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THE JOHNSONIAN



Feb. 10, 2026

Winthrop University

FIGHT DURING HIGH POINT VS WINTHROP BASKETBALL GAME

During a women's basketball, two players began fighting on the court.

Featured on Page 2

HOUSING CRISIS CONTINUES ACROSS CAMPUS

With the freshman class increasing, a housing crisis arises with upperclassmen.

Featured on Page 2

CLUB SPOTLIGHT: MUSIC CREATORS CLUB

Get to know our club spotlight with the Music Creators Club!

Featured on Page 3

The battle between Winthrop and its Athletic Fund deficit

Since 2016, the deficit in the athletic fund has drastically increased and Winthrop is doing what it can to turn things around.

Omar Woods
Sports Editor

behind what caused both of these fund deficits can be evaluated.

During April in 2024, the issue of the Athletic Fund deficit became apparent to the Athletics Department. Each FY, or fiscal year, at Winthrop goes from July 1st. to June. 30.

In FY2016, Winthrop reported that their deficit was about \$4,000. At the beginning of FY2021, that number climbed to a staggering \$2.9 million.

The deficits in the Athletic fund have also been a contributor in the Student Activities fund deficit.

In an collaborative email sent by the Vice President for Finance and Business Affairs Kevin Butler and the Athletic Director Chuck Rey, they discussed what funds were reportedly in a deficit situation.

"At the close of the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, there were two university funds that were reported in a deficit situation," the email said. "One was the athletics scholarship fund. The other was the Student Activities fund, from which the core expenses of the Athletics Department are funded, along with other campus life activities."

According to a board executive session, the athletic fund receives its revenue from a variety of sources. These sources include, but are not limited to, sponsorships, ticket sales, camps, guarantees, and contributions from the NCAA.

In the documents that were obtained by The Johnsonian, context

Causes of the deficit

What started the issue of the deficit has been attributed to the amount of athletic scholarships given out in the past three fiscal years. These documents identified athletics as a main cause of the deficit due to limited guardrails which allowed for the scholarship overrun.

In FY2024 specifically, the only sports, including E-sports, that did not overrun their budget were women's basketball, women's soccer, and volleyball.

In the document, it stated that at the time, the lack of managers in the department allowed individual coaches to make scholarship offers.

"Coaches have been making scholarship offers without a limit or review process before scholarships are posted," the document said.

"No internal monitoring of offers within Athletics was taking place."

In the same email sent by Butler and Rey, they explained the causes of why the athletic scholarships were adding to the athletic fund deficit.

"In terms of the Athletic Scholarship Deficit, as enrollment at Winthrop declined, so did the amount the university could contribute, not only for athletic scholarships, but all scholarships," the email said. "To remain competitive in Division I (note that we



Winthrop Coliseum entrance, the home of Winthrop University Athletics

Photo via winthrop.edu

are below average in our athletics grant-in-aid in comparison to other Big South schools), Athletics continued to provide roughly the same amount of scholarships every year."

The documents mentioned that most of the deficit did not come from the Athletics department overspending their given budget. It mainly stated that the issue was that while the budget for Athletics increased, the revenue generated towards the Activity Fee declined.

The COVID-19 pandemic was also stated to be a main cause that has led to the athletic

deficit. Universities and colleges experienced large drops in attendance during and after the pandemic.

One page of the documents showed that two senior men's soccer players stayed for their COVID year. Also on the same page, it said that there was a half scholarship that carried over after the pandemic that came from a women's softball athlete during fiscal year 2022 to 2024.

Another part of the documents indicated that both men's and women's basketball distributed more money than their scholarships officially

allotted, with men's basketball having a cap of 13 while women's basketball cap is 15.

"There are a few factors that caused the overrun: Basketball used more of their allotted scholarships (13 for men and 15 for women)," the document said.

It also stated that both basketball programs rarely use all of their allotted scholarships, but the extra COVID year was the cause of them going over their scholarship cap.

