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THE JOHNSONIAN



Winthrop University

WINTHROP PARTNERS WITH ATRIUM HEALTH

Winthrop launches their new partnership with Atrium Health and “The Pearl.”

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WINTHROP BASEBALL BUILDS MOMENTUM

With strong opening weeks, Winthrop baseball starts off hot.

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ADDRESSING RUMORS INVOLVING DINING SERVICES

After multiple dining surveys, Chartwells addresses rumors.

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Students socializing at the Undergraduate Juried Exhibition reception

Photo by Zoey Molina

38th Annual Undergraduate Juried Exhibition hosted in Winthrop’s Rutledge Gallery

Composed of submitted art by students across various fine arts.

Gabriela Griggs
AC&T Editor

Sydney Meetze
Staff Writer

On March 5, 2026, the Winthrop College of Visual and Performing Arts hosted the 38th annual Undergraduate Juried Exhibition Reception in Rutledge Gallery, also known as UJE. The exhibition was completely composed of student work, including pieces that were created as finals for classes like Introduction to 2D and Beginning Painting.

The University defines the gallery as “[an] exhibition featuring works of undergraduate students from the

Departments of Fine Arts and Design.” The selection process for the gallery, however, involves individuals from outside the campus community.

“We bring in a juror to pick the work. Students digitally submit their work, [while] I do a campaign to raise money for the galleries as well as awards for students,” gallery director Mike Gentry said.

Gallery assistant and sophomore Lily McKay said that, “any student who is an undergraduate in fine arts can submit their work, and there is one juror who looks at all the work and goes through a series of weeding things out and figuring out what should

be in the show.”

Gentry spoke about his reasons for selecting Rebecca Henderson as the juror for this year’s show.

“She is an art curator—she has a degree in sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth, [and] she’s also a comedian,” Gentry said. “She’s got really great opinions on art and that’s why I really wanted to work with her. I chose somebody with credentials in the area who’s also not super familiar with Winthrop.”

The student gallery assistants are also incredibly involved in the process of putting the gallery together.

“The process of setting everything up is really fun,” McKay said. “The

student gallery assistants get to assist a lot in organizing everything and figuring out where things should go. We had a really fun time getting to set everything up.”

Morgan Spargo, a junior studying sculpture and ceramics, is one of the students whose piece was accepted into the show. “[My piece is called] Perspective,” Spargo said. “It was a project for a digital collage, which is something that’s outside of my major, outside of my expertise. I made it 3D [and] more visually enticing by putting it on a box and putting things inside of it, lights and smells, so it attracts

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War in Iran escalates into its second week

Dr. Muhhamet Asil, professor of political science at Winthrop University, provides analysis on major concerns surrounding the conflict between Iran, Israel and the United States.

Evi Houston
News Editor

The war in Iran has dominated headlines ever since it began on Feb. 28, in what the Trump administration terms “Operation Epic Fury.” Intentions behind the conflict remain unclear and include the assassination of Iranian leader Ali Khamenei, with hopes of ending his regime, concerns over nuclear and missile development within Iran and geopolitical pressures from Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The United States and Israel continue to levy strikes and missile attacks on Iran and the surrounding region, which the country has responded to with their own military action. Death tolls in Iran have surpassed 1,000 and seven U.S. service members have been killed, according to the Associated Press on March 9.

Dr. Muhhamet Asil, a political science professor at Winthrop University, joined the department last semester. He specializes in international relations and political theory, and agreed to share his perspective as a scholar of Middle East politics.

When asked about what students might be missing when thinking about the war in Iran, Asil said that the war should be seen within the broader context of changing

international relations. He argues that there is an international resurgence of competition based power-politics rather than cooperative rules-based systems, having a direct consequence on interactions with Iran.

“Over the past decade, key institutions and agreements that once structured relations with Iran [. . .] have been weakened or abandoned,” Asil said.

Asil notes the alliances and rivalries which make this war more complex, such as a history of poor relations between Iran and Israel and cooperation between Iran and Russia. Along with this are two opposing groups of countries which shape the conflict: the United States, Israel, and their Arab partners; and Iran with their regional partners, including Yemen and Syria.

President Trump’s unconventional leadership style is relevant to the conflict as well, which Asil termed a “madman” strategy. “The logic behind this approach is that if adversaries believe a leader might do almost anything, they may be more willing to make concessions,” Asil said.

There are downsides to this strategy, such as the risk of dangerous miscalculations on behalf of the United States.

Iranian nuclear developments are a critical motivator for the war. From the American perspective, “The key

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Winthrop continued their streak of success on the big stage

At the Big South Indoor Track and Field Championship, Winthrop’s Track Athletes broke records while pushing their bodies to the absolute limit.

Omar Woods
Sports Editors

Since the beginning of the track and field program in 1993, Winthrop has produced and developed numerous athletes over the years. In these three decades, many of these athletes have recorded times and distances exceptional enough to be documented in the school track and field record book.

In the 2025-2026 season alone, the current track & field team has broken at least nine records so far in this season. At the most recent track meet, this pattern of shattering records was not broken.

On Feb. 27 and 28, the track and field team traveled to Tryon, N.C

to compete in the Big South Conference Indoor Championship. The event hosted seven other teams who also compete in the Big South conference, making it eight total teams who were in direct competition with one another.

Nerves and emotions were running high for some of the track runners prior to the most important track meet thus far in the season.

Sophomore track runner Tristen Patterson, who was a part of the 4x400 relay team that won first place in the event, described his thoughts and feelings before the championships actually took place.

