

est. 1923

# THE JOHNSONIAN



April 2, 2026

Winthrop University

## BELOVED GETTYS CENTER MOVES TO BE SOLD TO BIDDER

After discussions, the Rock Hill City Council looks to sell the Gettys Center.

Featured on Page 2

## IMPROV SHOW “WHERE AM I, WHO ARE YOU?”

For two nights only, WU Improv This presents a one of a kind show.

Featured on Page 3

## HOW DID WINTHROP TENNIS LEAVE ITS MARK ON HISTORY?

After six years, The Johnsonian highlights Winthrop’s tennis’ history.

Featured on Page 4

# 50 Years of Model United Nations at Winthrop

## Recapping Winthrop’s 50th Model UN conference and why it’s important.



Photo by Jackson Stanton

Sam Crouch debates for his country

**Kyan Feser**  
Staff Writer

From March 25 to March 27, Winthrop University celebrated its 50th Model United Nations conference, dubbed “Back To The Future: Studying Our Past To Secure Our Future.”

Model UN simulates United Nations meetings in universities and high

schools worldwide. Students assume the roles of delegates from UN-affiliated countries, voting and speaking on policies in an assembly environment.

Winthrop’s Model UN is unique; it was the first to combine college and high school participation, pulling from high schools across South Carolina.

“Winthrop is very

special for a lot of high schoolers,” said Logan Howard, chair of the Human Rights Council for Model UN at Winthrop. “They don’t get to do this anywhere else in the nation as often.”

In the program’s early days, UN ambassadors sometimes visited Winthrop. They even commended the

university’s inclusion during their General Assembly, said Ollie Whitfield, secretary general for the 50th conference.

“The fact that it’s persisted for 50 years is also just outstanding in and of itself,” she added.

This year’s conference began on March 25, opening with registration and orientation. Swaths of

high schoolers flooded the campus. That night, Jarett Lash, the Model UN Youth Observer, kicked off the coming days with a commemorative speech.

Lash’s speech focused on his Gen Z roots, highlighting how “what we’re hearing is not apathy from my generation, it’s impatience,” he explained. “That

impatience is not a liability, it’s one of the most useful things we have.”

Through several interactive events, Lash gathered data on students’ concerns about the world. Through the United Nations Foundation, a nonprofit, he plans to present his findings to the

Continued on Page 2

## Winthrop’s Students for Justice host packed drag performance

Student and local drag queens performed to help raise money for hunger relief in Gaza.

**Gabriela Griggs**  
AC&T Editor

On Thursday, March 26, students filled Dina’s Place to watch “Drag4Justice,” a drag show organized by Winthrop’s Students for Justice. The performance was also in collaboration with Winthrop’s Muslim Student Association to raise money for the Zakat Foundation of America, which contributes to hunger relief in Gaza.

Two of the performing queens are both current Winthrop students. Sophomore Dee Ateca, performed as Dee Formed, and sophomore Pat Fleming, performed as Dytie King. Drag, for both students, has become a way for them to build community and gives them a space to develop

their own art.

“Over the last year I have absolutely fallen in love with drag as an art form, through watching local drag, TV and, of course, developing my own drag style. I wanted to bring my passion and the passion of other performers to the campus community so maybe we can help someone fall in love with the art form just as much as we are. As much as I love shows like RuPaul’s Drag Race, Dragula, King of Drag, etc., they can’t compare to a live drag experience,” Ateca said.

“I’ve always loved showing my creativity to other people and drag is my way of expressing [that] creativity,” Fleming said.

Alongside Dee Formed and Dytie King, three

other Charlotte area queens were a part of Drag4Justice: Winthrop alum Rebecca Stardust, Leonasia Chanel and local Jade Envy. All participating queens donated half of their tips from the event to the Zakat Foundation.

“Since queer identity has historically been very politicized/systemically oppressed, I think that it’s really important for us as drag performers to fight for and speak out about important political and social issues,” Ateca said.

Following the funding cuts towards the DiGiorgio Student Union, an annual drag event hosted on campus known as “DragWU”

Continued on Page 3

## Winthrop’s new branding campaign: Bring the You

University communications and marketing launches new Winthrop brand.

**Dakota Gold**  
Staff Writer

Winthrop University has launched their new brand campaign called “Bring the You” that aims to encourage students to mold the campus with the qualities that make them unique.

A brand campaign launch presentation held

on March 25, 2026 at 11:30 a.m. described the process of development and strategic plan.

