Women's History Month can be traced back to a group of women protesting in New York City in 1857. According to the United States Census Bureau, these women gathered to protest the poor working conditions in the factories they were working. Then, in 1909, the first Women's Day celebration was held in New York City.

After seven decades, the United States Congress established Women's History Week which would be held and celebrated annually on the second week of March. Later, in 1987, Congress decided to expand the celebration to last the entire month of March.

"Women's History

Month is important because it helps to remind us of all the contributions and accomplishments achieved by women," Justin Rose, a senior business administration major, said. "It's an important reminder that it shouldn't be just a month that we celebrate women, but it should be every day."

When thinking about Women's History Month, many people remember the contributions of women such as Harriet Tubman, Elenore Roosevelt, or Jane Goodall. During their time, these women made significant history in politics and science that affect women in those fields today. Although it is important to remember and celebrate those who have come before us, it's crucial that we acknowledge the women who are currently making an impact on society today.

Women like Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai, and Vice President Harris are all making a state-

ment in politics, but are more importantly demonstrating to young girls the possibility they have to also be in leadership roles when they grow up. said Senior theater major Kersey Hanna, "For me, celebrating Women's History Month is important because I am a woman in the arts field. It's nice to have something celebrating women since men dominate the film industry. It's cool to see the strength of other women breaking the barriers in fields mostly dominated by men."

Young girls and young women sometimes are told that they are not able or allowed to participate in certain activities or work in a specific field because of their gender. To many, this statement is discouraging and sometimes intimidating. However, women have continued to display to men that this is not always the case, and women are capable of holding significant leadership roles. Vice President Kama-

la Harris is one who, in recent news, has displayed the possibility to young women of color that they are able to be in leadership roles, especially in politics. Harris was elected as the first female Vice President, along with being the first woman of color to hold that position. The significance of her position will affect women for generations to come. Ry'kel Hartley, a senior elementary education major said, "It is because of madam VP Harris that young girls and young black girls can now see that their hopes and dreams can now be a reality."

As we continue to celebrate women during this month, acknowledging those who are close to us is just as important as celebrating those who have come before us. "As a man, I only hope to support the women in my life and can't wait to continue to see how women change the world for the better," Rose said.

## Living an entire year in a global pandemic

*March marks one year of the pandemic, students discuss the ways their lives have been affected*

Sam Hyatt  
staff writer

March 11, 2021 marked the one-year anniversary of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring COVID-19 as a global pandemic.

After a year of wearing masks everywhere we go, social distancing from our friends and family and unfortunately watching the positive COVID case numbers increase, it still does not feel as if things will ever go back to the "normal" we remember.

As a result of the many precautions we have to take because of the virus, it was inevitable that our lives would be altered.

Winthrop students were shocked last March when they went home for spring break and did not get to return to campus until May, only to retrieve their belongings from their residence halls. Students had to finish their semester completely online. Seniors in both May and December were unable to attend their commencement ceremonies due to the uncertainty and lack of information about the virus.

Corrine Whipple, a senior computer science major, said, "For the last year and a half, I've been attending classes remotely from home, which is three hours away from campus, and it's been a big obstacle since I am the best student I can be while in person."

After students were fi-

nally able to return back to campus in the fall of 2020, they were met with a different college experience than what they have been used to. Masks are required everywhere on campus and students cannot hangout with friends that live in opposing residence halls unless they are somewhere else on campus.

Athletics and the Arts have looked different as well during this school year as their designated departments work to create a safe environment for students and spectators. Fans were not allowed to attend fall sports this school year, but spring sports are now open at limited capacity for fans.

Unfortunately, this is not the case for theater and dance performances. These performances are being recorded and are available to watch via Zoom.

Tyler Baker, a senior double major in sociology and psychology, and a member of the Winthrop baseball team, shared his experience with COVID and how it has affected his team.

"Earlier in the season I was one of the few players that didn't have to sit out because of contract tracing," Baker said. "It was weird going from 40 guys to 15 in a week. I, along with the baseball team, get tested for COVID 3 days each week. Even though I haven't tested positive, which is great, it has been weird not being able to spend time with my teammates as much."

► see **Pandemic** pg. 9

## Dr. Seuss is not being cancelled

Allison Reynolds  
staff writer

Everyone has their opinions on cancel culture. Many people believe that it is toxic and should stop because of the ideology that people who support cancel culture believe. Some believe that companies discontinuing products and/or changing products is a result of cancel culture. A recent example of this is the Seuss estate stopping the production of six of Dr. Seuss's books because of racially insensitive things that occur in

them.