“It was very exciting and nerve racking being

that it was my first Division 1 track meet with the Big South,” Patterson said. “It was definitely nerve racking the whole week just visualizing my race and just kind of being excited, nervous, and ready to go.”

These feelings of nervousness soon turned into excitement and determination when the track and field team stepped foot at the championship. Graduate student Kevin Brown, who was also a part of the gold winning 4x400 relay team and also ended up breaking the school record for the men’s 200 meter race, also explained his feelings when arriving at the meet.

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Darren Frazier leads pack around practice lap

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Bailey Wimberly | Editor-in-Chief

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Police Blotter



Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

Students use copier without permission, steal copy paper

A WUPD officer met with a complainant at the Bancroft Annex on Feb. 23 in reference to an altercation between the complainant and two students. The two students, a male and a female, were attempting to use the copier in an area where they were not permitted. The complainant told them to leave, which they did initially before returning to the area. They were told to leave again, and while doing so they took copy paper with them. The complainant was unable to identify the subjects.

Student loses tooth in West Center basketball injury

A WUPD officer arrived at the West Center on Feb. 23, where he observed an ambulance outside the building and EMS assisting a student who had been hit in the mouth while playing basketball. The student had collided with another student while playing and had his tooth knocked out. The injured student was advised to contact a dentist within 24 hours.

Homeless person encamping in softball complex bathroom trespassed from campus

A WUPD officer responded to the Terry Softball Complex on Feb. 24 in reference to a possible homeless person inside the women's bathroom. The officer found a female subject locked in the stall with a sleeping bag and her belongings. The subject was issued a trespass notice.

Marijuana seller placing sticky notes with dealer information on doors still at large

A WUPD officer responded near Walk2Campus on Feb. 24 in reference to a subject going around and leaving sticky notes on the doors that referred to selling marijuana and a phone number. The incident's status is listed as "active" in the case log for February.



mytjnow.com

Iran history Cont.

concern is the possibility that Iran could eventually nuclear-weapon state," Asil said.

Asil cited handlings of nuclear development in North Korea, where international agreements failed to prevent the country from obtaining a nuclear weapon. The United States and Israel may be taking a different approach with Iran, hoping that quick military action will prove more successful than lengthy negotiations.

Iran has already experienced political conflict with the United States and United Nations over nuclear development for many years. "Disputes over inspections, sanctions, and compliance have created deep mistrust on all sides," Asil said.

Another source of mistrust which bears some resemblance to the current conflict is the 1953 Iranian coup d'état, in which the United Kingdom and the U.S. helped to overthrow leader Mohammad Mosaddegh. While this did not involve lengthy military action, it did result in regime change that favored the United States' political and economic interests, including access to crude oil.

Many years down the line, resentment towards the United States and the installed regime culminated in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Iran hostage crisis, in which 52 Americans in Iran were detained for

444 days, ending in 1981.

The hostage crisis created a major public spectacle and led to political consequences both domestically and internationally. U.S. involvement in regime change was a factor in the crisis, making

century," he said. This led to continued hostilities following United States interference, a scenario at risk of repeating itself today.

Almost 75 years after the coup, outside involvement in Iranian

nationalist reactions and reinforce the legitimacy of hardline actors within the country," Asil said.

Mojtaba Khamenei, son of the former leader, was announced as the new Iranian supreme leader on March 9. Khamenei

ensure this.

Questions regarding the timeline of the war have surfaced, with large U.S. military deployments reminding Americans of previous long-lasting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Iran has a long history of resilience in the face of external pressure ... [so it] might not necessarily produce a quick political collapse," Asil said.

Asil sees the scope of the conflict partially dependent on public opinion in the United States, as the war could escalate or remain limited based on the response domestically.

Success on Iran's terms may be unconventional as well, as it can rely on "asymmetric tools" which put force on a stronger state without requiring as many resources. This includes shipping and oil costs and cyber operations.

Still, there is a possibility that President Trump's unpredictable strategy could speed up the war, leading to "rapid escalation or sudden de-escalation," Asil said. This rests on Iran's assessment of the United States' behavior, and the military strategies it is willing to attempt in response.

"The conflict with Iran is not just about nuclear policy or military strikes, but about deeper questions of regional power, historical mistrust, and how far great powers are willing to go when the rules of the international system begin to erode."



Iran flags waved in support of the country

Photo via Getty Images

diplomatic relations more contentious.

Asil agreed that Iranian memories of this coup could shape perceptions of potential regime change today.

"Many Iranians viewed the coup as an example of external powers overturning a popular political process and installing an authoritarian system that remained in place for another quarter

leadership (through the assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei) leads to more questions about the after effects of this approach on public opinion within Iran. Even if approval of the ayatollah was low, poor perceptions of the United States and Israel may sour the idea of "liberation" for Iranians.

"External intervention can easily trigger

will likely follow through with similar policies and approaches as his father, according to NPR.

President Trump expressed disappointment over the continuation of the Khamenei family reign, and has referenced that he would like to see different leadership and additional changes within the regime. It is unclear whether future military action would be taken to

No child left behind: Winthrop's collaboration with Atrium Health A new program offers STEM education to hospitalized learners.



The outside perspective of Winthrop's newest partner, "The Pearl"

Photo via atriumhealth.org

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

Winthrop is partnering with Atrium Health's "The Pearl," Charlotte's first-ever innovation district, according to a press release distributed on Feb. 12. The partnership will provide science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education for K-12 hospitalized students at Levine Children's Hospital (LCH).