The email sent by Butler and Rey further discussed a direct connection between the pandemic, lower

attendance rates, and the fund deficits at Winthrop.

"The deficit in the Student Activity fund is attributable to two main causes: the expanded cost to maintain NCAA Division I's required minimum of 12 athletic programs in an environment of rising costs, particularly the increasing expense of team travel, and lower enrollments in the wake of the pandemic which generated less Student Activity Fee income," the email said.

"There is a direct connection between the pandemic and both

Continued on Page 4

Rock Hill locals and students join protesting forces

Moderate crowds show up to support local "Abolish Ice" protest.



Protest sign reading "no one is illegal on stolen land"

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Gabriela Griggs
Staff Writer

Both Winthrop students and Rock Hill locals showed out on Sunday, Feb. 8 to protest against the practices of the U.S Immigration and Customs Enforcement, otherwise known as ICE. The event's initiation came from Winthrop student Mars Simpson, secretary and co-founder of Rising Artists of Winthrop.

"America is no place for fascism," the protest announcement reads, "[Come] engage in a peaceful protest with us against the neo-nazi regiment."

The protest was born from frustrations following multiple aggressive, deadly, and brutal raids on homes and communities by ICE following the presidential

inauguration of Donald Trump.

Students and locals stood along both sides of Dave Lyle Boulevard, one of the most actively used and primary roads in Rock Hill. Protesters stood for a couple hours, holding signs, chanting, and cheering for passing cars that honked in support of the cause.

Many of the present Winthrop students had much to say about the cause, like WU sophomore and environmental science major Alisa Olive.

"What brings me out here today is seeing all the injustices happening across our nation, with ICE, and [because] my family, [including] my grandma who immigrated here from Vietnam, have very contradicting political beliefs with

mine," Olive said. "My mom is first gen and she doesn't see why ICE is an issue, so that really affects me, and I needed to come out here and just stand with everybody else."

At the protest, many students came with signs already made. In the week leading up to the protest, campus groups such as the Student Environmental Action Coalition, also known as SEAC, in collaboration with Rising Artists of Winthrop and the Winthrop Socialist Student Union held meetings where students created signs and learned protesting etiquette.

"We're here to bring some awareness, learn how to protest in our community, and learn

Continued on Page 3

Bailey Wimberly | Editor-in-Chief

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Police Blotter



Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

Toilets overflow in buildings across campus in late January

Between Jan. 25 and Jan. 28, toilets overflowed in three separate buildings across the Winthrop campus.

The first toilet overspill happened on January 25 in McBryde Hall. While conducting a walk-through of the building, a WUPD officer observed an overflowing toilet causing a “large amount of water”, according to the incident report in the January daily case log. The second incident occurred the same day at The Courtyard, where a WUPD officer responded to the building in reference to an uncontrollable toilet.

The final incident occurred on Jan. 28, when a WUPD officer responded to room 406 in East Thomson Hall in reference to a toilet that “would not flush and had overflowed into the bathroom,” according to the report for the incident.

In all three cases, Facilities Management was notified of the situation.

Homeless man caught showering in track and soccer complex, trespassed

A WUPD officer responded to the university track and soccer complex on Feb 2. in response to a subject who had left their belongings in the locker room. The subject said that he was currently homeless and had taken a shower when he thought he had been seen, causing him to walk out and shut the door with his belongings still inside. The officer allowed the subject to retrieve his items, and the subject was trespassed.

Students referred to Dean for kicking soccer ball in Phelps, yell “City Boy” at complainer

A WUPD officer responded to the second floor of Phelps Hall in reference to two subjects kicking a soccer ball in the hallway. The incident report in the case log states that when the complainant, they started yelling “City Boy”. The students were advised by the officer to stop and were referred to the Dean of Student.



mytjnow.com

Women’s basketball player suspended by Big South Conference

A fight on the court during the Eagles’s conference game against High Point University has led to the suspension of Tocarra Johnson.

