



Winthrop University

CATAWBA NATION SPOTLIGHT

November is Native American Heritage month, so learn more about South Carolina's only federally recognized tribe on pg. 6

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MEN'S SOCCER COACH RESIGNS

Sports editor Omar Woods dives deeper into former men's soccer head coach Daniel Ridenhour's resignation on pg. 4

Rock Hill, SC

OUTSOURCING FACILITIES UPDATE

Originally announced in March, staff writer Kyan Feser writes about a new development in the outsourcing of facilities and management on pg. 7

Remembering Guy Reel: A man who shaped lives with words

Students and colleagues of the late mass communication chair Guy Reel remember a man who dedicated his life to journalism and those who wanted to pursue it.



Guy Reel (back center-left) and Johnsonian staff members at the 2016 South Carolina Press Association Collegiate Awards

photo via Carolyn Murray

Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

"Never start a story with a quote unless the Pope says shit" was a piece of advice the late mass communication professor and former chair Guy Reel would sometimes share with his students, a phrase his former student Marley Basset remembers to this day.

Whether it was for his sense of humor, his cutting but fair wit, his love for journalism or his unending dedication to raising college students into professional reporters,

countless Winthrop colleagues and former students continue to remember Reel for his dedication to the world around him.

Reel was a former newspaper reporter who became an associate professor in mass communication at Winthrop University in 2002, took over as chair of the department at the beginning of the 2016-2017 academic year and retired at the end of the 2023 spring semester.

Carolyn Murray, a 2016 graduate of Winthrop's bachelor

of arts in mass communication, said Guy Reel was her biggest cheerleader.

"At the end of my freshman year, I had applied for the Sports Editor position at the school paper, The Johnsonian," Murray said. "Within a day of applying 'Incoming Call from Guy Reel' appeared on my screen. I remember the call so clearly, when he told me that I should apply for the News Editor position, and that I should challenge myself to take on a larger position. I was

shocked he saw so much in me so early in my college career and from then on he continued to empower me not to sell myself short and hide from big opportunities."

Reel did not merely extend his support of his students through pleasant compliments. He was a blunt and honest critic of his students' work when he needed to be, something Basset, now a journalist for WIS-News 10, said was one of best qualities as a

Cont. on pg. 3

From Virginia to California, Democrats win big in key off-year elections

Democrat victories across the country spark debate about the future of the Party ahead of a volatile 2026 midterm season.

Zachary Bell
Managing Editor

Voters across the East Coast gathered at the polls this previous Tuesday to vote in some of the largest elections since the 2024 presidential election. Seen by many as a referendum on President Trump's performance a year into his second term, voters delivered Democrats an overwhelming victory at the ballot box.

In Virginia, Rep.

Abigail Spanberger, a former CIA officer, comfortably won the



Zohran Mamdani speaks after winning the New York City mayoral election governor's seat, beating

out the Republican Lt. Gov. Winsome Earle-Sears. Spanberger

AP Photo/Yuki Iwamura made history as the first woman to serve as governor of the Old Dominion state.

And in New Jersey, Rep. Mikie Sherrill beat the pollsters, defeating her Republican opponent, former state lawmaker Jack Ciattarelli, by a large margin. Although Ciattarelli was unlikely to win, some Republicans were quietly optimistic about his chances after Kamala Harris' shockingly narrow victory over Donald Trump in the state.

Both Spanberger and

Cont. on pg. 2

The Legacy of a Mentor Gallery honors former College of Visual and Performing Arts professor

Rutledge's current art gallery remembers Alfred D. Ward and his artistic influence.

Dakota Gold
Staff Writer

Alfred "Alf" D. Ward was a beloved teacher, mentor, artist, husband, and friend. He inspired many creative journeys and touched the lives of many.

Ward passed away on May 20, 2023. The Legacy of a Mentor Gallery was created to honor his memory.

The gallery displays

his own work along with the work of those who were inspired by his teachings.

Mike Gentry, director of Winthrop University Galleries, said Ward was one of his teachers from before he became a gallery director.

"I did take one class with Alf a long time ago," Gentry said. "I knew him more as I

Cont. on pg. 3



Outside of the Dixie Pig

photo by Jackson Stanton

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Police Blotter



Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

Natural gas odor detected at track and soccer complex concessions

On Oct. 29, a Winthrop University Police Department officer responded to a report of the smell of natural gas in the concession area near the track and soccer fields that had been ongoing for a few weeks. The officer contacted Facilities Management, and was advised to shut off the gas line. Natural gas leaks can be detected by a distinctive odor similar to rotten eggs, according to the York County Natural Gas Authority. If you suspect a natural gas leak somewhere or near campus, move away from the suspected leak and report it to WUPD at (803) 323- 3333.

Victim scammed out of \$4,500 out of savings

On Nov. 6, A WUPD officer met with a victim in reference to a text they received from an unknown subject who asked him to transfer \$4,500 to Cash App out of his savings. The victim sent the money, and someone sent the money to a debit card that did not belong to the victim, compiled with.