The Seuss estate has decided to stop publishing six of Seuss's books. These include *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, *If I Ran the Zoo*, *McElligot's Pool*, *On Beyond Zebra!*, *Scrambled Eggs Super!*, and *The Cat's Quizzer*.

The estate decided to stop publishing these titles because of racist imagery within the books. And to *Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* features a character described as a Chinaman, who has

lines for eyes, wears a pointed hat, and carries chopsticks and a bowl of rice. The book *If I Ran the Zoo* features two characters from an African island who are shirtless, shoeless and resemble monkeys.

One major thing is the question of whether or not it is okay to curate an author's work to conform to society. Philip Nel, a children's literature scholar at Kansas State University said, "There are parts of [Dr. Seuss'] legacy one should honor, and parts of his legacy that

one should not." This is a claim many are likely to agree with; no one should have their racism honored or celebrated.

Contrary to popular belief, mostly from conservatives, Dr. Seuss is not being cancelled and no one is cancelling him. His own estate decided to stop publishing books of the late author that depicted racist imagery. One accomplishment that is coming from the shelving of these books is that children's literature is becoming more inclusive.

► see **Seuss** pg. 9



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

The lives of the Winthrop community has changed a lot over the year since the pandemic hit America.



◀ **Pandemic** from pg. 8

Due to contract tracing and positive COVID cases with other teams, the team had to sit out several games. The most recent game that has been postponed due to COVID related issues was the March 5th and 6th games against High Point University.

As we surpass the one-year mark of living in a global pandemic, it is clear that we have learned a lot about ourselves, and will most

likely continue to learn how to live more comfortably as new information about the virus becomes available.

“I can say that through this journey I am grateful that I was actually able to learn a whole lot about myself,” Jaleel Hammonds, a senior educational studies major shared. “I couldn’t hang out with family or friends like I was used to so I spent a lot of time reflecting.”

◀ **Seuss** from pg. 8



Emma Crouch/The Johnsonian

**Dr. Suess is a famous children’s author who is known for his characters and rhyming.**

In the past, there have been very few books that included a diverse selection of characters of different cultures and backgrounds.

Rebekah Fitzsimmons, an assistant professor at Carnegie Mellon University tweeted, “The books we share with our children matter. Books shape their world view and tell them how to relate to the people, places, and ideas around them. As grown-ups, we have to examine the worldview we are creating for our children, including carefully re-examining our favorites.”

Not only could white children possibly see these racist images in these books and think it’s okay, but children of color could get upset or be offended by these images.

To add, the estate’s decision did not come out of nowhere. This decision has come from years of criticism of Seuss’ books. According to NBC News, criticisms of Seuss’ work goes as far back as the 1980’s. Also, in 2017, a Seuss museum in Massachusetts vowed to replace images from “And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street.”

While cancel culture is considered toxic by most, and many people consider what is happening with the Dr. Seuss books as cancel culture, that is simply not the case. Dr. Seuss’ own company made the decision to stop producing six of his non-popular books. The Seuss estate probably does not want racism attached to the late author’s name.

# Artist Spotlight: Oscar Soto

**Mari Pressley**  
staff writer

Like many art majors, Master of Fine Arts student, Oscar Soto has been involved in art since he was a child, but he became more involved in junior high and high school. As his teenage years got tough, Soto found art to be his outlet. When he started to meet other artists from different high schools, he realized that there was a community of creatives that he felt he belonged to. After attending the South Carolina Governor’s School for the arts summer camp, Soto realized that art was his center.

After completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Winthrop in 2007, The artist worked for a year doing picture framing but suddenly it became important to him to experience a little bit more of the world. He started teaching English abroad and moved to South Korea for a few years. What he found even more important was to go to Chile for a while because that is where his family is from.

“I spent a little over four years in Chile,” Soto said, “learning the language and meeting my family and trying to develop a deeper sense of who I am and where I’m from. That’s what allowed me to finally come back to art. I came back to Winthrop in part because Winthrop had given me such a feeling of home during my undergraduate experience here. Since I’ve been here, I’ve suddenly discovered woodworking. I think being away from the university for so long got me interested in taking advantage of the things that universities have in terms of facilities that I can’t do from an apartment somewhere.”

Due to his interest in woodworking and technology here at Winthrop, after graduating, he would like to be somewhere where traditional woodworking is combined with new technologies such as

CNC routing and laser cutting.