Evi Houston
News Editor

Tocarra Johnson, No. 25 on Winthrop University’s women’s basketball team, has been suspended for an altercation during the University’s Big South Conference game against High Point University. The suspension was announced on Feb. 7 by Commissioner Sherika A. Montgomery.

“The Big South Conference, in accordance with its Bylaws on ethical conduct, expects all student-athletes, coaches, athletic department personnel, and Conference staff to uphold the highest standards of ethics, sportsmanship, and integrity at all times,” the Conference’s website shared.

Johnson, a junior psychology major who joined Winthrop University last semester, will be suspended for eight games. This accounts for the remainder of the season, unless Winthrop advances to the final tournament games.

The altercation which led to Johnson’s suspension took place at the Winthrop Coliseum on Feb 4. In the final fifteen seconds of the game, with the Eagles fourteen points below the High Point Panthers, Johnson took multiple blows at High Point player Nevaeh Zavala.

Zavala was standing behind Johnson and wrapping her arms around Johnson’s torso and neck right before the fight, attempting to prevent her from grabbing the ball. Zavala did not retaliate, and referees and players from both teams quickly surrounded Johnson to

end the skirmish. The Winthrop Police Department also responded to the scene and were involved in

in three Winthrop players and one High Point player being ejected from the game,” according to their report.

tension which had been building up throughout a high-stakes conference game may be a factor. The

of frustration amongst the Eagles and Panthers.

The game ended soon after the fight was addressed, with High Point University taking home the victory and a final score of 88-74.

Winthrop women’s basketball has received an unusual amount of attention from the incident, with reporting from the Washington Post and New York Post among other outlets, as well as posts of the fight on social media.

Before a suspension was officially announced, Commissioner Montgomery issued a statement the day after the game.

“The Big South Conference holds all student-athletes, coaches, administrators, and representatives of institutional interest to the highest standards of ethical conduct and sportsmanship. The events that occurred during the High Point University at Winthrop University women’s basketball contest last night represented a significant departure from those expectations and from the values of the Conference. Unethical conduct -- and specifically fighting -- will not be tolerated at any level.”

Montgomery continued, “The Big South Conference takes full responsibility for upholding the integrity of its competition and ensuring accountability when standards are not met. I personally apologize to those impacted and remain committed to maintaining an environment rooted in respect, fairness, and sportsmanship.”



Winthrop women’s basketball player on the court

Photo by Jackson Stanton

separating the teams. “The altercation resulted

What exactly spurred the fight is unknown, but the

final seconds of the game were likely a culmination

Housing for upperclassmen crisis continues

A projected high incoming freshman class at Winthrop University continues to cause frustration among upperclassmen in regard to housing placements for the coming semester.

Caroline Smith
Staff Writer

Winthrop University’s upperclassmen are still facing the consequences of the increasing sizes of the incoming freshmen classes. The Class of 2029 is roughly 1,014 students, which is about 200 more than the Class of 2027.

In addition, students are already experiencing problems with their housing placements and how the campus functions. The buildings are out-dated, with many issues, like minimal air conditioning that functions properly.

Although the upperclassmen are upset with the incoming freshmen classes, Residence Life has been actively trying to address all of the comments and concerns from parents and students.

According to Jarad Russell, Assistant Dean and Director of Residence Life, “We have spoken with Apartment and Corporate Relocation Services [ACRS].”

ACRS is a service that specializes in locating affordable housing for the finances of students. Residence Life also plans to establish a website that

will help assist students in their transitions off-campus if applicable, said Russell.

One of the reasons that students are struggling to find affordable housing off-campus is because of their financial and geographic barriers. However, to mitigate that as much as possible the housing located by ACRS will be financially comparable to on-campus housing.

Additionally, “any aid that exceeds tuition costs is refunded directly to the student to pay off-campus rent,” said Russell. Russell believes that this will allow upperclassmen to pay a similar amount of room and board off-campus.