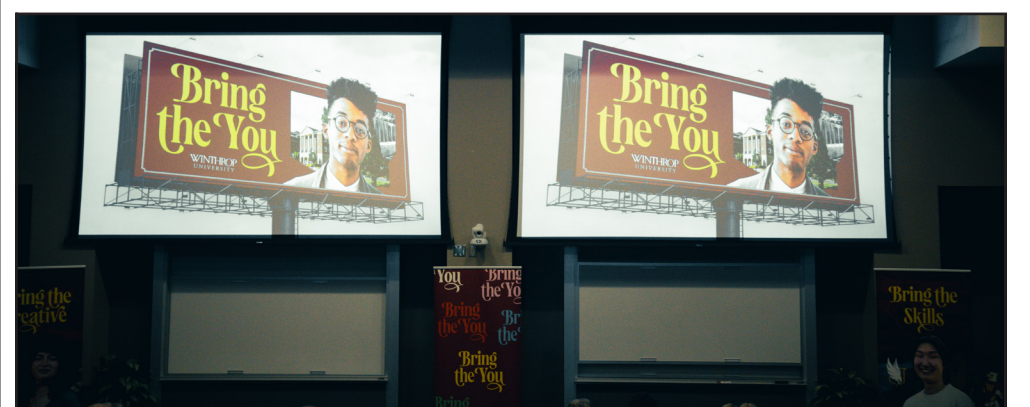
This event debuted the campaign celebrating individuality to the campus and the media.

The work began in 2025 with Winthrop’s agency partner 160over90 with the goal to create a bold and unifying platform to

elevate Winthrop and set it apart.

“The goal? To create a bold, creative and unifying brand platform and strategy that would heighten awareness of Winthrop with key audiences, elevate Winthrop’s reputation in the higher education

Continued on Page 2



A potential billboard for Winthrop’s future promotional

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Bailey Wimberly | Editor-in-Chief

wimberlyb2@winthrop.edu

## Police Blotter



**Chase Duncan**  
Copy Editor

### Firearm connected to RHPD case left discarded in grass patch near Dinkins Hall

A WUPD officer responded to a grass field near Dinkins Hall on March 10 in reference to an abandoned firearm. The officer found the firearm and it was taken into evidence. It was then turned over to the Rock Hill Police Department in reference to a case from the previous night.

### Student vomits blood after eating possibly undercooked meat

WUPD officers responded to Courtyard on March 26 in response to a report of a student who was fatigued and throwing up blood. The student told the officers that they began feeling bad after eating meat that may have been undercooked. EMS was contacted, after which they arrived at the scene to examine the student. The medical professionals determined the student wasn't in immediate danger and the student refused to be transported by EMS. The student's father transported them to a medical facility for further treatment.

### Student assaulted in Phelps Hall by unauthorized visitor; case still active

A suspect entered Phelps Hall on March 26 without authorization and assaulted a student while in the building. The incident type for the case log entry is designated as "Trespassing; School Disturbance and School Disturbance", and the case is currently listed as an active investigation.

### Student dislocated knee in horseplay gone wrong at Phelps Hall

A WUPD officer responded to Phelps Hall on March 29 in response to a student's knee being dislocated. An incident had occurred earlier in the day while the student was "horse playing around," according to the case log entry for the incident. EMS arrived to the scene and transported the student to Piedmont Medical Center for further evaluation and treatment.



mytjnow.com

## Model UN Cont.

actual United Nations. This escapes the "political guardrails other institutions might be bound by," he added.

Following Lash, student leaders of Winthrop's Model UN gave speeches throughout the week, beginning with Ollie Whitfield at the first plenary debate on March 25. Benjamin Byrd, coordinator general for the 50th conference, gave a speech the following day at lunch. Talor Noble, director general for the 50th conference, gave a closing speech on March 27.

"All of our speeches had very similar undertones about the importance of time and the importance of the impact you can make," Whitfield said.

"I kind of wanted to encourage students that you can make change even if you don't believe in yourself to do it," Byrd added.

At Winthrop, Model UN journeys begin in PLSC 260, a class taught by Jennifer Disney, chair of the Department of Political Science, Philosophy, Religion and Legal Studies and director of the Model United Nations and Women's and

Gender Studies programs.

The course documents operational techniques of the UN, and students can further advance into PLSC 261 to become chairs. These courses are many students' introduction to politics, Howard said.