After having a past undergraduate professor who Soto described as a “stickler about craft” who would have the students build their own paintings, stretchers, and panels, Soto learned to take pride in the structures he was painting on and when he came back for his master’s degree, he was still planning on painting, but he was having a lot more fun working in the woodshop building the structures for the paintings.

“I started to try building things out of wood, out of scrap wood,” Soto said, “especially when I first came back and I had just gotten back from Chile. Three days after I came back from Chile, I was in grad school. It was a really sudden change and I didn’t have a lot of materials anymore. I didn’t have a lot of possessions at the time. So in our wood studio, we have lots of scrap wood that people just leave for other people to use...I started just making sculptures using the scrap wood to kind of learn to think with wood.”

Recently, Soto has been designing on Rhino, a 3D modeling software program. Most of his sculptures are two chairs that require two people to balance or cooperate to use. To come up with the designs the artist will either start making chair shapes or he will start with the circle that might be the pivot point of the chairs, before drawing lines out from there, and toying around with ideas using the 3D modeling software.

“It’s nice because you can change ideas pretty quickly because you’re not working with any actual wood yet. So, eventually, some kind of new challenge or idea will come up and then I’ll start honing in on that,” Soto said. “I get a 3D model that [is] designed then, also using a computer, slice that



Olivia Esselman/The Johnsonian

**Soto**

into shapes that I can then cut templates for those shapes using the CNC router and then I can cut pieces of normal wood like two chunks of two-by-fours or whatever and fit those to the template. It’s kind of an involved process but the start of the design is just those common ingredients, maybe two chairs and a fulcrum and then trying to find a challenge through the 3D modeling software and then trying to figure out how to build it.”

From Mar. 22 to Apr. 9, Oscar Soto’s work will be featured in the 2020-2021 Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition in the Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Art Gallery.

“The exhibition is only going to have three sculptures in it,” Soto said. “Each of them, as I described, are going to have two chairs with this sort of balancing requirement. One of them looks pretty much just like a giant see-saw.”

Soto explained, “I’d like people to look at

them and just imagine what it would take to use them because they are always more difficult to actually use than they might look at first. If you even think about your childhood playground with see-saws on it, a see-saw looks like a simple, fair system but not everybody has the same confidence. Definitely not everyone’s the same physical size as each other. Not everyone has that go-to partner who’s going to hop on the other side with them. So, even such a simple system like that is already actually requiring a lot of complex social negotiation and not everyone is going to be coming to it equally.”

Oscar Soto will also be involved in a Winthrop University Galleries Virtual Artist Talk at 11:00 am on Mar. 25. The event will count as a cultural event and will be hosted on Blackboard Collaborate.

## Introducing NFTs: A digital art revolution?

**Shyanne Hamrick**  
staff writer

As the mania surrounding NFTs continues to skyrocket, an artist known as Beeple recently eclipsed the record for digital art by auctioning an original JPEG for \$69 million. But what does that mean?

NFTs, or nonfungible tokens, function as a sort of certificate for original, tokenized versions of digital art. These tokens are not strictly limited to digital art, but essentially every digital asset of any medium could become a marketable NFT.

Although NFTs were established in 2017, the market recently snowballed with the release of a collectible

digital album produced by rock band Kings of Leon, a video of LeBron James in mid-slam dunk, and so on. Even the founder of Twitter, Jack Dorsey, is auctioning off his first tweet as an NFT.

Technically speaking, the tokens exist within the blockchain, or record, of the cryptocurrency known as Ethereum. Unlike bitcoins or physical currency, NFTs are nonfungible. What that means is they cannot be exchanged because they are irreplaceable creations. For example, if someone trades a dollar for another dollar, the value of the dollar remains the same; however, an NFT is the sole identifier for a piece of digital art and, for that reason, it

cannot be exchanged in the fashion of traditional currency.

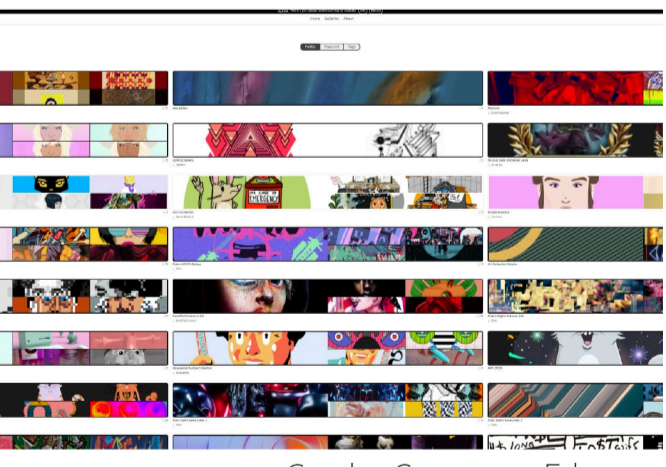
According to an article from The Wall Street Journal, the tokens “act as virtual deeds conveying ownership of a digital asset. Each one gets uploaded to a digital ledger where it conveys information: the date it was created, when it was sold, for how much and to whom.”