Water leak in Phelps Hall, occupants moved out of room temporarily

A WUPD officer responded to room 276 of Phelps Hall on Nov. 3 to a report of a water leak from the ceiling. Facilities Management was notified of the leak and the occupants were temporarily moved out of the room.

Bench goes for a swim in Winthrop Lake, possibly vandalized

A WUPD officer responded to Winthrop Lake on Nov. 8 to a report of a possible vandalism of a bench near the farm house that had been spotted in the lake. The bench appeared to have been underwater for a few weeks, according to the case log.

mytjnow.com

Rock Hill businesses helping with SNAP | Cont. from pg. 1

The Jackass Cafe is located within the Mercantile at 153 E White St Unit B in Rock Hill.

The Dixie Pig, a local barbeque restaurant, has established a deal that provides 2 free kids meals with every purchase of a single adult meal.

“Effective until SNAP benefits are fully restored, our Kids Eat Free deal will be available all day, every day. We love our community who have supported us for the past 10 years,” The Dixie Pig posted on their Facebook page.

The Dixie Pig is located at 2007 Celanese Rd here in Rock Hill.

Los Cantaritos, a local Mexican grill and cantina, has extended to offer food to both children and the elderly.

“This town has always shown up for small businesses like ours and my family will do our best to show up for those who may need it the most. Kids and elderly neighbors are welcome to enjoy a warm meal with us all month long. Our

kids shouldn’t have to worry about problems bigger than them. They deserve joy, play and community,” Jenny from Los Cantaritos posted on the restaurant’s Facebook page at the beginning of the month.

Los Cantaritos is also hosting a donation drive, asking for contributions of “non-perishable food items at Cantaritos to help feed local families throughout the month.”

Los Cantaritos is located at 1415 Riverchase Boulevard in Rock Hill.

Outside of Rock Hill, the Charlotte Area Transit system will begin offering free rides to those who are currently facing difficulties with SNAP. From Nov. 10 to 14, there will be officials at the Charlotte Transit Center to help those affected download the right mobile pass.

Within Rock Hill, multiple food pantries are open throughout the week for those struggling with food insecurity.

Hope of Rock Hill, located at 504 Oakland Avenue, is open from

8:30 to 10:30 a.m. from Monday to Thursday. Hope of Rock Hill has been assisting the community since its establishment in 1975, and prides itself on serving “thousands in Rock Hill, South Carolina by providing food and utilities to those in need.”

On Tuesdays, HOPE of Rock Hill is open from 6 to 7:30 p.m., specifically to provide assistance to those who work and may not be able to arrive during their usual, earlier operating hours.

Pilgrim’s Inn, located at 236 West Main Street in Rock Hill, is open from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. from Tuesday to Friday.

“To those struggling in poverty, we represent a community that loves and cares for its own. And in the community, we are the voice of the voiceless, and a means to reach out with the touch of a gentle guiding hand to help,” the Pilgrim’s Inn posted on their website.

On the weekends, Heavenly Pantry is open from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 842 Cauthen Street in Rock Hill.

They are also open on Fridays from 12 to 3 p.m. Their website declares their missions as consisting of “volunteer efforts [that] respect the dignity of those [they] serve and are an expression of the spiritual mission of [their] church.”

Heavenly Pantry is also accepting donations, calling for “rice and peanut butter” as the food items for the month of November.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP, is a federal program that provides citizens assistance in purchasing groceries. Formally known as “The Food Stamp Program,” SNAP has been a program under the United States government since 1964.

This program offers assistance to those who live below the poverty line. To qualify, one must be a part of a household whose monthly income totals below 130% of the federal poverty line.

For an individual living alone to qualify for SNAP benefits in South Carolina, they

must have a gross monthly income of \$1696. For each additional individual in the household, that qualification amount increases by \$596.

Following the current government shutdown, the SNAP program, which operates through the U.S Department of Agriculture, has been facing problems with securing funding. Currently, only about 9 states have been able to process and issue regular SNAP benefits on time, not including South Carolina. These benefits are currently being labelled as “delayed,” rather than “cancelled,” but families are still left without the ability to pay for groceries.

While SNAP benefits are on pause, there are many ways those affected and their families can continue to feed themselves due to the generosity of many local establishments. Until then, it is up to the Supreme Court to decide on whether or not the U.S Department of Agriculture may be able to reinstate these benefits, ideally sooner rather than later.



photo by Jackson Stanton

Outside of Los Cantaritos



photo by Zoey Molina

Inside the Dixie Pig, “Kids Eat Free” sign in view

2025 Elections | Cont. from pg. 1

Sherrill outperformed Harris in their respective states. According to Dr. John Holder, instructor of Political Science at Winthrop University, Virginia and New Jersey governor races received lots of attention because they supposedly reflect the national opinion of the president.

“But those two states are more Democratic than the nation as a whole,” Holder said. “So, I don’t necessarily think this can be extrapolated into a national rejection of Trump and Republican policies.”