"Winthrop is recognized as a leader in educator preparation, and this partnership reflects the innovative and caring environment we cultivate for our future teachers," Winthrop president Edward Serna said.

Winthrop's involvement with The Pearl is spearheaded by April Mustain, the professor of

special education and director of special education programs at the university. The collaboration allows Winthrop Teaching Fellows (a group of future educators) to experience real-world, non-traditional learning settings alongside their coursework, while simultaneously benefiting patients at LCH, she explained.

"Our first 13 Winthrop fellows of this inaugural initiative have recently completed their Children's Hospital orientation, and the first small groups will begin their sessions at Levine Children's Hospital at the end of this week," she said. "Weekly visits will continue until the end of the semester."

Mustain's passion for hospitalized learning stems from experience, as

her eldest daughter was diagnosed with D.R.E.S.S. syndrome in 2014, she said.

"She isn't a pediatric patient anymore, but she is my reason for this work. I watched her feel disconnected due to learning and social disruptions caused by her many hospitalizations," she explained.

Winthrop aims to support students one-on-one in their hospital rooms, alongside various classroom spaces at LCH, Mustain said. Additionally, students can broadcast learning opportunities from the Ryan Seacrest Recording Studio (a local studio inside the hospital), teach in the Infusion Room (during extensive treatments), and instruct outside at the newly installed rooftop garden, she added.

"I see this collaboration growing in depth and breadth by offering the opportunity to more education students and education-related fields such as Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), Social Work, Counseling, and more," Mustain said. "The Pearl is also so much bigger than our initiative, and I see connections to applied health and biological sciences, AI, and so much more."

She also invited Winthrop Provost Sebastian van Delden to tour the facilities, hoping to "plant the seeds of possibilities for so much more opportunity for Winthrop faculty, staff, and students."

Despite these plans for growth, Mustain said one logistical challenge remains; the

geographical distance between Winthrop and LCH. However, a system involving "chunks" of time has allowed students to schedule beforehand, she explained.

"I think scheduling will always present a unique challenge each semester, but I really like figuring out puzzles, and that's the way I approach this task."

Going forward, Mustain encourages those interested to email her at mustiana@winthrop.edu.

"Many chronically ill kids don't 'look' sick every single day, but the impacts of their illness on their physical and cognitive aptitudes, well, it needs to be better understood by teachers. What better way to do that than to prepare (teachers) in an authentic hospital setting before they ever walk into their own classrooms?"

Undergraduate Juried Exhibition Cont.

people and uses your senses, making you look deeper and have different perspectives on the piece.”

Spargo was not the only artist pushing boundaries with her work. Across the gallery, it was evident that many interdisciplinary and large scale three-dimensional works had been accepted into the show.

“I really appreciate how many sculptures there are in this, because [Winthrop juried shows are] usually 2D centered, so it’s really nice to see more of that in here,” Spargo said. “I think that, based on the past shows we’ve had, this [one is] the most ‘in your face.’

It’s filled with amazing work, and no matter where you look, you’re going to see something good.”

Cassi Bleitz, a junior fine arts major, also contributed to the exploration of art forms with her accepted piece.

“[It] was for my interdisciplinary class, it was a final piece, and I was actually in residency at Goodyear Arts in Charlotte during that time, so it kind of became a conglomerate between that and my class,” Bleitz said. “I basically just had this really nice space, and this set, and room, lighting, and resources, so I would haul up to Charlotte and it was

meditative in how I got to travel and be in this space and create this new thing. It’s very different from anything I’ve ever made.”

“Winthrop’s art seems to change over the years,” Gentry said. “Sculpture is very prominent in our program right now, and the students are much more ambitious in scale. If you look around the gallery, we have pieces hanging, we have metal sculptures leaning against the wall, we have someone performing inside of a chrome horse, so the ambition of the students and scale has been really interesting and inspiring.”

However, accepting



People viewing a sculpture at the reception

Photo by Zoey Molina



People viewing artwork at the reception

Photo by Zoey Molina

many large scale pieces into a gallery with limited space does not come without consequence.

“This year we got around 100 entries, [with] 24 pieces selected by Rebecca Henderson. I usually tell a juror 30 to 35, but she understood the scale of the space and knew what she picked, so [she knew] fitting the 24 pieces in the exhibition would work better than going up to 35,” Gentry said.

The 2nd Annual UJE Rejects Show was shown in McLaurin 314 at the same time as the Undergraduate Juried Exhibition, organized by

McKay and sponsored by the Rising Artists of Winthrop, a club also known as RAW. Students in the club wanted to create a space for artists who were not accepted into the Juried Show to display their pieces.

“That show really highlights a lot of the students whose work didn’t get accepted because, obviously, with so many artists submitting their work a lot of people are getting rejected, so we like to still have a place where students can showcase their work,” McKay said.

Bleitz, president of

RAW, encouraged attendees to visit the McLaurin gallery space. “Go to the Rejects show! UJE is stuffy, it’s formal. Rejects is us being young and saying ‘we’re in these spaces too.’ We’re gonna dance, we’re gonna look at weird art that wasn’t invited into this space for whatever reason ... everybody deserves to show their [work] off.”

The Undergraduate Juried Exhibition will be held in Rutledge Gallery until March 13. The gallery is open to students and the public Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

International Women’s Day in South Carolina: Give to gain The history and events celebrating women around the world.

Dakota Gold
Staff Writer

Cities throughout South Carolina recognized International Women’s Day alongside the rest of the world on March 8 through celebratory events including festivals, luncheons and fashion shows.