Such information is then transformed into identifiers by complex algorithms, which is crucial in ensuring an NFT has not been nor will be manipulated for malicious purposes. In a sense, NFTs therefore serve to promote and preserve an artist’s integrity as well as the authentic-

ity of owning a digital artwork.

Security measures, however, are not the crucial risk involved in participating in the NFT market. Some critics emphasize the common assumption that NFTs are valuable because digital artwork has become a popular demand.

“There are people who have been conditioned by cryptocurrencies to believe that just the fact that it can be owned makes it valuable. . . People just 100% believe that this thing has value, but in fact it doesn’t because there’s no way to get value out of it except for selling it to another investor,” computer science professor Jorge Stolfi told The Wall Street Journal.



Graphic Courtesy to Ethereum

**A selection of available NFT(non-fungible tokens) are available online.**

Moreover, there is a concern that NFTs could devalue with the passage of time. Humans are fallible and technology is ever-changing; sometimes we forget passwords, files become outdated, and accounts crash.

Perhaps it is not much different from physical art’s susceptibility to time, the elements, and natural

deterioration. So far, the world of digital art has produced NFTs of photos, memes, videos, GIFs and music albums. If an NFT of Nyan Cat—an animated cat with a Pop-Tart body flying through a rainbow trail in the sky—can sell for \$580,000, the future market for digital art begins to seem infinite.

## The senior graduation experience during COVID-19

Jada Strong  
staff writer

At the start of Covid-19 last year, everything was shut down. The circumstances were filled with questions without answers, and hard sacrifices that had to be made.

Everyone went into some sort of quarantine procedure. Everything went online and no one could go anywhere or do anything. What was safe to do and what wasn't? What were acceptable places to go? Among the many school events that had to be canceled was commencement.

For students graduating last spring in 2020 here at Winthrop, everything was vir-

tual. The same went for most graduations; some students did have an in-person graduation, others had a drive-by graduation, but the majority was online. Many sat in front of a computer or some other device, stuck at home, in the living room while a family member waited for their child's name to be spoken at the Zoom graduation ceremony. There were no parties to celebrate and no celebrating with their friends and classmates. The celebration of those who graduated college and were ready to start their professional careers was put on pause.

This year, however, is different. President Hynd recently announced that the

Commencement Committee has created a plan to hold in-person graduation this May, with five ceremonies for each college on different days.

On May 6, there will be a graduation for only graduate students. May 7 will include College of Arts and Science, and College of Visual Arts Performance graduation, each college having their ceremony at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. respectively. And finally, on May 8 there will be a ceremony for the College of Business and College of Education. There will be no commencement speaker and each student can only have two guests.