This will allow the incoming freshmen to live in the dorms, which is a way for them to find where they fit into the community. “This builds a vibrant ‘core’ to our campus life,” said Russell.

Incoming freshmen figuring out where they belong assists in building them up for academic success with support from the campus clubs, events, and social activities. Campus life is more than just living in a residence

hall and attending classes. “It’s unfair that the upperclassmen are not getting priority when we have been here longer,” said junior, Logan Howard.

The University bases their idea on the fact that upperclassmen have more experience with campus life and the functions of things. Freshmen are completely out of their comfort zones with the new lifestyles they are introduced to. “We value our upperclassmen; they are the leaders of our campus. To accommodate as many as possible, we are actively reviewing exemption requests for sophomores

who wish to move off-campus early,” said Russell.

Winthrop also anticipates having new infrastructure built to accommodate everyone. According to Julia Longshaw, Winthrop’s News and Media Services Manager, Winthrop will be fast-tracking the construction of additional residence halls.

“We will release as many sophomores that wish to move off-campus as are interested, so that we can create additional bed spaces for upperclassmen,” said Longshaw.

In the meantime, the juniors and seniors that wish to stay on-campus, or in local comparable housing will be placed on a wait list that is based on credit hour—the people who have earned the most thus far are placed at the top. Every upperclassmen wishing to stay will be placed in order of their hours earned, and when there is an opening from an underclassmen, that room will be available to the waitlist.

Winthrop is making a conscious effort to please everyone who wishes to stay on campus and those who do not.



The Courtyard at Winthrop University on Alumni Drive

Photo by Jackson Stanton

“Abolish ICE” protests Cont.

how to give back and be more aware of the problems we have in our society right now,” president of SEAC Wally Rine said.

“I’ve been seeing videos of [ICE] doing terrible things to regular human people, my peers, so I just wanted to come here and show my support, whether it’s alone or with a big group,” Sophomore English student Vincent Schrock said.

“I believe that what is going on right now is very terrible and there needs to be people speaking up about it. It’s very grim right now, and I think that the more people organize, the more people come together... [will help] the people who are affected know that there are people who still believe in the right thing to do,” Senior Musical Theatre student Mark Blankenship-Brown said.

“[I’m here] for love, for my future, for my friends’ future. You make noise and you take up space and people know what you need. Rock Hill is beautiful and this community is so tight and

cares for each other and holds each other up so well, I’m just so glad to be here,” Junior Fine Arts student Cassie Bleitz said.

Proper peaceful protest guidelines include proper, accurate preparation, thorough knowledge of the protesting environment and the surrounding area, avoiding provocative behavior, prioritizing de-escalation, and maintaining peace. The American Civil Liberties Union, a nonprofit American civil rights organization, has accessible information on protesters’ rights for both participants and aspiring organizers on their website, [aclu.org](https://www.aclu.org).

Nearby, a group of participants set up tents near the protesting location where aspiring participants made their own signs on the spot.

Students participated with signs that read “Melt, Crush, and Abolish Ice,” among other phrases that captured the meaning of the protest: being against the current operations, activity, and practices of the U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement agency.

Besides assorted signs, many students also held their own ideas of what kind of change they desired in government practices.

“I would like to see a more fair and easier immigration process for those trying to come into our country. I think currently, it’s too difficult for people to become U.S. citizens, and it really

shouldn’t be. My mom talks about my grandma taking all these tests to become a citizen, and she studied for years and years, and it really shouldn’t be some years long process,” Olive said, “and if we want people who aren’t U.S. citizens out, why don’t we make it easier for those [who want] to come in?”

“Hopefully we build

a future where people are safer, and much more knowledgeable about the issues that we have, and have the ability to understand what’s wrong, to see what’s wrong, and understand what to do about it,” Rine said.

“I just want to see people treated like people, not less than people,” Schrock said.

“The fact that they have killed a white man

in broad daylight means that absolutely nobody else is safe, and that is very frightening. I want to support my community and the people here the best that I can,” Blankenship-Brown said.