The first celebration of IWD was in the early 20th-century originating from labor movements in North America and Europe. The first official rally happened in 1911.

The day was officially established to bring attention to women’s suffrage, equal pay and labor rights. The United Nations later recognized the day to promote gender equality, reflect on progress and celebrate the achievements of women.

In 1909, the Socialist Party of America declared the first International Women’s Day on Feb. 28.

In 1910, Clara Zetkin, a German activist, proposed an International Women’s Day at the second International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, aiming to promote women’s suffrage.

On March 19, 1911, more than a million people attended rallies in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland to demand the rights to work, vote and to end gender discrimination.

On March 8, 1917, Russian women initiated a “Bread and Peace” strike securing voting rights and forcing the czar’s abdication, finalizing March 8 as the official day.

In 1975, the United Nations celebrated International Women’s Year followed by the adoption of an official day for women’s rights and international peace two years later. This year

marks the 115th year of celebration.

Previously rooted in labor, IWD has become an annual global celebration of women’s achievements. This year’s theme is “Give to Gain,” which advocates for gender equality through abundant giving.

The IWD organization said this campaign encourages a mindset of generosity and collaboration.

“Give To Gain emphasizes the power of reciprocity and support. When people, organizations, and communities give generously, opportunities and support for women increase. Giving is not a subtraction; it’s intentional multiplication. When women thrive, we all rise.”

They add that contributing to women’s advancement helps create a more interconnected

world. Giving can be through donations, knowledge, resources, advocacy, education, mentoring or time.

“We can all give our support to gain advancement for women and girls. As individuals, giving support means calling out stereotypes, challenging discrimination, questioning bias, celebrating women’s success and more,” the organization said.

IWD is not specific to a country or organization. It is a day of collective global activism and celebration for all those who fight for gender equality.

Several cities in South Carolina took part in the celebrations of women’s empowerment.

Historic York celebrated IWD on March 7, 2026 with a day full of community events to highlight and foster

relationships among women.

The events held from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. included breakfast and crafts, tea time, a spring fashion show and several other activities. They even held free mammogram screenings from Invision Diagnostics.

The main activity, the Spring Fashion Show hosted by Sweet Southern Gals, took place at 4:30 p.m. to close the event. Sweet Southern Gals is a ladies boutique found in Rock Hill and York.

Ryleigh Schronce, freshman in art education at Winthrop, attended this event.

“As someone who was raised in York, I found this a moving event because the show highlights the strength in the women around my community and around me,” Schronce said.

In the capital city, Columbia, women

gathered for a walk on the West Columbia Riverwalk at 10 a.m. In the evening, the Zonta Club celebrated the women in the community through live music, food, and a silent auction with proceeds going towards scholarships for rising college students.

Furman University hosted a “Give to Gain” event in Greenville that focused on empowering women in leadership and professional positions. Participants shared challenges they experienced that they were willing to “give” the group, while in return they “gained” new perspectives and support.

Quarterman’s Park in North Charleston held a women’s march called “Unite and Resist.” The rally emphasized defending the rights, bodies, and futures of women.



A protestor holds a sign during a IWD rally in North Charleston

Photo via WCSC

March 12, 2026

Track and Field success Cont.

“At the track meet as an old guy out there, it’s always exciting to get up and warm up because like we say during the week, that’s the hardest thing,” Brown said. “At the track meet, that’s the easy time. That’s where we have fun because the energy is there and we’re just ready to go.”

The track and field team showed out at the championships with many of the athletes breaking nearly decade old records and taking home metals.

The women’s distance medley relay team set a new school record while at the event. The runners for this team were senior Brianna Dooney, juniors Jayla Weeks and Kayah Marques and sophomore Anna Conrad.

Junior Jade Reese broke the third place women’s 200 meter dash school record while at the event. Senior Maurion Jamison also claimed a bronze medal in the men’s triple jump while attending the event.

The men’s 4x400 relay team not only took home gold but also broke the second place 4x400 relay school record. The

runners for this team were sophomores Kendale Cooke and Tristen Patternson, junior Shane King and graduate student Kevin Brown.

For the 60 meter dash, Kevin Brown broke the second place school record while junior Micheal Boucher broke the third place school record. Freshman Raffael Craig II broke the second place school record for the men’s heptathlon.

Raffael Craig, the newly hired head track and field and cross country coach for Winthrop, detailed not only his thoughts regarding the successful championship and season so far, but also what he attributed mostly to the team’s growing prosperity.

“It really is just them buying into the training and committing totally to the work. Track isn’t easy,” Craig said. “We start in September and we don’t have a meet until December. Then you go on break and you come back so there’s a lot to it. But through it all, the kids stayed focused and kept their goals in mind.”



Jurnii Lucas gets set for race

Photo by Jackson Stanton

A hot start on the diamond: Winthrop baseball builds momentum for a promising season

Eagles swing into the season with power, confidence, and early momentum.

Maurion Jamison
Staff Writer

The crack of the bat and the cheers echoing from Founders Field have become familiar sounds on campus this spring as the Winthrop University baseball team has opened the season with one of its strongest starts in recent years. With a challenging schedule and high expectations, the Eagles have quickly established themselves as a team worth watching. Their early success has energized the program and created excitement for what could become a memorable season for the Winthrop community.

The Eagles began the 2026 campaign at home with a three game series against Georgetown, where the team displayed a powerful offense and confident pitching performance. Winthrop opened the season with back to back victories, including dominant wins of 13 to 2 and 13 to 3 before splitting the doubleheader series

finale. The early series showed the offensive potential of the Eagles lineup and set the tone for the weeks ahead. Through the opening stretch of games, the team has continued to build momentum while hosting opponents at Founders Field in Rock Hill.