▶ see [Senior](#) pg.11

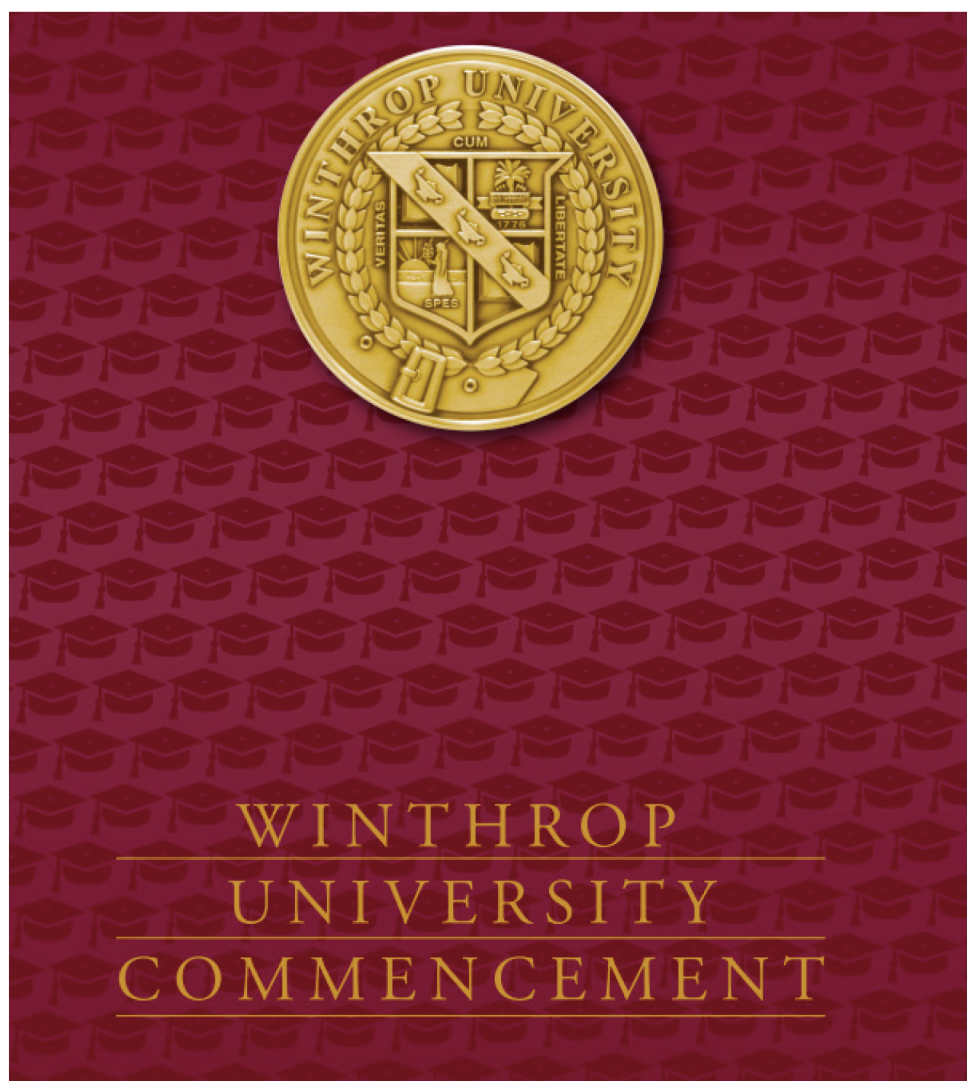


Photo Courtesy to Winthrop University

A digital copy of the December 2019 Commencement program cover which is available on Winthrop's website. This was the last in-person commencement to be held before the pandemic.

## Oprah's shocking interview with Prince Harry & Meghan

*Meghan Markle and Prince Harry shared information about their time in the royal family in an interview with Oprah*

Sam Hyatt  
staff writer

On Sunday March 7, many curious viewers tuned in to CBS, which aired an exclusive program of Oprah Winfrey interviewing former Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle concerning the rumors of their time with the royal family and their departure.

In the first hour of the interview, Markle told Winfrey about her first meetings with the royal family and how they all seemed welcoming to her even during the time she and Harry were dating.

As the interview continued, Markle began sharing information about the royal family and the institution that has not been heard before, however, she did so without exposing members of the family individually. Markle was able

to bring clarity to several stories and rumors that were scattered across television screens and newspaper headlines. One specific rumor concerned Markle making Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, cry. Markle explained that Middleton actually made her cry and said the rumor before was false.

Ashley Moore, a secondary English education major said, "I was intrigued to learn about the incident with Kate and to find out that Kate is the one that made Meghan cry, but Meghan let the viewer know that Kate apologized, and they had no problems regarding the incident."

A major point that Markle shared about the royal family was their concern about Archie having a darker skin color due to her ethnic makeup.