The protest was both conducted and concluded peacefully, with active efforts to not impose on the community, but to raise awareness towards government actions.



Winthrop women’s basketball player on the court

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Club spotlight: music creators club

A collaborative space for producers, singers, and musicians at Winthrop.

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

Every Tuesday in the Dacus Library studio, or sometimes a home studio just outside Winthrop, the Music Creators Club (MCC) meets for its weekly session.

Founder of the MCC Jaylin Brown said it is a place for Winthrop musicians to meet up and collaborate.

“I would describe MCC as a conglomerate community or network where we have creators that come in, and y’all can find ways to collaborate with other creators,” Brown said.

Getting his start on an old Roland MIDI keyboard, Brown has made music on and off for 10 years.

“I made my first beat when I was, like, in fourth grade,” Brown said.

Brown entered Project MIDI while attending Winthrop, a producer contest hosted by the DiGiorio Student Union in 2023. Six students entered, and these students later founded “Nothing to Something,” a music collective.

This collective went on to release “Something From Nothing,” a collaborative album that inspired Brown to form the MCC, he explained.

“I ended up thinking, man, my entire college career I’ve always wanted to be able to collaborate with producers and come together and make stuff, because I was kind of just doing it on my own,” Brown said.

Brown has since graduated from Winthrop and now serves the club as an advisor. However, this means that many of the club’s

leadership positions are vacant.

“Hopefully, we can keep Project MIDI as a thing that continues on-going, so we have a producer contest. I feel like that’s something that I want MCC to be known for is Project MIDI, and then our artist Student Showcase.”

Antonio Brown, the previous president after Jaylin Brown’s departure, echoed this statement.

“I hope that the future and remaining students of Winthrop can continue to maintain the space for people to come together, create, and share their art.”

Despite these vacancies, many of the MCC’s current members are carrying the torch, including Nick Zоргias, a music technology major and MCC regular.

“I wanted to get

involved with a community of artists who I can learn from and improve my own skills when it comes to songwriting and production,” Zоргias said.

Specializing in a style called “post-metalcore,” Zоргias is an aspiring chair of the MCC and wants to spread awareness of its existence.

“I would like for the club to be more public rather than something that you would need to be in the know about,” Zоргias said. “We have many great musicians at Winthrop in different spaces, so this should be a place where they can come together as a community.”

Another recurring member is Karson Kane, a cybersecurity major and hardcore EDM producer.

Kane’s mother exposed

him to various bands growing up, and this, combined with his love of rhythm games (music video games), led him to music production.

“I just started falling in love with a lot of cool producers and music creators out there in the world, and I’m just like, this is really neat, I like this stuff,” Kane said.

Eventually, Kane found the MCC’s listing on Winthrop’s club website and reached out. He quickly received an email back.

“Throughout the past couple years, I’ve had some thoughts about wanting to try to, not get better with music, or like or be professional with it, but I’ve always just thought about it recently as just keeping it as a side thing or like a hobby,” Kane said. “I never really put too much

recent thought into trying to make it big with it. I just wanted to just put my sound out there and just hope people like it.”

You can follow the MCC @winthromcc on Instagram, and join the linked discord for meeting updates and resources.

“I just want this to grow as much as possible,” Jaylin Brown said.

Keep up with the featured artists here:

Jaylin Brown:
@jalnmusic

Antonio Brown:
@theonly_tonio

Nick Zоргias:
@_soundsbynick_ / @

evergrey_noise

Karson Kane:
@djicore_lofi

For more information on future events, see the cultural events calendar at winthrop.org.



Winthrop’s Music Creator Club at their event “Business Boomin”

Photo via Instagram @winthromcc

Athletic Fund deficit Cont.

rising prices and lower enrollments throughout higher education.”

Esports is another sport that was reported to be at a deficit. However, this deficit seems to stem from an entirely different reason altogether.