"We're shaping the future minds that could possibly go into the United Nations," Howard said. "I didn't do Model UN before college, so doing it for the first time here really influenced my decision of wanting to keep doing it."

Similarly, personal growth is a large part of Model UN, and students don't need an interest in international relations, Byrd said.

"I've seen students in 261 and 260, and even myself, come to the program as if what they had to say had no substance," Byrd said. "Through the program, you see this insane amount of growth just in a few months," he explained.

For invested students, the Department of Political Science and its alumni are very gracious, Whitfield added.

"These people really



Plaques held to show agreeence at Model UN

Photo by Jackson Stanton

are here for you. From top to bottom, from the director of the program, to literally, I could call an alumni and I know they'd be there for me," she said.

On March 26, a scholarship dedicated to Chris Van Aller, the previous Model UN director for 24 years, was endowed. Alumni raised over \$25,000 for the cause, honoring his long career at Winthrop with a new scholarship for Model UN students.

Going forward, events and classes like these will

continue to foster Model UN and its community, Howard said.

"I have a strong feeling that we're gonna have many more people come in just for the class, the 261 class, and we have good hands to be putting it into."

To support this growth, following this year's conference, Model UN realized some things need touching up, Byrd added.

"Every year we touch up the rules a little bit and make everything a little bit more clear

for everyone, because every year there's always something," Whitfield said.

"I think the structure of it being student-run will never change, but I think the conference will expand. I definitely think that we will have more committees."

In the end, Byrd believes that by conference 100, there will be thousands of students in attendance, he said.

"It's a pretty beautiful vision, but it will happen."

## Brand launch Cont.

landscape and set the university apart from its competitors," said Winthrop News.

160over90 gave introductory remarks at the presentation. When addressing the "you's"

of the campaign, they shouted out generations of Eagles, first-generation college students, creative thinkers and all the other individuals who make the university what it is.

During the event,

attendees received the first look at the new branding in ads, banners, and Winthrop swag. The banners are now visible along Oakland Avenue and other places around campus.

160over90 described the creative process in which "Bring the You" came to life.

In addition to the slogan, the project includes new visual identities such as fonts and colors.

Sean Pennington, the graduation associate for fraternity and sorority life, said the new brand is exciting and designed in a way that will stand out to students.

"I think the brand is bold and eye-catching. It will catch the attention of prospective students. The slogan is captivating and it allows for students to

know they can help shape Winthrop in the way they want to," Pennington said.

The new visual identity brought a makeover to Big Stuff, the university mascot, to celebrate his 50 years with the campus. Students chose the eagle for the school's mascot on March 25, 1976.

Big Stuff has had several makeovers over the years. He was originally known as Mr. T.E.E., short for Tillman Edgar Eagle. His current and more common name likely came from an athletics event of the same title.

On launch day, tables were set up on Scholar's Walk where students could write on sticky notes what they bring to Winthrop.

The brand campaign as a whole pushes for individuality and diversity, calling students to show up with all their potential to spark a campus energy that is unlike any other.

Dr. Amanda James, vice president for enrollment management and marketing, said the new brand invites new students of all kinds to bring their uniqueness to the school.

"The new campaign speaks to every prospective student wondering if Winthrop is for them. We are telling them to bring exactly who they are to Winthrop."

More information about the brand can be found at <https://www.winthrop.edu/ucm/our-brand.aspx>.



Photo by Jackson Stanton

Entrance to the brand launch

## Rock Hill City Council moves to sell Gettys Center to anonymous bidder

### Dylan Bannister, a local artist and Winthrop alumni, warns what the loss of this creative hub will mean for artists.

**Zachary Bell**  
Managing Editor

Rock Hill seems to be moving forward with the sale of the Tom S. Gettys Center. In a City Council meeting on March 9, a spokesperson for an anonymous bidder asked members of the council to review their offer for the downtown property.

This offer comes after a year of uncertainty for Rock Hill's art community. The art community's relationship with the Gettys Center goes back over 40 years when Rock Hill rented the property to the York County Arts Council. In turn, the Arts Council has leased offices to local artists.

Dylan Bannister, a Winthrop alumni whose studio is located in the Gettys Center, has been

a powerful advocate for Rock Hill's art community.

need is for the larger, broader Rock Hill population to understand

Bannister emphasized the Gettys Center's role in developing a grassroots

also hosts galleries and features venue spaces for concerts, weddings and speaking events.

During weekdays, the Gettys Center is open to the public. This space provides a unique opportunity for the public to interact directly with local artists in their own workspaces.