Holder did say that voters went to the ballot box with the shutdown and Trump on their minds. The shutdown has caused thousands of federal workers to be furloughed, many of whom reside in Virginia. This suggests that Spanberger’s overperformance can be partly attributed to voters’ frustrations with the shutdown.

Spanberger’s 15-point victory over her Republican challenger dwarfs Harris’s 5-point victory in 2024. Spanberger’s margin helped carry Jay Jones, the Democratic nominee for attorney general, across the finish line despite leaked texts in which he suggested a Republican colleague “should be shot” rocked his campaign.

Elsewhere in New York City, Zohran Mamdani defeated former Gov. Andrew Cuomo for the second time this year. Mamdani was the favorite after beating Cuomo in the Democratic primary earlier this year.

Mamdani, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America, drew national attention over his progressive ideology. At 34 years old, Mamdani also tapped into a cohort of young voters eager for change, according to Holder.

“I think the ongoing debate within the

Democratic party may be less about ideology and more about youth and changes in leadership,” Holder said. “Younger voters want someone who understands them and represents them, rather than a president who’s 82 like Biden or 79 like Trump.”

Holder cautioned against extrapolation, calling the Democratic Party an “ideologically diverse coalition.” After Mamdani’s victory, questions have abounded regarding the ideological direction of the party.

Holder said, “Someone who could get elected mayor of New York probably couldn’t get elected governor of Virginia, and vice versa.”

Still, part of Mamdani’s victory can be attributed to the voters’ economic anxiety, particularly related to rising housing costs. Mamdani campaigned on reducing costs. If Mamdani can deliver, progressives succeed

much more broadly in cities across the country where the cost of living has climbed substantially.

On the West Coast, California voters gave Democrats a lifeline in next year’s midterm election. Prop 50, or The Election Rigging Response Act, will give Democrats in the Golden State 5 more favorable districts in the House of Representatives. It also represents a significant victory for Gov. Gavin Newsom ahead of a suspected 2028 presidential campaign, and proves to Democratic voters that he can stand up to Trump.

Following the Democrat’s sweeping victory, pundits and pollsters are looking ahead to the midterms in 2026, which will decide the control of the Senate and House of Representatives.

When Representative-elect Adelite Grijalva is sworn in, the balance in the House will be 219 Republicans to 214

Democrats. According to Holder, control of the House could easily change next year.

“There also seems to be a sentiment that there should be checks and balances in Congress against an executive who’s overreaching his power, sometimes in unprecedented ways,” Holder said. “Since very few Republican members of Congress seem to be willing to do that, that would mean giving control to the Democrats.”

In the Senate, the Democrats’ chances face an uphill battle. Republicans hold 53 seats to the Democrats’ 47, and the seats that will be up for grabs in 2026 do not favor the Democrats.

According to Holder, the 2026 election will be a referendum on Trump’s handling of the economy. If the cost of living remains high or continues rising, Republicans can expect to be punished at the ballot box.

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Remembering Guy Reel | Cont. from pg. 1

teacher.

"I only had one class with Reel, it was writing for mass comm," Basset said. "I thought he was a hardass but his teachings provided the foundation for my journalistic career and are something I carry with me today as a journalist."

Reel also didn't stop paying attention to his pupils' writings when they graduated or performed journalism outside of Winthrop.

Bryn Eddy, now editor-in-chief of The Lexington County Chronicle, graduated from Winthrop University with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English having only taken a handful of mass communication classes along with two years of experience on The Johnsonian.

Despite graduating from a different program with only a handful of experience in the mass communication program, she said Reel supported her work as a reporter during and after college.

"Dr. Reel advocated for me like no other professor had, and I really mean that," Eddy said. "For my reporting during and after college, he was often my first reader and most meaningful feedback provider. Sending him my work became a habit after I graduated, and even since his death, my muscle memory hasn't left—I still come close to texting him links

to my stories I think he'd enjoy, only to remember he's gone, leading to that bad feeling of disbelief once again."

Murray also said Reel continued to read and give feedback on her reporting as an intern for The Island Packet, a Hilton Head newspaper, after he successfully nominated her for the annual South Carolina Press Association Internship in 2015.

"Once again I was honored he considered me," Murray said. "That summer, while I completed that internship at The Island Packet, he would read every single article and would send me emails with kudos (and plenty of feedback of course). To think that he spent his summer truly interested in my work and cared that much, still boggles my mind 10 years later."

Amanda Harris, who is a journalist for Auto Finance News and another former student of Reel's, said she continues to remember and appreciate his genuine support for her pursuit of journalism as her career.

"He was always willing to answer my many questions and dole out advice whenever I needed it," Harris said. "He was a huge part of why I was successful as a college reporter and why I am now coming up on more than a decade as a journalist. He taught us to be real reporters

— to ask the tough questions, go after the hard stories as well as the heart-warming and informative, and to be

but the entire mass communication department.

"As a department chair, Guy was very



Guy Reel (center-left) with MSNBC anchor Rachel Maddow (center-right) at a 2016 presidential election event

photo via Carolyn Murray

persistent." William Schulte, Winthrop professor of mass communication, said his late colleague and friend always advocated for his students and their needs.