The schedule for the 2026 season has been designed to challenge the Eagles while also giving fans plenty of opportunities to support the team at home. The season includes fifty five games and features several competitive matchups before conference play begins. Early games include contests against teams such as NC State, Morehead State, Marshall, and Maine, followed by key Big South Conference series later in the spring. Head coach Mike McGuire emphasized that the schedule was created to push the team and prepare them for conference competition.

For the players, the hot start is the result of preparation long before opening day. Outfielder and infielder Josh Skowronski, who was named to the Big South Preseason All Conference team, believes the work done during the offseason played a major role in the team’s early success.

“We spent a lot of time preparing before the season even started,” Skowronski said. “The coaches emphasized consistency and discipline every day in practice. Everyone came in focused and ready to compete, and that preparation has helped us start the season strong.”

Skowronski has already been an important contributor for the Eagles offense. In an early season contest against NC State, he reached base three times and recorded two hits while continuing to provide leadership within the lineup. His ability to produce offensively while maintaining strong

defensive play has helped the Eagles establish a balanced approach to the game.

Behind the plate, catcher Cade Norton has also played an important role in guiding the pitching staff and maintaining the team’s defensive structure. Catchers are often responsible for managing the flow of the game, calling pitches, and keeping pitchers focused during high pressure moments.

Norton explained that the team’s early momentum has come from a combination of preparation and trust among teammates.

“We prepared all fall and winter for this moment,” Norton said. “Everyone trusts each other and understands their role on the team. When the pitchers trust the catcher and the fielders trust the pitchers, it makes everything work together.”

According to Norton, the team understands that maintaining momentum

requires consistent effort throughout the season. While the early victories are encouraging, the Eagles remain focused on continuing to improve as conference play approaches.

The energy surrounding the program has also begun to spread beyond the team itself. Students who attend games at Founders Field can experience a fast paced environment filled with competitive baseball and strong school spirit. With many home games scheduled early in the season, the Eagles have a unique opportunity to build a strong connection with the campus community.

Skowronski believes student support can make a difference during games.

“Having students in the stands gives us a lot of energy,” Skowronski said. “When the crowd gets loud, it motivates us even more and makes the atmosphere exciting.”

The early portion of

the schedule has already provided memorable moments, but the Eagles understand that the season is still developing. As the team prepares for upcoming conference matchups and challenging road trips, the focus remains on maintaining the same level of effort that produced their strong start.

Norton emphasized that the team’s goals extend beyond early success.

“We want to keep building on what we have started,” Norton said. “Our goal is to compete every game and represent Winthrop the right way.”

With a talented roster, dedicated coaching staff, and growing support from students and fans, the Winthrop baseball team has positioned itself for an exciting season. The strong opening weeks have demonstrated the potential of the Eagles and provided a glimpse of what the team can accomplish moving forward.



Winthrop pitcher gets set in his stance, prepared to pitch

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Effects of women's hustle culture on a college campus

As the feminine expectation of staying busy and filling up a schedule of productivity intensifies with the rise of hustle culture, its reach beyond academia stretches into socialization deficits and other aspects.

Caroline Smith
Staff Writer

Hustle culture is the path often encountered by women who feel they must constantly be productive in order to exceed expectations that males have established in the academic and professional world.

Most people don't understand the effects that hustle culture has on women in college, often driving them to push their own boundaries.

When I graduated high school a year early, I was at a crossroads with an academic dilemma that opened that opportunity for me. I felt like I had to make up for being

a junior that graduated with the senior class. Although I didn't participate in a plethora of extracurriculars, I was still heavily involved in school clubs and sports, which came with the pressure of feeling like I had to prove something to my peer counterparts.

As a result of that, I've grown up with the overwhelming desire to overperform and achieve in an area where I'm junior to everyone else in the room. However, that has not stopped me from pursuing my biggest dreams!

"I've also always put a lot of pressure to overachieve and be perfect and that's just

really how I grew up ... then whenever I don't, it feels like I'm not doing enough," freshman Maddy Goble said.

It is quite common for women, like myself, to experience and grapple with intense burnout in everyday life. This past semester, I was too involved with social activities in an attempt to fit in as much as I could, but I fell significantly behind in school and my GPA dropped much lower than I would have ever allowed in high school.

"I was raised in a household where if I didn't get higher than an 85, it wasn't good enough. It took me

getting to rock bottom mentally for that to turn to my parents helping me understand where I went wrong," freshman James Phelps said.

Similarly, I was raised in a household where my parents seemed to understand my academic capabilities and expect a higher performance. I have been an honors student since middle school. Coming home with a C meant that I needed to work harder.

My weakest subject was math, so throughout high school I was required to attend tutoring sessions, and if I didn't attend I would get reprimanded for it. I have struggled with

asking for help even when I knew for a fact that I wasn't able to do something on my own, which stems from the ingrained idea that I need to be independent and non-reliant on others.

"At the same time, there can also be an expectation that [women] serve as an emotional support system within their friend groups, organizations, teams and families. This combination can add another layer of responsibility and increase the pressure to balance personal success with caring for the needs of others," professor Mikayla Sengle said.

When I was carrying the weight of graduating early, being on a varsity sports team and the Editor-in-Chief of my high school newspaper meant that I often neglected my own emotions and internal conflicts to accommodate the needs of my friends, family and peers. I felt disconnected from my friends and family because I was working myself to almost absolute burnout trying to overperform and prove to not only to myself, but everyone around me that I can take on an immense amount of responsibility and still rise to the top.