Uncertainty surrounding the building has made it difficult for artists to plan for the future, both creatively and professionally. Bannister said many artists rely on the Gettys Center as an environment that includes tools and equipment that cannot be easily replaced. Bannister discussed a hypothetical scenario where an artist is invited to exhibit at a studio. "I don't feel that I can



The front of Tom S. Gettys Center

Photo by Zoey Molina

"The arts community is very aware of what's going on here," Bannister said. "What we really

the value of the arts and why they should be unhappy with this decision too."

artistic scene. The Gettys Center provides an affordable space for artists and workshops. It

Continued on Page 7

## Drag4Justice Cont.

was noticeably absent from the events planned for this academic year. Instead, it became up to student efforts to make sure there was room for a drag show.

"I absolutely think drag has a place on this campus. Though, I feel for many students that this interest often starts

and ends with drag that appears on TV, so I wanted to help bring local drag to the forefront. I [also] wanted these talented students and alumni to really get to showcase their work!" Ateca said.

"I think drag does have a place on this campus, especially in this climate

of people trying to bring down drag as an art form. Drag itself, as an art form, is so versatile that there is some form of drag out there for anyone," Fleming said.

The performances ranged from high energy dance numbers to more emotional performances to slow songs, such as

Ethel Cain's "Family Tree" and Laufey's "Goddess." Within the range of performances, there was something for everyone.

For many students, this was their first experience with a drag performance. This makes the performance special for not only those in the

audience, but also for the queens performing.

"Performing for my classmates and peers is really exciting. It allows for all of my friends, acquaintances and friendly faces around campus to really get to know my art and performing style. I know a few people who have never seen me perform in drag before will be coming to the show so I'm really hoping I'm able to truly shock, gag and impress them with what I do!" Ateca said.

"Performing in front of my classmates absolutely changes the experience. I love that, after the performance, I get compliments from people around me who I see everyday," Fleming said.

By giving students a place on campus to explore with performing, it allows them to develop their own skills, perfect their art and take creative risks.

"Performing on campus allows me to play with my drag in a different way than I usually do. Part of the picking out what you're going to do for

performances as a drag artist is knowing your audience. So far, I've been able to perform for older queer adults and more alternative young adults, but being able to perform here on campus means I'm performing primarily for my peers, which allows me to really try out new things. Part of college is figuring out who you are... and, for me, that includes who I am as a drag queen," Ateca said.

"At the end of the day, I am a performer. I recently switched my major to theatre tech because I love making things but also I love being able to showcase and make things for performances. I, as a drag artist, love doing every aspect of my art," Fleming said.

Drag4Justice helped fill the space left by DragWU and fuel interest in the art within students. The performance reminds attendees that this type of show will always find a way to be held on campus, funding aside, and continues to inspire students to be creative, hone their personal art and collaborate.



Jade Envy performing at Drag4Justice

Photo by Zoey Molina

## ImprovThis Club opens new show "Where Am I, Who Are You?" in Johnson Theater

Each semester, the club creates a new improvisational theater show and holds auditions for new actors.

Sydney Meetze  
Staff Writer

The first performance of this semester's Improv Show was held in the Johnson Studio Theater on March 27 at 3:00pm. The show, which is titled "Where Am I, Who Are You?" was titled collaboratively through votes by members of the ImprovThis Club.

"Coming up with a name is such a difficult process," said Kai Brooks, member and actor in the show. "We come up with so many things on the spot, so why is finding a name so hard? Since we were all confused, we created a title that equally expressed that confusion."

While sponsored and promoted by the ImprovThis club, the

show was performed by a few members known as the Improv Troupe.

"The troupe (is) a subsection of the club that meets outside of the club hours," said Connor Rothberg, a musical theater major and the director of the improv show. "We hold auditions for the troupe at the beginning of each semester, as it's a new cast and show each semester."

This semester, the show is made up of a variety of games.

"Every improv show is different! But (...) we will usually play three to four short form improv games followed by a long form improv game," said Christian Inman, a theater major and actor for the troupe. "Short form improv games tend to be fast paced, super

exaggerated, and over the top, (however) long form games are my favorite! The one we performed for our first show and will be performing in our second show is called 'The Harold.'"

Dee Ateca, another member of the troupe, said the opening game helps develop the direction of the rest of the games.