▶ see [Oprah](#) pg.11

## Love of money is the root of all evil

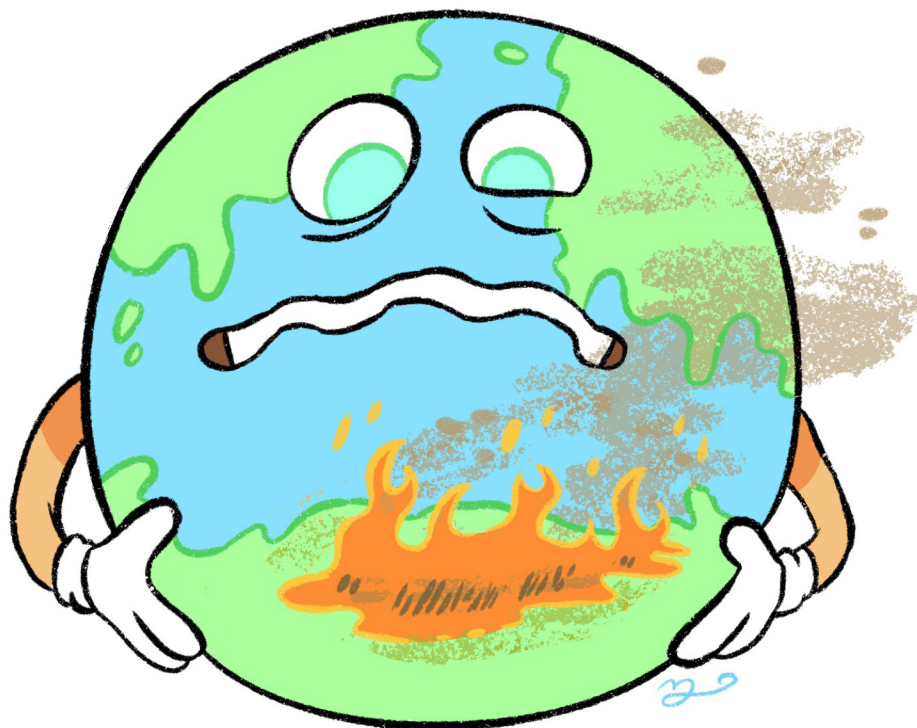
*How colonialism's legacy lives on through environmental destruction*

Mary Hicks  
hicksm@mytjnow.com

When it comes to the environment, much of the responsibility is often placed on individuals to create a "greener" planet themselves. "Recycle," they say. "Reuse," they say. "Ride a bike," they say.

While all those things are great to do, they are merely distractions in comparison to the real root of the climate crisis at hand today: neocolonialism. The term neocolonialism is "used to refer to a form of global power in which transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries," according to Britannica.

It is time to face who the "world superpowers" have been and still are at their core: colonizers. The world's leading nations have not only caused immense destruction for centuries by colonizing countries, but also the earth, for their own benefit. Now, time is winding down and many are already feeling the implications



Michael Yelton/The Johnsonian

due to the environmental irresponsibility and greed of countless generations.

In talking about greed, a particular Bible verse is often referenced. 1st Timothy chapter six, verse ten says, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (New International Version). ALL kinds of evil begins with the love of money. Imperialism, colonialism and racism are without a doubt included in these evils that first began with greed.

Imperialists and the European colonizers were motivated by the love of money and desire for power, which

then produced racism because they valued the land and resources more than the actual people, communities and societies who inhabited it. They did not regard natives as fellow human beings, but simply objects to use and take from.

Today, centuries later, the very nations who pride themselves on having "free markets" and being "free countries" are continuing to enslave others by taking from developing countries, their communities, and creating wealth off the backs of those putting in the hard labor. These practices today are most often

carried out through what many of us as Americans view in a positive light -- capitalism.

Though oil companies recently have rebranded and started initiatives to invest in low-carbon technology, many are still burning fossil fuels because of government subsidies. Yet, it is not just the oil companies harming the planet. Many large corporations exploit developing countries that don't have many labor laws by using workers to build their products and ship them to America.

▶ see [Money](#) pg. 11

# Repealing mask mandates — a step forward or backward?

*Masks are no longer required in South Carolina restaurants. Does this really make a difference?*

Wren Brooke  
staff writer

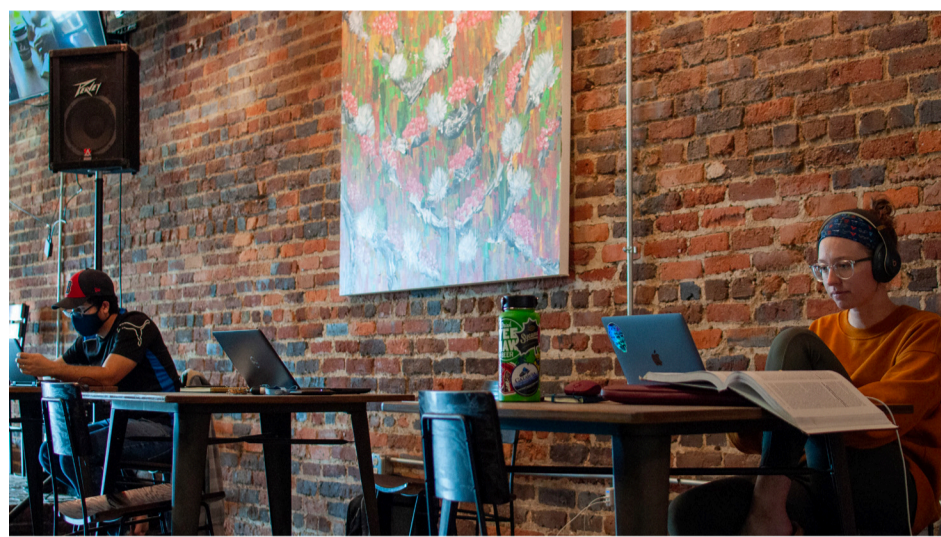
South Carolina governor Henry McMaster issued an executive order on Friday, March 5, reversing the mandatory mask order in state buildings and other public buildings, including businesses such as restaurants.