"He was uncompromising in that area," Schulte said. "A lot of people will remember Guy for his humor, and that is totally understandable — he was funny. But the ways he used his wit to put you at ease, point at an absurdity or make sure you were not taking yourself too seriously opened people up around him."

Retired mass communication professor Mark Nortz said Reel's affability and attention to detail were a boon not just to the students,

approachable," Nortz said. "He made sure faculty had what they needed to be effective teachers. He continued to look for ways to improve the curriculum, keep faculty current on our ever changing industry, update our facilities and, as always, make sure the students were getting what they needed."

Schulte said Reel was a journalist at heart who was always keenly aware of politics and social dynamics, and how good reporting could affect the direction of society.

"As a leader, he led from the front; he was the first to try something new in the classroom, the first to shake up the status quo, and the first to acknowledge if something was working or not," Schulte said. "I

personally always felt valued, respected, and understood by Guy. We bonded over journalism and student publications. If I was excited or mad about a story or needed to vent or share an idea, I always knew where to go."

Nortz also said he enjoyed and fondly remembers his late colleague's dry sense of humor.

"He also used to kid me about being a 'broadcast journalist,'" Nortz said. "Whenever we would discuss various current events and critique writing styles the discussion would usually end with: 'not bad insights for a broadcaster.'"

Before coming to Winthrop as an associate professor in 2002, Reel was a reporter and editor for the daily Memphis newspaper The Commercial Appeal.

He was a published author who penned historically focused journalistic works like "The National Police Gazette and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906" and "Unequal Justice," according to GoodReads.com.

Even after Reel's passing, specific recollections of him continue to linger in his colleagues' and pupils' remembrance of him.

"When I first came to Winthrop as a new faculty member and new dad, I was a bit frazzled," Schulte said. "Adjusting to academia is a real process. Guy

ordered my books for me and gave me his syllabi and all of his in-class exercises. He taught me how to set up a lab-style class and helped me become my authentic self as a teacher. When he came into my office, the weight came off my shoulders. The mentorship he gave me was priceless, and I believe he is a huge reason I've been so happy doing this job. His memory and impact will always be felt in me. Most of all, [I] really miss my friend."

"Knowing Reel was such a privilege and I wish I could talk to him and get more advice and encouragement, especially since graduating in May and just starting journalism full-time," Basset said. "... I am lucky to have known and to have been mentored by such a wonderful person."

Reel passed away on May 3, 2025 in Lancaster, South Carolina after being hospitalized after experiencing sudden issues with his health, according to reporting by The Commercial Appeal. He was 66 years old.

Winthrop's mass communication department will hold a celebration of Reel's life on Nov. 15, 2025 at the Old Stone House from 11 AM to 1 PM. Colleagues, friends, family and students are invited to attend and pay their respects.

Legacy of a Mentor gallery | Cont. from pg. 1

became engaged with the Rock Hill Arts Community, before I returned to Winthrop to take the position of Gallery Director."

Ward was heavily involved with the arts at Winthrop and within Rock Hill. He served as the chair of the Department of Art and Design at Winthrop from 1989 until he returned to teaching full-time in 1996.

He received Winthrop's Distinguished Professor of the Year in 1998 and the Medal of Honor in the Arts in 2011.

Ward also taught

Appalachian Center for Crafts in Tennessee.

Ward's art is on display in permanent collections, including one at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. Ward served as consultant designer for Spinks & Sons in London under appointment of Queen Elizabeth II.

As a professor, Ward taught classes in metalsmithing, design, jewelry and art. Students are said to have enjoyed his fun character inside and outside the classroom.

The gallery showcases art from

by his kindness and his inspiring teaching style over the years,"

continue working, even through the mistakes.

"He took every

at Winthrop.

Rust's piece is titled "In the Heart of the



Inside the Legacy of a Mentor gallery

photo by Zoey Molina

Kasakowski said.

Kasakowski said that Ward radiated kindness to his students and fellow professors.

"He was like that with everyone, always encouraging us to think creatively, talk through ideas, and push beyond our boundaries," Kosakowski said. "I can only imagine how many students he has impacted through his openness and encouragement of their ideas. As young artists, we felt safe sharing our thoughts with Alf."

Kasakowski said that her late teacher was always open to his students' ideas and encouraged them to

idea seriously and created space for stories to unfold. He often reminded us that mistakes and unfinished work are vital parts of the creative process. What mattered most was to continue working."

Kosakowski's work is featured in the Legacy of a Mentor Gallery. Her pieces are titled "Meadow Bound" and "Monarch Migration."

Another artist featured in the gallery is Ward's former wife, Caroline Rust. She is the Executive Assistant to the Dean, Administrative Coordinator and CreatorSpace Manager

Heart." In her artist's statement, Rust said, "Life is big. Love is big."

"Alf was a star I was meant to attach to, to shine from, and shine upon. My memories of our times together, at Winthrop University, in Rock Hill, and around the globe will never fade. They will live on," Rust said.