"The Harold' begins with an opening game like 'Eulogy' where we have to hold a funeral for an object, or idea. From that first game we gather ideas and concepts for the rest of the game, getting into pairs to do individual recurring 'beats' and playing group games between each section."

"I think the first show went really well," Ateca said. "There were a few mishaps, but we really

relied on each other as a troupe."

Reliance on the other troupe members seems to be a recurring theme within the group.

"As someone who has been in (the troupe) four times now, (there is) always a sense of community," Inman said. "Whether we like it or not, we all become closer in the process of the show and that is because improv is an intimate thing. You are creating something every rehearsal with these people, and you have to let your guard down ... you have to understand one another on such a level that you could predict what they are going to say."

"I feel like our strongest trait as a troupe is our overall chemistry," Ateca said. "Everyone is willing to listen to each other's

ideas and build off of them, which creates great scenes."

Both the Improv Troupe and the ImprovThis club seem to be hotspots for the creative community on campus.

"Going to improv club every Thursday has made so many (of my) relationships stronger," Brooks said. "It's something I look forward to every week!"

"Improv (is) something that I don't have to worry about at all because I know I can go and just let loose, have fun, and laugh. It has also helped me really feel like a part of a campus community," said Ateca. Inman has also found community through the Improv club. "Without the troupe, I wouldn't have made some of the friends I have made today," Inman said.

Troupe director Rothberg wants all to know that they are invited to visit the club.

"Improv is very welcoming to all, no matter the skill level! Please feel free to drop by and try out improv," said Rothberg. The club meets in Johnson 117 on Thursdays from 10:30pm to 12:00am.

The final performance will be shown in the Johnson Theater at 3:00pm on April 3rd. Lainey Williams, secretary of the ImprovThis club, encourages everyone to attend the show.

"I definitely think this is something you should come to because each show is a once in a lifetime experience," Williams said. Why would you not take (the opportunity) to laugh?

Photo by @wuimprovthis via Instagram

Graphic advertising "Where am I, Who are You?"



Photo by @wuimprovthis via Instagram

Photos from the show, "Where am I, Who are You?"

April 2, 2026

# A ghost of Winthrop's athletic past: The tennis program

A Big South Player of the Year Winthrop Tennis Alumni and helps paint a picture of the successes of the tennis program six years after becoming defunct.

Omar Woods  
Sports Editor

Starting in 1994, the Winthrop tennis program showed it was anything but unsuccessful. In its time, the program was able to produce many major wins in both the men's and women's division of the program.

The women's tennis team was able to secure a whopping 21 Big South Championship titles during their time. Along with these wins, they would also secure three runner-up finishes and secure 17 NCAA tournament appearances. The men's tennis team was just as successful as they were able to secure nine regular season championships and 12 runner-up finishes.

The tennis program's successful run would soon come to a shocking and abrupt end. On June 19th in 2020, the Board of Trustees at Winthrop voted to end both the men's and women's tennis program for the foreseeable future.

Winthrop University put out a statement on their website after the breaking news explaining that this decision was decided

upon based on the financial impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Vice President for Intercollegiate Athletics, Ken Haplin, expressed that he never thought that the university would have to come down to make such a heartbreaking decision.

Due to the gap of time since the program's absence, it is likely that most current students at Winthrop will not experience a Winthrop that offers tennis as a sport on campus. Lauren Proctor, a Winthrop tennis alumna and Big South Player of the Year, discussed her experiences and highlights while spending her four years competing for Winthrop University.

"Every year we won the conference tournament was a massive highlight," Proctor said.

"I would say the absolute biggest highlight of all-time, though, was winning the first round of NCAA in my junior year which would have been in 2018. That was the biggest accomplishment or highlight for sure."

Proctor started her

college career in the 2016 season for the women's division in tennis. In her freshman year, she earned accolades such as the Freshman of the Year award and the Big South conference player of the year.

In fact, Proctor would end up being voted the conference player for all of her four years at Winthrop. She credits much of her success on the tennis court to coach Alcides "Cid" Carvalho, who had been a coach for the program for nearly three decades and was also an 1981 alumnus of Winthrop University.

"Going into that program with Cid having been head coach for close to thirty years at that point, he obviously had a winning system in place. That's for sure," Proctor said.

"He knew exactly what we needed to do to be successful and win the conference tournaments every year and make it to NCAA and nationals. He was tremendously effective."

Just like the rest of the athletic department when the news broke that the tennis program was to



Winthrop Tennis player prepares to serve

Photo via winthrop.edu

be no longer, Proctor was disheartened. She described her immediate feelings towards finding out the tennis program was getting cut.