One specific page of the documents that detailed the esports fund deficit explained why they ended up going over budget for FY24. It stated that because of the positive revenue generated from E-sports in FY22, the budget was “accepted on the basis of increased enrollment.”

It later states that the “new esports space

delayed opening until November 2023.” Due to this delay, Winthrop was unable to recruit new students for the program.

The budget for Esports in FY24 was \$637,308. In FY24, it was reported that the program had spent \$998,717.

Winthrop’s current plan against the deficit

Starting in FY2024, Winthrop has been taking action against the growing deficit. The email sent by Butler and Rey discussed potential solutions.

“Enrollment at

Winthrop has been increasing significantly over the past few years. In addition, the university moved to a different tuition model beginning this academic year, as part of its Tuition Transparency Initiative,” the email said.

“The amount of the Student Activity Fee and other fees that were previously bundled in one tuition amount were separated out. This provided an opportunity to adjust that particular fee allocation to a more sustainable budget at no increased cost to the students.”

The documents further expressed and detailed the strategy to incorporate a more secure and stable system to the athletic scholarship process.

This would include having meetings with the head coaches of each team in order to review scholarship amounts for that academic year and creating “an external three-way checks and balances structure between Business Office, Athletics, and Financial Aid” in order to account for fund availability of scholarships.

The document also proposed that each sports

team should have a reserve account or budget for 5th years to account for athletes that may redshirt for their athletic season.

According to the documents, this process would also cause no disruption to the recruiting processes.

The email sent by Butler and Rey also explained the plans and methods set in place for the prevention of there being an Athletic fund deficit in the future.

They also mentioned a specific name the university gave the strategic plan aimed towards athletic

scholarships.

“The methods Winthrop now uses to create its annual budgets, coupled with increased monitoring, will ensure that not only will these deficits be contained, they will erode over time,” the email said.

“In addition, Athletics has worked diligently in recent years to increase its overall revenue to help reduce the institution’s total financial commitment to athletic scholarships. This is in alignment with the university’s strategic plan, Winthrop: United in Excellence.”

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Students voice safety and accessibility concerns over Joynes–Byrnes walkway following winter storms

Adriane Alston
Editorial Editor

Following recent winter snow storms, students have raised concerns regarding the safety of the walkway connecting Joynes Hall and Byrnes Auditorium, a route consistently used by students traveling to and from their respective courses.

Consistent reports of slippery surfaces and lingering ice after the recent wintry weather storms have led numerous students to discuss whether the path is being adequately maintained by construction crews and facilities management during periods of inclement weather amidst the ongoing construction plans.

The walkway is a central connector between numerous academic buildings, making it difficult for students to avoid even when conditions

become dangerous. After snowfall, students reported a large amount of ice patches remaining on the surface for days, increasing the risk of slipping during their daily commutes to class.

Student Publications are dedicated to broadcasting the issue, particularly as multiple storms impacted the campus in a short period of time and weather conditions are still an ongoing issue in the state. Some students argue that the current design and architecture of the walkway, including its slope and drainage, contributes to the acquisition of ice and makes the area especially dangerous during current winter conditions.

Concerns surrounding the walkway extend beyond general pedestrian safety and prompt concerns about accessibility. Students with mobility-based disabilities or those who rely on mobility aids have

expressed that certain weather conditions can render the walkway inaccessible for them. When snow and ice are not promptly addressed, these conditions can limit students’ ability to safely navigate campus and attend classes in a timely and safe manner.

From a student standpoint, it is easy to worry about how the continued presence of icy conditions amidst the winter weather can directly impact the Joynes–Byrnes walkway, creating the perception that student safety is not being prioritized by university officials. For students who rely on the route daily, the lack of visible or immediate improvement following winter storms can heighten frustration and cause concern, particularly when alternative routes are not always realistic for students to take.

However, the Campus

Safety Committee of the Winthrop Student Government Association is actively taking steps to address these concerns and advocate for the wellbeing of students and overall safety of the campus. The committee will conduct a campus safety walk on March 4 2026, with the goal of identifying hazardous conditions on campus, highlighting accessibility based concerns like the lagging ADA push buttons and evaluating impacts to pedestrian safety and accessibility across campus.