Before his passing, Rust and Ward were together for 25 years.

Rust began work on her piece the day that Ward passed away. She did not pick it up again for two years.

"The reading of Alf's former students' statement for this exhibition fueled my

ability to push myself to the studio once more," Rust said.

The piece is an oil on slip mounted to board. It features vibrant swirls of color and symbolism.

Rust said, "Love is the primary character in the work, as I believe we have an enormous capacity for love of one another." The rest of her statement can be read on the top floor of the exhibition.

The gallery reception will be held today, Thursday, Nov. 13, from 5 to 7 p.m. Legacy of a Mentor Gallery will be open through Nov. 15 in Rutledge from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Pictures of Alfred "Alf" D. Ward, photo by Zoey Molina



First Lady of South Carolina pendant created by Ward

a handful of Ward's former students, like Samantha Kosakowski, an Arkansas State Fine Arts instructor and alumna of Winthrop.

"Like many students, I was deeply influenced

at the University of London, the University of Michigan, the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit, and the

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Sudden resignation of Winthrop head soccer coach leaves more questions than answers

After nearly a decade of being head coach, Daniel Ridenhour resigned from his head coach position without much notice on November 3.

Omar Woods
Sports Editor

Two days after the Winthrop Men's Soccer team played their final game of the season against High Point on November 1, news of the resignation of the men's soccer head coach Daniel Ridenhour was released.

Due to how sudden and immediate his resignation was, it has left some to ponder over the reason for his departure from Winthrop. Chuck Rey, the Athletic Director of Winthrop, gave

his recognition to the ex-coach and some possible answers for his leave.

"I have known him since 2008 when I first got here. He's a great man and somebody that has a ton of respect within our department," Rey said. "He has provided his letter of resignation and is probably going to pursue some opportunities outside of the university here which we respect."

Ridenhour has served as head coach for the soccer team since the retirement of the

previous head coach Rich Posipanko. Before taking the role as head coach, he worked as the associate head coach.

Since becoming head coach, the men's soccer team has had a losing record every season.

The current season followed this same trend, as the men's soccer team would go on to only win a single game for the entire season. The lone win came against Radford.

On the website "2aDays.com," which is a service that allows verified collegiate athletes

to anonymously rate college coaches and college sports programs, the reviews for Ridenhour have been less than positive. Many of the reviews are overwhelmingly negative and one of them referred to Ridenhour as a "pathological liar."

"Pathological liar, does not keep his word. No knowledge of soccer and no people skills. I would not recommend any prospective collegiate soccer player to pursue to play for," said an anonymous athlete.

After Ridenhour's resignation, the process to find a new head coach for the soccer team started immediately. Chuck Rey mentioned that he is interested in seeing the future of the men's soccer program due to it currently being the 50th anniversary of the program.

"About a month ago we had over one-hundred alumni here just for the men's soccer program, of which they have been very vocal in a positive way," Rey said. "Everybody

kinda has their own guy and 'this is who it's gonna be,' but I'm glad for their support and glad for their recommendations."

Zane Barnes has taken the role as the interim head men's soccer coach. He was previously associate coach for the men's soccer team.

The Johnsonian reached out to multiple members of the men's soccer team to express their thoughts on Ridenhour's resignation, but we did not receive any responses.

Winthrop women's basketball ready to take flight this season

After their season that saw their first winning record since 2014-15, the women's team looks to build off their strong 2024-25 season.



photo by Jackson Stanton

Winthrop women's basketball players gather in a huddle

Maurion Jamison
Staff Writer

After a strong preseason and weeks of hard work, the Lady Eagles are stepping into the 2025-26 season with new confidence and chemistry. Players and coaches say this year is all about growth, grit, and proving that the team belongs at the top of the Big South.

Junior guard Amourie Porter said the team's mentality has shifted in a big way since last season.

"We came into this year focused," Porter said. "Everybody is locked in and wants to compete at a higher level. We have a different kind of energy now and it's showing every day in practice." That renewed focus has been a major talking point for the team since the offseason.

Head Coach Semeka Randall-Lay has emphasized consistency and toughness, pushing her team to compete hard in every drill and possession. Practices have been intense, with

players holding each other accountable and focusing on the details that can decide close games.

The team has also worked on improving communication and execution, especially on defense.

Sophomore Madison Ruff said the team has developed a stronger bond, which is making a big difference on the court.

"Our chemistry is real this year," Ruff said. "We trust each other more and that helps with everything.

You can see it when we move the ball, when we talk on defense, and when things get tough."

Porter said leadership has been a key part of their improvement, especially among the upperclassmen.

"I feel like everyone is taking ownership," Porter said. "It's not just one person leading. We all hold each other accountable and that's made us stronger as a team."

Ruff said one of the team's biggest goals is to stay consistent no matter who they play.

"We want to show up every night with the same energy," Ruff said. "It doesn't matter if it's a home game or on the road. We're coming to compete and play our style of basketball."