"It was devastating I would say to be honest," Proctor said.

"I have very long ties to Cid and Winthrop. The first time I ever trained with him was when I was nine years old. He's family for me in a way and both of us

had a lot of love for the program."

Proctor mentioned interest in wanting to see the program return to Winthrop. She believed that a college with such a successful history in tennis should not be overlooked.

"For a school and program to have the history of success that it does, of course I would love to see it make a comeback and make a return," Proctor said.

"Gardner-Webb just cut their women's tennis program. It's the last year it's going to exist. It's sad to see these things happen. For the sake of that conference, it just would be really great to have the program come back with its history as well. I have no doubt that it would have support from alumni and people who have been a part of it," Proctor said.

"It was just a great program."

# Winthrop lacrosse builds momentum with three game win streak

Riding the streak into conference play with confidence and key contributors leading the charge.

Maurion Jamison  
Staff Writer

The Winthrop women's lacrosse team is finding its rhythm at the right time, riding a three game win streak as it enters the heart of conference play. With growing confidence and strong performances across the field, the Eagles are positioning themselves as a team to watch this season. The recent stretch of success has energized both players and fans as expectations continue to rise.

Winthrop's balanced attack has been a major

factor in its early success, combining efficient scoring with disciplined defense. The team has shown the ability to control tempo, capitalize on opportunities, and maintain composure in key moments. This consistency has allowed the Eagles to build momentum heading into some of their most important games of the season.

Senior attacker Tori Iannotti has been a standout leader, pacing the team with 25 goals so far this season. Her scoring ability and field awareness have made

her a constant threat to opposing defenses. Iannotti's leadership extends beyond the stat sheet, setting the tone for the team's competitive mindset.

In the midfield, Gabby Pierpont has made a strong impact with 16 ground balls, helping Winthrop maintain possession and transition effectively. Her hustle and physical play have been key in winning loose ball battles and creating additional opportunities for the offense. Pierpont's presence in the middle of the field continues to be

a crucial element of the team's success.

Defensively, Lily Davis has anchored the back line with 20 ground balls this season. Her ability to disrupt opposing attacks and secure possession has helped stabilize the Eagles' defense. Davis' consistency has allowed Winthrop to limit scoring chances and control the pace of play from the defensive end.

Head coach Hannah Potter has played a significant role in the team's early success, emphasizing preparation, discipline, and team chemistry.

Under her leadership, the Eagles have developed a cohesive style of play that highlights both individual talent and collective effort. Potter's approach has helped the team stay focused and motivated as the competition intensifies.

As conference play begins, Winthrop looks to carry its momentum forward and continue building on its strong start. Each game presents new challenges, but the Eagles have shown they have the depth and determination to compete at a high level. The team

remains focused on maintaining its winning mindset and executing its game plan.

Winthrop will return home on April 4th, 2026, when it hosts Gardner-Webb at Eagle Field. The matchup offers another opportunity for the Eagles to extend their win streak and strengthen their position in conference standings. With confidence growing and key players stepping up, Winthrop lacrosse is poised to make a strong push as the season continues.



Winthrop Lacrosse team huddles before the game starts

Photo by Jackson Stanton

## Learning and earning

### Considering education students amidst the transition to off-campus housing.

Adriane Alston  
Editorial Editor

Students at Winthrop University are entering a period of transition, and with that transition comes excitement from some and uncertainty for others. The shift toward off-campus based housing gives students more independence and provides the opportunity to experience college from a different standpoint, but it also introduces new financial obligations and responsibilities that many are still learning to navigate, some people for the first time ever.

For a small number of students, this change feels like a natural next

step. They are excited and looking forward to having their own space and managing life beyond the 4 walls of a residence hall. But for others, especially students in the Richard W. Riley College of Education, Sport and Human Sciences, this transition raises important questions about balance, between academic commitments like internship and the cost of living.

At an Student Government Association Town Hall meeting a few weeks ago, students voiced these concerns directly. One question continued to remain persistent throughout the discussion: what will students in the College

of Education do when their internships are unpaid, but they are now expected to afford rent? The consistency of that question stood out significantly among the other questions asked. Students were not asking it as a complaint, but as a way to better understand how they will manage their responsibilities moving forward while balancing the rigor that comes with their chosen degree path.