In doing so, I hit rock bottom multiple times, but I always return to one question: "What if I succeed and what if all the hard work I've done pays off?" The main driving force behind all my motivation and why I push myself so hard is grounded in making myself and others around me proud.

From a mental health perspective, neglecting to take time for yourself while juggling several responsibilities can lead to burnout, sometimes more severe than a

minor setback. Taking time for myself meant spending time doing what I was genuinely passionate about and things that made me happy!

"I've learned that when I neglect these things, I start to feel burnt out and overwhelmed. When that happens, it actually becomes harder for me to focus and complete my schoolwork. Taking time to care for myself helps me stay balanced and ultimately allows me to be more present and productive in the long run," graduate student Molly Myers said.

Setting boundaries in academia and professional settings is imperative. I have eased my mindset in wanting to work harder than my peers. While I am the Vice President of the Winthrop Creative Writing Club, as well as a Staff Writer for The Johnsonian, I have not joined anything else as a testament to elevating my mental health over my desire to be great at everything I do.

"I've set an involvement boundary that I wouldn't join any organizations until my later years of college. This has

allowed me to have so much 'free' time to complete work for classes and even give me mental breaks in between," freshman Amani Gibbs said.

These testimonies of students discussing their experiences with hustle culture is not at all the issue—the crash intensity of burnout is. Hustle culture has a tendency to make someone feel trapped, but there is hope for redefining what it means to strive on a college campus as a woman when remembering not to confuse efforts with results.



Photo by Zoey Molina

Student-Made Rock Hill is an organization created to help students share their creations

College students need identity, not trends.

Adriane Alston
Editorial Editor

When everyone is following the same facades and trends, hobbies help students build real identity beyond campus culture. Walk across any college campus in the United States and the patterns become excruciating obvious. The same Stanley or Owala water bottles. The same clothing brands. The same TikTok trends repeated in slightly different variations (varying on the spectrum of dance skills). Individuality, once a defining feature of college life and the college experience, feels increasingly rare.

People are not becoming more interesting. Instead, many students are becoming carbon copies of one another. Trends themselves are not the problem because college culture has always had trends. What has changed is how quickly and completely people adopt themselves to fit these trends. When a product goes viral,

whether it is a Stanley, a fashion aesthetic or a social media personality, it spreads across campus almost overnight.

Suddenly everyone owns the same item. Everyone participates in the same scripted conversations. Everyone follows the same cultural contexts and inventions. As a result, it becomes harder for students to differentiate what they genuinely value from what social media tells them they should value.

That confusion matters more than most people realize. College represents a crucial stage of identity development for an individual. During these years, students begin forming the beliefs, morals and personal values that often guide them through adulthood. But if individuality is disappearing under layers of trends and group based expectations, that process becomes much harder.

How can students solidify an identity if they never have the space to develop one for themselves in the first place? The pressure to

conform often intensifies through campus wide involvement. Students join organizations, hold leadership positions and build social circles that shape how they present themselves to the world around them. Those opportunities can be meaningful, but they also encourage students to define themselves by titles rather than personal passion projects.

People start introducing themselves by what they do instead of who they are. It becomes "I'm the president of this club or I'm in this organization," but outside of that organization people struggle to explain what they actually enjoy and more importantly who they actually are. That gap reveals something important. Many students no longer have hobbies.

And no, relationships do not count as a hobby. Having a boyfriend, girlfriend or partner does not replace the need for an independent interest or ten independent interests. A hobby is something you pursue because you love it, not because it helps your résumé or

strengthens your value in the context of a social circle.

A hobby could be something simple, such as reading or journaling. It could also be something more technical in nature, such as repairing electronics, restoring old cars or installing AirPlay systems in older model vehicles. The engagement in an activity itself matters less than the personal connection behind it. Hobbies help students build identity outside of trends and institution-based roles. They create spaces where individuality is valued and therefore can thrive. In our current political and social climate that pushes people to take sides, hobbies also offer a rare sense of balance, allowing you to escape from the hardships of the world around you and not let hard times consume you. College students face enormous pressure to define themselves through ideologies, activism or organizational affiliation. Those conversations matter, but they should not be the only parts of

your identity.

A hobby reminds students that they exist beyond debates, deadlines and leadership experiences. It also creates something long-lasting. Campus organizations will eventually fade when students graduate. Leadership positions disappear after a semester or two. But hobbies often follow people throughout the entirety of their lives.

Someone who develops a love for reading in college may continue exploring literature for decades to come. A student who begins learning photography might eventually turn that interest into a creative career where they feel fulfilled. Even hobbies that remain casual still provide lifelong enjoyment.

Most importantly, hobbies encourage intellectual curiosity. They call for patience, experimentation and personal investment. Unlike viral trends, hobbies cannot be replicated or duped instantly by thousands

of people online. They develop slowly, shaped by personal taste and experiences.

That process naturally creates individuality. College should be a place where students discover who they are, not where they slowly merge into identical versions of other people they have encountered. Trends will always exist, but they should not define the entirety of your college experience.

Students desire something that is sacred to them. A hobby may seem small compared to internships, leadership roles or academic achievements. Yet those personal interests often become the most authentic expressions of yourself. If college truly represents a time of self-discovery, students should treat hobbies as seriously as their résumé builders.

Because the most interesting people are rarely the ones who follow every trend on TikTok. They are the ones who spend their free time doing something they genuinely love.