The schedule ahead will test Winthrop early with some tough non-conference matchups, but players say they are ready for the challenge. Both Porter and Ruff said those early games will help them prepare for Big South play and give them a chance to see

how far they have come since last season.

Porter said the players want to compete, grow, and bring pride to Winthrop.

"We want to make this a season people remember," Porter said. "We've worked too hard not to."

The Lady Eagles will look to keep that momentum going as they return to the Winthrop Coliseum this Saturday to face off against Queens University in their next game at 4:30 pm.

The pushed out seniors phenomenon: How Winthrop's strategic housing plan leaves upperclassmen searching for space

Adriane Alston
Editorial Editor

Housing priority shifts under strategic plan

Winthrop University's prospective housing strategy is sparking concern among upperclassmen who are concerned that the plan prioritizes freshmen and sophomores while leaving juniors and seniors struggling to find affordable off campus housing.

In the recent Board of Trustees meeting on Oct. 30, the strategic plan depicted how housing will be guaranteed for first and second year students. The policy aims to promote retention and engagement for underclassmen, but for seniors this comes at an expense.

This shift brings more than a logic based challenge. It signals a loss of recognition for upper-level students who have contributed years of service, leadership and involvement to campus life.

Demolition reduces campus housing capacity

The change follows the demolition of Wofford and Richardson halls in 2024, two residence halls that once housed hundreds of students. Their removal reduced overall on-campus housing capacity at a time when freshman enrollment continued to grow.

According to Winthrop's Office of University Communications, the university is constructing a 95,000 square-foot residence hall that will house approximately 400 students. The new building is expected to open by 2027 and will be located near the current residence hall area.

Until that project is complete, space remains limited, and returning students are competing for a smaller number of available rooms.

Impact on juniors and seniors

For upperclassmen, the change in housing policy creates new challenges both academically and financially. Many juniors and seniors are

now required to seek housing off campus, often in surrounding areas of Rock Hill where rent prices have increased in recent years.

The shift also disrupts routines and schedules for students involved in rigorous academic programs. Juniors and seniors in fields such as education, social work and the sciences are typically enrolled in upper-level courses that demand more time, fieldwork and leadership responsibilities.

Students in the Richard W. Riley College of Education Sports and Human Sciences, for example, complete practicums and student teaching placements that require early mornings and long hours in K-12 schools. Commuting from off campus adds additional time constraints and expenses. Balancing coursework, professional preparation and part-time employment becomes increasingly difficult when housing is not within walking

distance of campus resources.

Comparisons and campus community concerns

Other universities have adopted practices that continue to recognize upperclassmen responsibilities. At Clemson University, for instance, freshmen are permitted from bringing cars to campus, which preserves parking availability for juniors and seniors managing off-campus internships or work obligations.

The contrast highlights differences in how institutions prioritize seniority. While some campuses design policies to reward returning upperclassmen students, Winthrop's current housing structure focuses on building a foundation of success for new students.

However, the long-term concern among many is how this may affect student involvement and campus culture. Upperclassmen

often hold executive positions in student organizations, serve as mentors to underclassmen and help sustain Winthrop's community traditions. Reduced access to on-campus housing could limit that presence and weaken engagement opportunities.

University growth and the path forward

Winthrop University continues to experience growing enrollment, with more than 1,000 freshmen and 350 transfer students arriving for the Fall 2025 semester. The expansion contributes to the demand for more residential space and has accelerated planning for new residence halls.

The "Winthrop" Instagram account has announced that Winthrop University has already offered admission to "2000+ future Eagles," as of Oct. 17.

That number does not mean every person offered admission in October will choose to come to Winthrop, but it does imply

that the university is intent on prioritizing student enrollment and admissions even if the number of students admitted doesn't necessarily correlate with the housing that is reasonably available. And more student admissions are yet to come, as we haven't even hit the half-way point of the academic year.

Administrators have stated that the goal of the housing guarantee is to improve the student experience for first and second-year students, ensuring they remain connected to campus life. Yet the lack of space for upperclassmen remains a pressing issue that affects affordability, convenience and student morale.

As the university moves forward with construction and future planning, juniors and seniors hope that future housing policies will consider their role in the Winthrop community not just as residents, but as leaders and mentors shaping the next generation of Eagles.

Before you share: The dangers of spreading misinformation through social media

An anonymous post on Fizz about an alleged assault in Phelps causes panic among students.

Kira Rich
Staff Writer

Within hours, uneasiness flooded the campus. Screenshots were shared amongst group chats, parents were called, and dorm doors were double locked, all before anyone had the chance to fact-check the information.

It all started with a vague yet concerning post on the anonymous social media platform Fizz warning students about an alleged sexual assault attempt in Phelps Hall.

The supposed assailant, described online as "a tall, dark-skinned individual with dreads, oval-shaped eyes, and eye bags," became the focus of widespread suspicion and anxiety.

Many students began sharing warnings by boosting Fizz posts or reposting screenshots on their stories, but as campus police began their investigation, the story quickly began to unravel.