Education majors follow a path that looks different from many other programs. Alongside their coursework, they complete field placements, practicums and student teaching experiences that

require time, focus and consistency. These internships play a critical role in preparing them to become effective educators in the state of South Carolina and beyond. At the same time, they often limit the number of hours students can dedicate to part-time jobs outside of schoolwork.

As the off-campus housing experience becomes more common, students are beginning to think more practically about how these responsibilities will fit together. Rent, utilities, groceries and transportation will all become part of their daily reality. For education majors, the challenge is not a lack of motivation or lack of work ethic, it is allocating the time to meet academic expectations while also maintaining financial stability that will become a crucial component of the student experience.

This concern does not take away from the value of off-campus living. Many students welcome the newfound independence and growth that comes with it. Instead, it highlights that all students experience and relation to this transition differ based on their major and intended degree program. Financial situations vary, and the ability to adjust to these changes will not be the same for everyone.

The question raised at the Town Hall

reflects a broader sense of awareness among students. They ask these questions not necessarily as critiques but as a way to think ahead. They are considering how their academic paths connect to real-world responsibilities, and they are trying to plan accordingly to accomplish every dream their hearts desire. That kind of reflection is exactly what higher education encourages.

At the same time, it creates an opportunity for conversation, particularly within the College of Education. As the university continues to implement changes in housing, it may be worth asking how these transitions will impact students whose programs require significant unpaid time commitments.

Again this is not about placing blame or criticizing the structure of education programs because it has been proven that Winthrop by far has one of the best education programs in the state. Research has shown the value of hands-on experience is clear, and internships remain an essential part of becoming an effective educator. Instead, this is about asking whether there is room to further explore how students can be supported through this transition to off campus housing while remaining committed to their academic obligations.

Can the Richard W. Riley College of

Education, Sport and Human Sciences explore ways to better guide students as they balance unpaid internships and newfound financial responsibilities? Are there additional resources, conversations, or strategies that could help ease this shift for students? Even opening that dialogue could make a meaningful difference for students trying to plan their next steps while keeping their education at the center.

Winthrop has always emphasized student voice, and spaces like the SGA Town Hall show that students are willing to speak up and engage thoughtfully when they feel comfortable to speak. When concerns arise consistently, they offer insight, not just into challenges, but into opportunities for growth and support from our University.

Students in the College of Education remain committed to their path. They are preparing to enter a profession that demands an intense amount of patience, dedication, and care. As they take on that responsibility, it is reasonable to ask how the institution and their college in particular can continue to support them in return.

The question students raised still stands, not as criticism, but as consideration. And it is one worth exploring together.



Education Core (EDCO) bulletin board in Withers

Photo by Zoey Molina

## Is activism social performance or in desperation for genuine change?

### Activism on a college campus is not just a “trend” on Instagram, but a means for true change of the outlook on how justice is portrayed.

Caroline Smith  
Staff Writer

When you hear the word activism on a college campus, the first thing some might think of is “post it to Instagram to advocate for your cause,” and others think of setting up a table in a common area and discussing it with interested people. Both are activism in different ways, but only one truly sparks change that is meaningful and evolutionary.

At Winthrop University there are multiple outlets to stand up for a change. Social media posts can circulate through algorithms, but is that the only way to raise awareness in the push for justice?

In our technological society, online posts usually bring engagement through likes, comments, reposts or shares. Yet, there is little accomplished in that moment of fame. This may feel like an impact, but it raises the question: What happens when people stop interacting and move on to the next hot topic?

This calls for a more tangible opportunity to advocate for awareness. A large part of campus culture is attending

cultural events, which help us reach our graduation requirements but can also raise awareness in ways that may not be possible through the internet’s reach.

In Fall 2025, around the time of Charlie Kirk’s death, representatives of the WU Democrats and WU Republicans co-hosted a cultural event. The main goal of this event was to bring together the separate ideas of both political spectrums by explaining that there are a variety of ways to have cool, calm, and collected conversations with those you may not necessarily agree with.

Over 30 students attended that event, but that did not seem to reflect positively on the online social media spaces of campus. This was an especially wonderful turnout, however, that didn’t appear to go well online. Social media platforms sparked some positive, but mostly hateful commentary.

Fizz, an anonymous social media app, has become a space where criticism quickly escalates into personal attacks. In this online community there is no trace of accountability;

it vanishes into thin air, where without anonymity it would create unmistakable responsibility for a hateful post. While WU is known for being a Liberal-leaning public university, it seems that the activism that they advocate for often leads to a dead end.