The Campus Safety committee will be walking around the campus allowing students and university representatives to observe conditions firsthand and better understand the challenges faced by students. Areas of concern, including the Joynes–Byrnes walkway, will be assessed, and feedback gathered during

the walk will be used to develop recommendations aimed at improving safety and accessibility for students, staff and faculty across campus..

University officials worked to clear snow and ice as quickly as possible following winter weather, prioritizing high-traffic walkways. Despite these efforts, students have continued to question whether current measures are sufficient, particularly in areas where ice appears to persist longer than expected.

Some students have suggested that more proactive solutions may be necessary, such as increased salting, improved drainage, or long-term structural changes to reduce ice buildup. Others have emphasized the importance of clear communication so students are aware of what steps are being taken to address hazardous

conditions. The upcoming safety walk has been met with caution and optimism among students, many of whom view it as an important step toward accountability and improvement. Several students have expressed interest in participating or sharing their experiences to ensure their concerns are documented and addressed.

As winter weather continues to pose challenges for campus navigation, the March 4 Safety Walk represents an opportunity for collaboration between students and university leadership. While concerns remain, the efforts of the Campus Safety Committee signal a commitment to addressing safety and accessibility issues and ensuring that student voices remain central to discussions surrounding campus infrastructure.



Metal walkway and construction between Byrnes Auditorium and Thurmond Building

Photo by Zoey Molina

Winthrop students navigate housing challenges ahead of fall semester

Juniors, seniors, and underclassmen adjust to limited on-campus options.

Maurion Jamison
Staff Writer

Walking around campus this week, housing came up repeatedly. With the fall semester approaching, many students at Winthrop University are focused on classes, clubs, and roommates, but for some, where they will live next year is their biggest concern.

Juniors and seniors discovered in late January that freshmen and sophomores get first pick at on-campus housing. This means upperclassmen often must look for apartments off-campus, sometimes at higher prices than expected and with limited availability.

“I honestly think it

is a big deal because upperclassmen such as myself have to now worry about if we are going to be able to pay for off-campus housing, which is expensive as a college student,” junior Shane King said. “It is stressful because you want to focus on classes, but housing becomes this huge worry.”

Many students understand the reasoning behind the priority system, but it does not make the scramble for off-campus housing any easier. “I get why freshmen should get first pick,” junior Shadrach Nvodjo said. “It is their first year. They need to feel settled. But it does make things harder for the rest of us.”

Senior Dominique Nesbitt, said it is just part of college life.

“It is kind of a scramble every year,” Nesbitt said. “You just have to start early and hope for the best. Nothing is really new here, just a little more stressful this time around.”

Some students have already found apartments, but they are paying more than expected. “I did not plan to spend this much on rent,” said sophomore Emily Rivers. “The good places near campus are gone fast. You have to grab whatever you can, even if it is not perfect.”

Sophomores, who are often given priority over upperclassmen, said the system has benefits for them as well.

“It is nice to know I will have a dorm close to campus,” WU sophomore Kendale Cooke said. “It helps me focus on school and get settled before everything else starts. I understand why it might be harder for the older students, but it is helpful for me.”

University officials say the priority system is meant to help new students feel at home and build community early in their college careers. Most students understand the reasoning, but they wish there were more options for those further along in their studies.

“I get it,” King said. “It is not about taking anything away from the freshmen. But it is still a reality for juniors

and seniors. You have to be ready to move off campus, and that is expensive and stressful.”

Despite the unexpected challenges that the changes to the university housing policy have brought, some students are making the best of it.

“We are all just trying to survive college,” Nvodjo said. “If that means sharing a house with three other people or paying a little extra rent, we do it. It is all part of the experience.”

By the time the semester starts, most upperclassmen will have found a solution. Walking across the quad, there is a mix of excitement and uncertainty in the air. For many, housing is not just about a place to

sleep. It is about planning, budgeting, and figuring out how to make the next year work.