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Hudson Mize, Advertising Manager

March 12, 2026

Chartwells denies rumors about Chick-fil-A, other campus restaurants closing

Dining services says student surveys intended to gather feedback, not signal closures of Chick-fil-A, Einstein's Bros. Bagels, or Starbucks.

Zachary Bell
Managing Editor

Rumors circulated in recent weeks about the future of on-campus branded dining options. Following a student survey on campus dining, some students came to believe that Chartwells, Winthrop's food service provider, intended to close Chick-fil-A, Einstein Bros. Bagels and Starbucks.

A Winthrop Eats survey prompted speculation. The survey, which opened in February, polls students about their interest in branded on-campus dining.

Questions ask, "How often do you visit Starbucks?" A following question then asks, "If the current coffee concept were replaced with one that allowed Eagle Meals and mobile ordering, would you support that change?" and "If you had to choose a new coffee concept, which would you prefer?"

A similar question is asked regarding Einstein's Bros. Bagels. The survey asks if students would be interested in replacing Einstein's with "a new bagel concept that includes custom sandwiches, if menu offerings and hours of operation were extended?"

Chick-fil-A is not mentioned in the survey.

According to Gerald Gatto, Chartwell's resident district manager, there are no confirmed plans to close or replace any branded dining locations.

"The survey shared with students is part of our regular effort to better understand the student body's preferences and overall satisfaction with

in what was a major transition. Chartwells replaced Sodexo.

According to a statement from Chartwells at the time

students to build meals based on their individual preferences, dietary needs, and portion choices."

At the time of

feedback. At the same time, they will conduct a series of student focus groups. The intention is to develop a complete understanding

When asked if Chartwells had any plans on the table, Gatto pointed to the implementation of new technology. "We are actively exploring opportunities to expand the use of technology in our dining locations to enhance convenience, efficiency, and the overall guest experience."

This ideal has already manifested in the form of ordering kiosks inside of DiGs. A partnership with GrubHub, announced in October, that allows students to place orders at Winthrop dining locations ahead of time reflect a broader emphasis on partnerships between Winthrop and third-party services.

When asked about the future of Chartwells's dining operations, Gatto said that Chartwells is exploring ways to address campus food deserts "By expanding access to convenient dining options and ensuring students have more opportunities to find meals and snacks in areas where options may be limited."

There is also a desire from Chartwells to expand daytime offerings to provide students with more variety throughout the day.

The retail survey is still open at the time of publication. Students are encouraged to text "2" to (803) 866-6266 to provide dining services feedback, or leave a review at a Happy or Not Terminal in Markley's or the Eagle Eatery.



Starbucks sign located in Winthrop University's on-campus location

Photo by Zoey Molina

campus dining options. Gathering feedback allows us to evaluate what is working well and where we can improve, ensuring that our dining program continues to meet the needs and expectations of the campus community."

This survey and subsequent rumors come after Winthrop announced in the Fall of 2025 that it selected Chartwells as its new food services vendor

of this transition, Chartwells planned to bring an energized and collaborative vision that emphasized culinary excellence, community connection, and student development.

Gatto said that early feedback from the survey indicates that students are interested in late-night dining options and more customizable menu choices. "Customizable offerings will allow

publication, the Winthrop Eats Retail Survey is still open. Gatto encourages students to participate. "Student feedback plays a critical role in guiding decisions about the future of dining on campus. The survey is designed to gather insights into current retail dining options and identify areas for improvement."

When the survey closes, Chartwells intends to review the

of what the campus community would like to see.