This sort of anonymity opens doors to more extreme conversations rather than encouraging understanding. The students who have attended local protests against issues like ICE often face commentary that is negative and positive in the same span of time. If a republican-leaning or democrat-leaning person comments on a post, it truly doesn’t matter how politically involved someone is—it is abundantly clear which way each person leans regardless of anonymity.

On that note, that specific event was a hot topic online, but with the anonymity behind it there is that safety net that protects almost everyone who continues to use that platform.

Further, tabling in student common areas seems to be an effective way to connect with students and share ideas. This student-to-organization connection is

one of the main features of Fall and Spring involvement fairs.

Tabling allows for the interactions that create an atmosphere where questions can be asked, comments can be heard, and in-person interactions that social media can’t replicate can

take place.

Activities such as cultural events and tabling to facilitate face-to-face conversations teach something beyond the scope of the internet, beyond superficial engagement, and most importantly create a safe space for

lasting change that many advocates hope for.

Activism is an evolving call for justice among college campuses. The question now stands: Will this form of activism continue to exist only in online spaces or is there a real desire for change that will become an



Instagram logo

Photo via Wikimedia

# ADVERTISE WITH US!

*Advertise with us today and reach over 6,000 students and residents in the Winthrop University and Rock Hill communities- whether you're hiring, looking for interns, performing research, or wanting to get your business out there!*



**mizeh2@winthrop.edu**

*Hudson Mize, Advertising Manager*

## Gettys Center Cont.

truthfully participate, because if I agree, and then I lose my studio, how am I going to produce the work?" Bannister said. "I can't move the full operation home."

That uncertainty has not only impacted individual artists like Bannister. The Gettys Center has functioned as a gathering place for concerts, exhibitions and community events. From

pottery classes to live music in the building's former courtroom, the space has supported a wide range of creative activity.

However, planning those events has become more difficult in light of the looming sale.

"It's very tough to plan for concerts, theater plays, symphony performances—any of that kind of stuff when you don't know how long you'll have the

space," Bannister said. However, this uncertainty has not stopped these artists from organizing. Winthrop's own Mike Gentry, for example, continues to host concerts in the old courtroom.

According to Bannister, in the event that a sale is finalized, eviction would not be instantaneous. He described a potential 90-day inspection window following a second

reading of the ordinance. During this time, the anonymous buyer would evaluate the building and would be allowed to alter or withdraw their offer.

Unlike a previous offer made in January, there are no known financial provisions being provided by the bidder to the artists.

Despite the uncertainty, artists continue to engage the community. Bannister and others are organizing an "artist yard sale" on April 11, which will open all three floors of the Gettys Center to the public. The event will feature artwork, supplies and open studios, and give visitors a chance to meet local artists.

The community's response has been supportive. According to Bannister, some residents show up to events because it may be the last time they have the opportunity. Other times, Bannister says he will have conversations with people who walk into the Gettys Center and might not know about the situation.

"I am informing them

of what the situation is, because it feels important to let the general public know," Bannister said. "The arts community is very aware of what's going on here. What we really need is for the larger, broader Rock Hill population to understand the value of the arts and why they should be unhappy with this decision too."

Looking forward, the Arts Council of York County is exploring a new studio location in Leslie. While the shift to a new location might provide artists with a space to work in, it also emphasizes the loss of a downtown artistic hub.

According to Bannister, City officials have pointed to the Mural Mile Initiative and the Storyline Project as evidence of the City's support for the arts. Although Bannister believes these efforts are valuable, he argues that they do not provide the same impact as an artistic center located downtown.

"There's no question it is great for communities. It brings a lot of beauty

into a space," Bannister said. But the affordability and central location of the Gettys Center has enabled many artists to participate directly with the community. One such example is the Rock Hill Pottery Center which works with at-risk youth and people with developmental disabilities.

"Those are the things that are going to be lost from the sale of the building," Bannister said. "I think when the City points to things that are pretty and digestible, like a Mural Mile, it feels like a true misunderstanding of what we're actually asking for."

For Bannister, the future of the Gettys Center is a reflection of a community's creative identity.

"For the last 40 years, the city of Rock Hill has partnered with its grassroots arts community to make this building possible. And that community deserves to be a part of the conversation as well."



Photo by Zoey Molina

Arts Council of York County flyer table inside of Gettys

**ONLY YOU**

**CAN SUPPORT  
STUDENT  
PUBLICATIONS**

April 2, 2026