“I just hope everyone finds something that works for them,” Rivers said. “It is stressful, but it is not the end of the world. You deal with it, like everything else in college.”

The housing shuffle may be challenging, but it is also a story of students adapting, prioritizing, and learning how to navigate life on their own. For freshmen and sophomores, it is a chance to get settled. For upperclassmen, it is another challenge to manage, one that is shaping their college experience in unexpected ways.

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February 10, 2026

Measles makes a comeback: severe outbreak in South Carolina

Viral disease spreading throughout the upper part of South Carolina.

Dakota Gold
Staff Writer

The South Carolina Department of Public Health confirmed a measles outbreak on Oct. 2, 2025, in the upstate. As of Feb. 3, 2026, the DPH is reporting 920 cases of measles surrounding Spartanburg County.

Measles, or rubeola virus, is a highly contagious viral disease with symptoms such as a cough, fever and runny nose, followed by a severe rash.

Complications can occur including pneumonia, encephalitis, and even death.

There are currently 443 people in quarantine and 20 in isolation. The latest date for quarantine release is Feb. 24.

Several schools were affected by the outbreak, including Clemson University.

At Clemson, a confirmed

positive test resulted in the isolation of an individual.

An email sent from the university said, "The individual has isolated per DPH requirements, and DPH is conducting contact tracing with individuals who may have been exposed and outlining isolation and quarantine protocols."

Clemson Student Health Services data states that 98% of main campus students have provided proof of immunity, according to the email.

Clemson students shared their thoughts on the outbreak.

Claire Willis, an undergraduate business student, said, "I was definitely nervous about it when all we heard was that there was an outbreak. Since the person was isolated, I have not heard much."

Willis also shared her thoughts on the

immunization of measles, as it is a required vaccination for the university.

She said that health officials came to the university to provide MMR vaccines.

Willis said, "The only way a person could not receive the vaccine is for religious purposes, which is reasonable, but it's definitely irresponsible not to get them coming into college because it can cause outbreaks."

Before this outbreak, there had not been an outbreak of measles since before 2000, following the 1989 shift to a 2-dose vaccination. This led to a declaration that the disease had been eliminated by the United States.

The Center for Disease Control will meet on April 13, 2026 to discuss if the U.S. still has its elimination status.

A person is contagious

for four days before and after the rash, so they can spread measles without them knowing they have it. The virus can also linger in the air for up to two hours after an infected person leaves the room.

The DPH said, "The majority of cases are close contacts of known cases. However, the number of public exposure sites indicates that measles is circulating in the community increasing the risk of exposure and the risk of infection for those who are not immune due to vaccination or natural infection."

According to the data on their website, 97% of those infected were unvaccinated. The DPH released a list of exposure sites on their website along with data of the locations and ages of the infected.

The majority of cases were of those from the

ages of 5 to 17 years old, therefore schools are at the highest risk for exposure.

The DPH recommends not to send children to school if they have any symptoms and to report any positive tests.

The outbreak has brought up controversy about immunization and vaccines. According to a recent study by the National Library of Medicine, models have shown declining rates in childhood vaccination.

The NLM said, "Based on estimates from this modeling study, declining childhood vaccination rates will increase the frequency and size of outbreaks of previously eliminated vaccine-preventable infections, eventually leading to their return to endemic levels."

However, the NLM

acknowledges vaccine hesitancy and mistrust towards public health institutes following the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

They said that the pandemic played a role in hesitancy because a politicized emergency response fueled misinformation, therefore causing mistrust.

The NLM also said, "Efforts to rebuild public trust must begin by prioritizing science over politics."

Following the current measles outbreak, the CDC and other health institutes are advocating for vaccines.

The DPH said, "The measles vaccine (MMR and MMRV) is the best way to protect yourself and others against measles."

Any additional information about the outbreak can be found at dph.sc.gov.

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