According to The State's coverage of McMaster's statements, the order is in response to steadily dropping infection numbers as well as the steadily rising number of administered vaccines. However, the governor did temper this change with advising people to continue wearing masks.

These mixed messages have left both sides unsatisfied, especially considering that the executive order came at the heels of numerous other states conceding and lifting their own mask mandates as well.

According to the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), over 1 million first and second doses have been administered out of South Carolina's approximate population of 5 million. As of the following Monday the 8th, 2.7 million residents became eligible for the vaccine, including teachers and other frontline workers.

Currently, vaccines have only been provided to hospitals



Cooper Beck/The Johnsonian

**The mask mandate has been lifted in South Carolina.**

and pharmacies to be administered. So although many Winthrop University professors have taken advantage of their new eligibility, there is not a campus-wide system for faculty to receive the vaccine.

Most people who have been vaccinated were administered either Pfizer or Moderna's two-shot vaccine, although a limited number have been able to secure the single-shot routine from Johnson & Johnson.

Although about 25% of South Carolinians have received the vaccine, COVID-19 is not sufficiently under control to deem mask wearing and other safety measures unnecessary. Although almost all at-risk individuals are eligible for the vaccine by now, only half of that number have actually received it, due to both limited supplies and also vaccine hesitancy.

It's also worth remembering that none of the vaccines have been 100% effective - severe case preven-

tion has capped out at around 95%, so even if at-risk individuals have been vaccinated, One out of 20 people who are repeatedly exposed to the vaccine will contract it.

This is why it's simply too early for statewide mask mandates to be rescinded. In addition to people taking the executive order as a cue that it is safe to stop wearing masks, it is also causing many people to relax precautionary measures.

Although Winthrop University has maintained measures around campus and in classes, distancing measures have already started to drop off in social interactions. Around Scholars Walk and the Digiorgio Campus Center, Greek societies and other organizations have already resumed sign-up and information tables, attracting crowds that do not always observe social distancing.

Restaurants and other businesses are no longer required to enforce mask wearing,

however as private businesses they retain the legal right to do so. Despite this, according to a Business Insider article, some restaurants are having to close their dining rooms back down to protect their employees from serious harassment and even violence.

A video recorded on March 7 by a San Francisco Uber driver that has since gone viral, depicted the driver being assaulted by three passengers after he asked one of them to put a mask on. He was subjected to racial slurs, had both his mask and phone stolen, and one of the passengers coughed on and pepper-sprayed him.

In an ideal world repealing laws requiring masks might not be an issue. However, since mask mandates were the only measures that had a united legal front, this recent trend of repealing them may undo all of the good that has been done by our healthcare professionals.

◀ *Money* from pg. 10

Due to the absence of labor laws, most of the workers have to deal with unhealthy working conditions, long hours with no breaks, no benefits and below poverty level wages. Most often, capitalism in fact capitalizes off these conditions because it saves money for corporations.

Like many individuals, institutions such as Winthrop are making efforts toward being environmentally responsible and doing their part to help take care of the planet by following sustainability policies. However, the greatest responsibility comes down to the ones who hold the most power over their own country as well as others, which is why it's so important that they put the earth and people before their own interest in wealth.

It is the government's responsibility to create parameters around

big business, but how do we expect that to happen considering the historical evidence of greed and corruption within our government itself?

This is the part where we come in -- not in just the everyday points about being environmentally conscious, but in holding representatives and local officials accountable. Writing to representatives and getting involved in organizations that are influencing policy are the actual responsibilities of citizens.

It is imperative that those of us who can see the effects of colonialism and the perpetuation of enslavement through neocolonialism and capitalism on nations, communities and the environment, take action by applying pressure on legislators to put the planet and all of its inhabitants before the love of money.