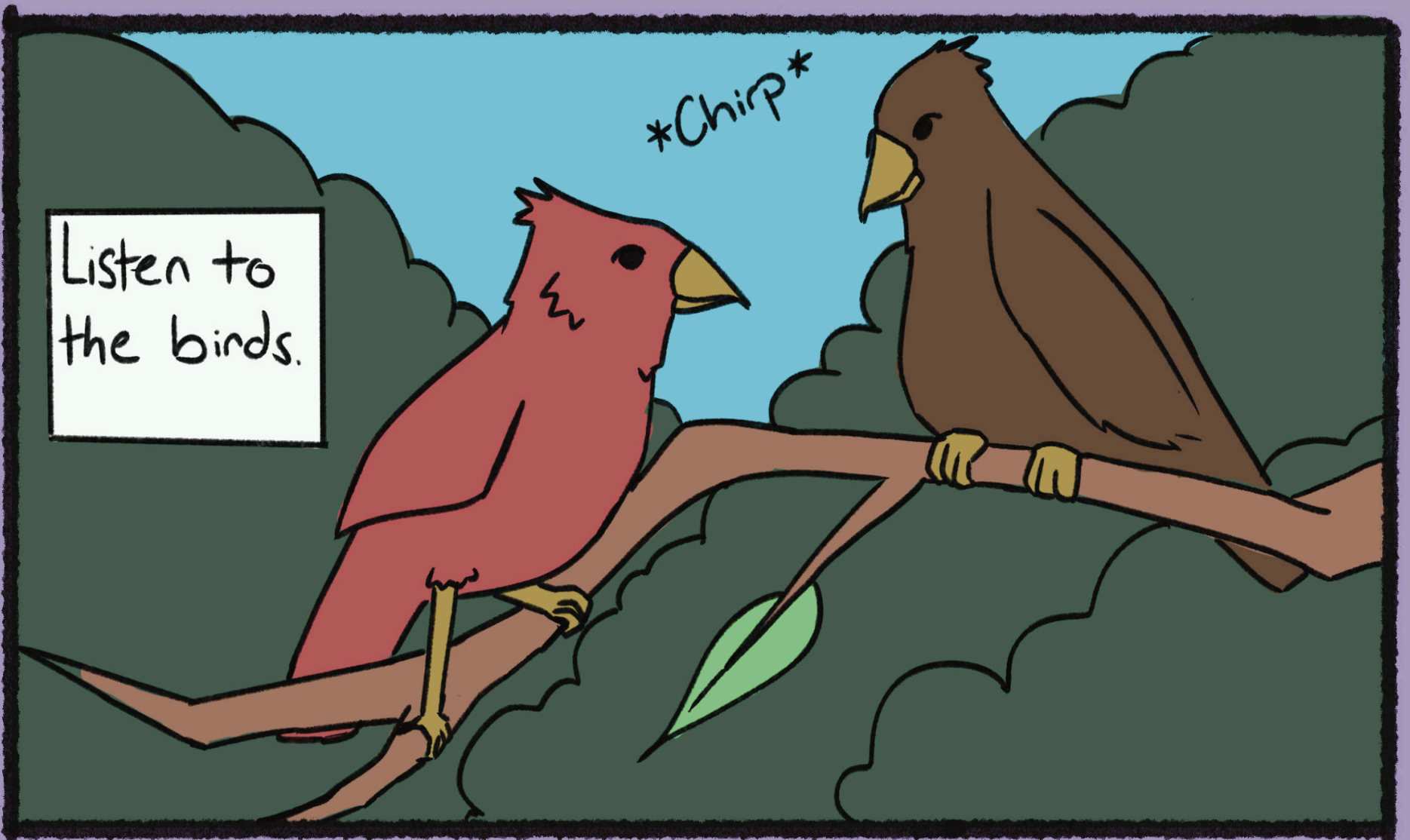
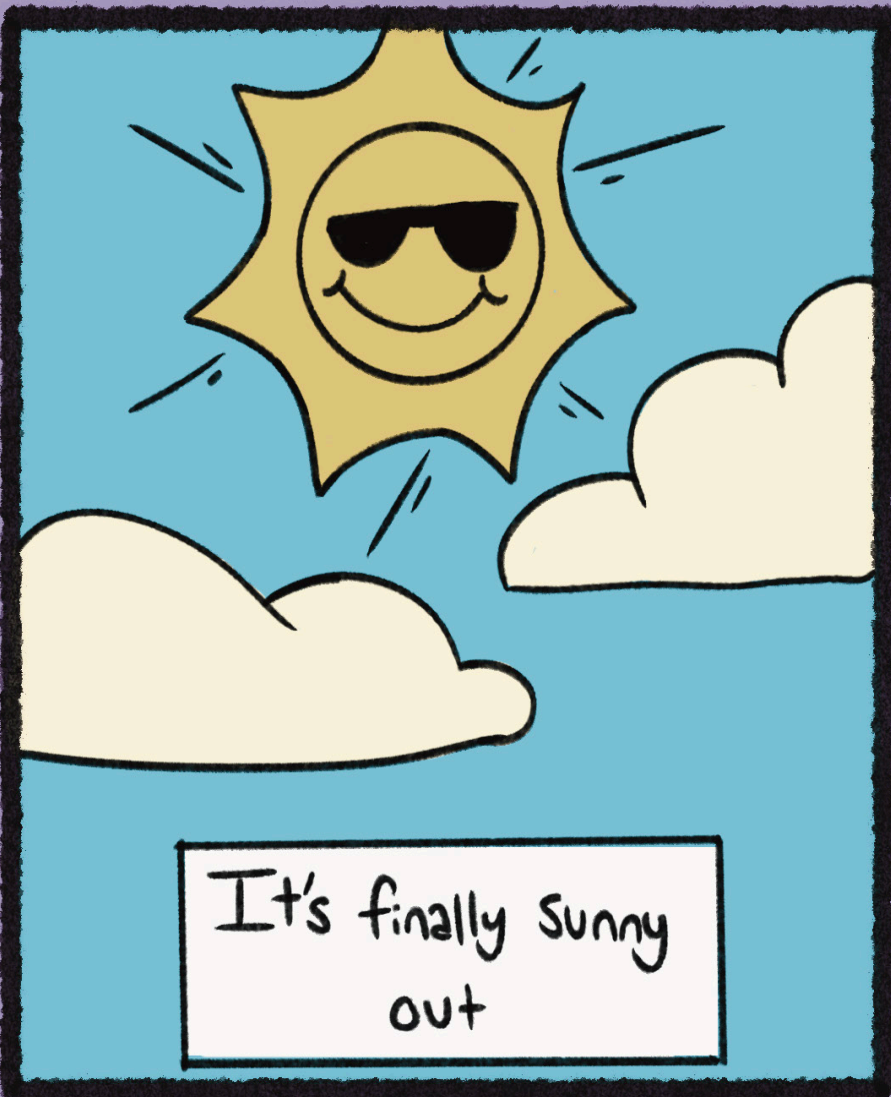
"Using these insights, we plan to develop and present a plan that reflects the wants and needs of the Winthrop campus along with a timeline of any plans for the near future," Gato said. Gato did not say when the feedback period would conclude, or when students could expect to see changes to campus dining.

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March 12, 2026



Due Tonight

- Chem101-Project 1
- Writ406-Journal entry
- MUST 562- Annotated Bib
- MUSA107- Rehearsal 6:30-10

Due Tomorrow

- MUST403-Test 3
- MUST307- Test2
- Phil204-Project 2

Absolutely nothing