According to WUPD Chief of Police Charles Yearta, officers responded to Phelps Hall on Oct. 29 after obtaining a report of someone allegedly entering students' rooms to assault them. "During that time, available security camera footage was reviewed and interviews conducted with Residence Life staff and the students who reported it to their parents," Yearta said in an email to students.

It soon became clear, however, that the

reports had spread entirely through social media and "thirdhand narratives." Officers conducted a floor-by-floor search of Phelps Hall and interviewed residents, but found no suspect or eyewitnesses.

After numerous interviews and evidence reviews, Yearta confirmed that "no credible information or evidence has been discovered and that it appears the reported incident did not occur."

Freshman Amanda Albano explained the frustration she felt when the accusations were proven false.

"I do feel really disappointed if this was simply just a made-up incident that someone made because sexual violence is really not a joke, it's something that should be taken seriously," said Albano.

The conclusion of the investigation left the campus in a state of mixed emotions. Students were relieved that no assault took place, but also frustrated at

how easily fear and misinformation turned into chaos. False reports like this, while rare, can have serious consequences.

They can warp the lives of those falsely accused, create distrust among students and make it even harder for true survivors of sexual assault to come forward.

The idea of not being believed or dismissed typically already looms over victims. However, the actuality of it happening increases tremendously when people make false accusations.

Students remain confused about the motive of the original poster. The lack of specificity in the given description made it difficult to narrow down the focus to a single individual. Some students believe that the accusations could have been made purely out of racist intent.

Sexual assault remains one of the most underreported crimes on college campuses. Survivors

already face social stigma, self-doubt, and fear of not being believed. When false reports dominate headlines, they risk overshadowing the very real issue of sexual violence that students face every day.

Sophomore Tanishiana Brunson hopes that this incident doesn't discourage future victims from sharing their stories. "Now some people might not want to talk about it because they'll be scared that no one will believe them, and that's very sad," said Brunson.

With the majority of the students ranging from ages 18 to 22, attending social events on and off-campus, or sharing living spaces, students often face unfamiliar environments and shifting boundaries.

On college campuses, 13% of all students experience rape or sexual assault, with rates even higher for undergraduate women (26.4%) and students with nonconforming

social identities (21%).

As students, we have a responsibility to take safety concerns into our own hands. However, it is still very important to pause and carefully assess before sharing information. As a community, we should look out for one another and ensure we fact-check information to avoid creating collective panic. Nowadays, the media plays a huge part in how we communicate with one another, and it has proven to be more impactful than word of mouth. What is posted online carries just as much weight as the words spoken to one another. Universities are obligated to respond quickly and effectively to avoid panic.

In the end, this incident should be a leading example of the dangers of spreading misinformation. What is spread in the name of safety should be completely transparent to maintain the strength of trust we have in each other.



photo via fizz.social

Fizz, the anonymous posting community

Continuing Indigenous traditions within the community

Celebrating Catawba Traditions through art, education and community engagement within the on-campus and off-campus community.



photo by Zoey Molina

Women performing a traditional indigenous Catawban song

Caroline Smith
Staff Writer

To kick off Homecoming Week at Winthrop University there was an Indigenous Pride Night to celebrate the Catawba Nation. Winthrop and the Catawba Nation have always had a close relationship, especially because the Catawba Nation has sold pottery with Winthrop students in the 19th century.

Today, there are around 5,000 Catawba citizens. Their roots date back to 12,000 years ago, but they have modernized their land to provide the community with a museum and nature trails that are open to the public at the reservation in Rock Hill, SC, and there is a second Catawba

reservation in Kings Hill, NC.

Events such as the Indigenous Pride cultural event at The Edge, in the DiGiorgio Campus Center, helps support the preservation of Indigenous culture with historical representations and general cultural appreciation.

Kassidy Plyler, the Catawba Nation Cultural Public Programs Specialist, talked about how important it is to remind people that the Catawba people are still here and not going anywhere.

“I think this kind of sparks a little bit of interest in the Native community. One, it showcases the community that’s here, and still here, still kind of thriving, still

having younger people involved and elders involved, it showcases just a variety of aspects of Native culture. The main takeaway is that we’re still here and still active, and vibrant in this community,” Plyler said.

Ms. Senior Catawba 2025-2026, Tonda Medlin, shared a similar sentiment.

“We’re still here, We’d like to get more people to come out and visit our reservation,” Medlin said.

The event, which was hosted on November 10, featured traditional Catawba performances, like the friendship dance and prayer dress dance.

Dalton Kimbrell, a sophomore psychology major, said he enjoyed participating in the friendship circle because of “how it

created a sense of community in such little time and effort.”

John Kirk, Director of Campus Programming, set up the event with the help of DSU. He hopes students learn just how engrained in the community the Catawba Nation is – as their land is only about 15 minutes from Winthrop’s campus.

“Listen, learn and show up. Support Indigenous voices,

share their stories and take time to understand the history and communities that exist right here around us,” Kirk said.

Kimbrell also expressed the importance of being educated on the Catawba Nation, but he also wants to see people engage in Native

communities more.