◀ *Oprah* from pg. 10



Jamia Johnson/The Johnsonian

According to Markel, members of the royal family had conversations with Harry concerning his then unborn child's skin color and was a major component of Archie not having the title as a duke nor having security.

While discussing this topic, Markel was choked up, which leads me to believe that the conversation in question really happened and that she was genuinely upset because of the racist comments being made about her then unborn child. It was shocking to hear that members of the royal family were making racist remarks, but unfortunately, it seems to be a huge possibility from the way the interview went.

"I think it's absolutely inappropriate coming from the royal family, but I am happy that Meghan and Harry are coming forward about this," said Austin Spencer, an integrated marketing communications major.

Before Harry joined the last portion of the interview, Markel shared her inability to get help for her mental health as the institution told her it would initially make the royal family look bad. Later, Harry shared that this was a turning point for him to take a step back

from his duties as a senior member because he was concerned for his wife.

As of March 9, the royal family has not put out a statement concerning the interview or any of the topics discussed. In the days to come it will be interesting to see what the royal family says or if they make a statement at all.

"Honestly, I don't think the royal family will speak publicly about the interview," said Taylor McNair, an elementary education major.

Since the two former royal family members are no longer a part of the business side of the family, they have started a new life in California and started an organization called Archewell. This organization was created to bring relief and charity to various areas that are in need of help and compassion.

Fortunately, the couple shared they have had the opportunity to attend therapy and were able to get the care that was once before denied to them. Additionally, the two are excited to welcome their baby girl into their family of three this summer. This interview will bring the two closer and are able to use this experience as a way to recognize other toxic situations.

◀ *Senior* from pg. 10

While of course, this is not an ideal graduation, anything is better than nothing at all, right? However, it is completely understandable if seniors don't feel as joyful for this kind of graduation ceremony. For the past few years undergraduates and graduates have had one goal: to graduate -- and of course, that's the most important thing. However, something they didn't think they'd have to question about what would happen, would be the graduation ceremony. It's happening but not in the way one would hope. These changes make it difficult to enjoy the ceremony regardless of the circumstances.

From personal experience, last year I had to have my high school graduation very similar to the one Winthrop is having

this year. I could only bring two guests, and while I was happy that I could have a graduation ceremony, I was also disappointed. The graduation ceremony I was hoping to have included my siblings and my extended family, not just my parents. My grandma still flew out for my graduation, but she had to stay in the house and utilize technology in order to watch me walk across the stage. I didn't realize it myself until later, but I was extremely disappointed in the fact that this was the graduation I was given.

Winthrop students, I imagine, feel the same way. Not only are they limited to who they can bring, but they're also being limited on who they graduate with as well. I'm sure many students were hoping to graduate

with all their friends.

However, not all students have friends who are in the same college that they are. If there's a senior graduating with a degree in the College of Arts and Sciences, and most of their friends are graduating with a degree in business administration, that senior is going to feel pretty left out and lonely at their graduation. Graduation is about a celebration of a huge milestone, and yet it's going to be a divided event.

Still, these seniors are fortunate to have a more satisfying graduation than last year's graduates. While I'm sure seniors are relieved; they aren't having a graduation that's only virtual. Though they may not feel guilt, nor do they feel entitled to have any about having the "better" graduation.

Both last year and this year's graduates understand that while we're still in a pandemic, a lot has changed over this past year. Protocols for Covid now are not the same as they were in the beginning. If anything, it's disappointing how we all thought that after a year since Covid began, we would be in a much better place and wouldn't have to worry about such protocols.

Regardless, it is a slight improvement from last year. Seniors will get to walk across their stage like they've always wanted and take pictures with their families. While it's not perfect, we're all grateful for the faculty and staff who've done their best to make this an enjoyable time during a difficult period in our lives.

# THE JOHNSONIAN

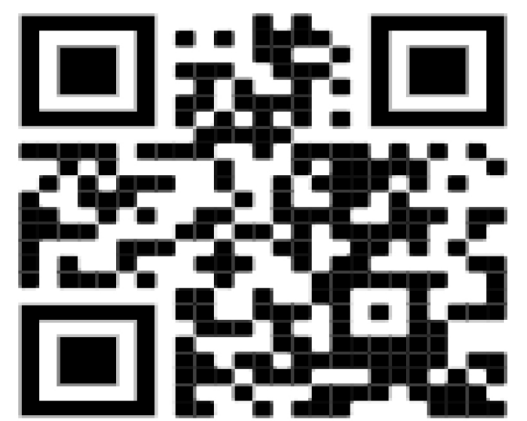
*presents*



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