“It’s important that we are educated this way and that events take place in this manner so we as a greater community are exposed to different ways of life,” Kimbrell said.

The Nation fought alongside the Patriots, American colonists opposing British rule, during the American Revolution. They were the only tribe to fight the entirety of the war alongside the Patriots.

Although the Indian Reorganization Act tried to better the conditions of the tribes, the government policies were changed in the 1950s, and because of this the Catawba Nation was no longer federally recognized. In 1973, the Nation submitted a petition to Congress, in hopes of

federal recognition.

Native Americans also were unable to practice their traditional rituals or religions until the passage of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act in 1978. In 1993, the Catawba Nation, after a lengthy back and forth with the federal government, was finally recognized as its own Nation.

As of 2025, the tribe resides on 600 acres of land in Rock Hill. They are currently preparing to open a casino in Kings Mountain, N.C.

Another event that is open to the public as an opportunity for cultural appreciation will be at the Catawba Cultural Center in Rock Hill for the Yap Yè Iswà Festival on November 22, 2025.



photo by Zoey Molina

Kassidy Plyler (right) and Tonda Medlin (left) holding hands during the friendship dance



photo by Zoey Molina

Boys performing the Catawban hunt dance

Winthrop to secure outsourcing deal for Facilities Management

What this deal means for Winthrop Facilities Management employees

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

Winthrop University President Edward Serna announced his next steps in outsourcing facilities management via an email to faculty and staff on Oct. 26.

Currently, Winthrop plans to award SSC Services for Education as a facilities vendor, with the company handling “custodial, skilled trades, and maintenance services for the next 5 years,” according to Serna.

SSC specializes in managing university and K-12 grounds nationwide, and plans for a “greener facilities future,” according to their website.

SSC should arrive on campus around Dec. 1, Serna said.

This announcement is a follow-up to an announcement made last March, when Winthrop originally

began its Request for Proposal (RFP) process to search for a facilities management vendor.

At the time, high employee turnover in Rock Hill’s economic sphere left “one-third of maintenance positions vacant,” Serna said. Thus, a limited Reduction in Force (RIF) was predicted, alerting certain employees to their inevitable job loss when a vendor was located.

The email also explained that “those in higher-up positions” would keep their jobs, Butler said.

Serna’s recent email disclosed the RIF’s impact, revealing that 62 employees were impacted. Out of those employees, 39 stayed with Winthrop for the time being, while the remaining resigned.

For the former, James Grigg, the associate vice president for Facilities

Management, sent letters detailing a one-time bonus on Sept. 19, Serna said.

Additionally, a meeting was held Oct. 29 to connect employees with SCC hiring representatives, initiating a potential transfer process with the company, Serna added. Winthrop representatives also discussed retirement, benefits, and unemployment options for impacted employees.

This meeting occurred six days before the contract date of Nov. 3, aiming to give employees more time for the transition, Serna said. During this transition, SCC plans to create a team to “augment Winthrop employees to maintain our campus until the ‘go-live’ date,” he wrote.

Serna stated that Kevin Butler



photo via winthrop.edu

Winthrop’s facility management building

will release more information on the transition soon.

“While we regret that we could not be more communicative with employees as the RFP

process unfolded, the administrative team has been working diligently behind the scenes to negotiate the best possible outcomes for our remaining

employees. We sincerely hope many of these loyal employees will seek employment with SSC so we will continue to see them working on campus.”

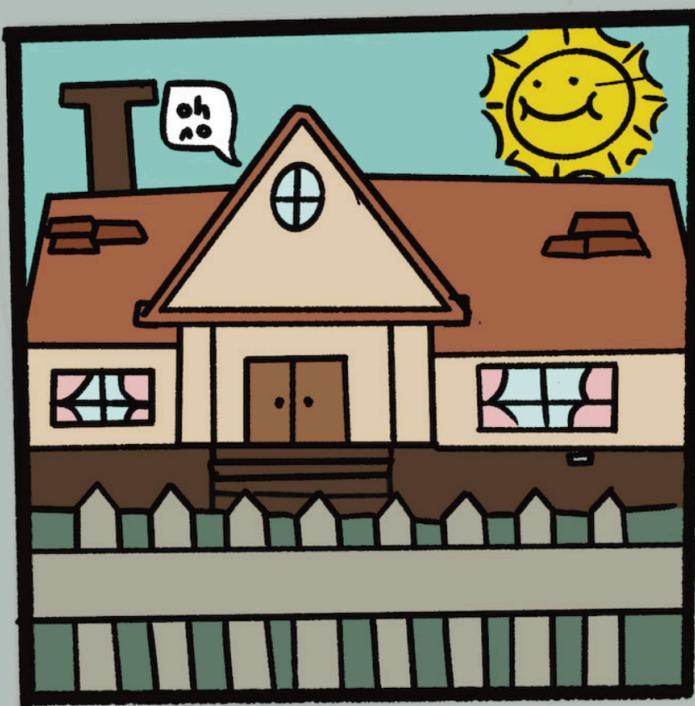
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