



PETITION TO REMOVE FLOCK CAMERAS IN YORK COUNTY

York county residents began a petition to remove flock cameras around the area.

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WINTHROP MEN'S SOCCER ROSTER CHANGES

With twenety new players and a head coach, what will happen next?

Featured on Page 4

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR: BAILEY WIMBERLY

Editor-in-Chief, Bailey Wimberly, shares her mission for the year.

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Winthrop University administration kicks off the semester with year three of strategic plan

The university hopes to grow its campus size, enrollment and academic profile in the coming years, with initiatives such as a Fort Mill campus and an aviation degree.



President Serna poses with the new students of Winthrop

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Evi Houston
Managing Editor

Under President Edward Serna's leadership, Winthrop University has undertaken a multitude of projects to improve academics, student success, enrollment growth and more, as a part of the university's larger strategic plan: "Winthrop: United in Excellence".

In a press release from the president this August, Serna explained that the plan will "enact changes that will place this university in a strong and resilient position."

The summer of 2026 marked the conclusion of the second year of the first "three year

sprint" of the university's current strategic plan. Many initiatives were accomplished in the 2025-26 school year, and many more have been planned for year three.

Winthrop University Provost Dr. Sebastian van Delden is responsible for overseeing multiple aspects of the strategic plan and was happy to share with The Johnsonian the specifics of these completed and soon-to-come goals.

"It's always good for an organization to have a strategic plan," said the provost.

New Academic Programs

One of van Delden's primary responsibilities

within the strategic plan is the development of new degree programs, especially programs which might fill gaps in the university's robust academic portfolio. Last year, three undergraduate degree programs were targeted, all of which progressed towards enrollment: health sciences, aviation and business management and advanced manufacturing engineering.

A soft launch of the bachelor's in health sciences degree began this fall with about three students. The degree will have "broad market appeal", according to a university press release, and attract the many South Carolina high

schoolers who list health sciences as their top career choice.

Since the program was not fully approved until this July, it is quite small, but is expected to multiply in the coming years. This program will not only help grow university enrollment, but is relatively cheap to implement, said the provost.

Van Delden said he has also enjoyed working on the first-in-state aviation and business management degree, which will ideally launch in fall 2027. The program has been fully approved by the state of South Carolina, but is awaiting credentials from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA),

which were delayed during the historically-long government shutdown last year.

"This will be a signature program for Winthrop because, first of all, we're the only public university in South Carolina have it, but the proximity to Charlotte Airport, one busiest in the world, and the number of people in this region who are in the aviation industry or adjacent to it is wild," van Delden said.

The university is prepared to pursue a few more aviation-related programs once they are granted FAA approval. They intend to enroll up to 100 students by year five of the program.

Lastly, the university has secured funds to begin an advanced manufacturing engineering program in Fall 2027. Engineering is the second-most-popular area of study among high schoolers (behind Health Sciences) and has yet to be introduced in South Carolina.

Van Delden described the future advanced manufacturing degree as a "really meaty, robust program."

The provost also said that Winthrop University "is just so uniquely positioned to do this because we have cybersecurity and we have AI," unlike other universities in the state with similar engineering programs.

Advanced manufacturing

engineering has been approved by the Department of Computer Science and is set to progress through approvals within the university and state government. The city of Rock Hill will be donating funds to the program this month, contributing to an overall goal of \$5 million in the next five years.

Beyond these programs in current development, van Delden also hinted at a future nursing program at the university, with the potential to largely grow the university. This will take multiple years to roll out, but the provost confirmed that they are "actively exploring it."

Fort Mill Campus

Another major undertaking of the provost this academic year is the expansion of Winthrop into a brand-new Fort Mill instructional site. This will consist of three distinct programs outside of undergraduate studies.

The university intends to create a lab school environment for young children, similar to the Macfeat Laboratory School in Rock Hill. There will also be classroom programming for middle and high school students in Fort Mill so that more students can participate in dual enrollment.

"We just signed an exciting partnership

Continued on Page 2

A student-made Winthrop miracle Winthrop debuts two student-made sculptures at Rock Hill's Miracle Park.

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

When visiting Miracle Park, Rock Hill's state-of-the-art accessible playground, guests can view two newly-installed sculptures made by fine art students at Winthrop.

The park's developers wanted an interactive art piece to thank its donors, so a developer reached out to Shaun Cassidy, the professor of fine arts at Winthrop.

Miracle Park collaborated with Winthrop students in the past. The commissioner was an old student of Cassidy's, and this time she suggested a class-wide project, Cassidy said.

"They came back to me and asked if I would be interested in working

with a class on projects for the second phase of Miracle Park," Cassidy explained.

"They wanted sculptures that would function not only as interesting visual landmarks and objects, but also as a way to recognize the 200 donors that donated money to Miracle Park."

After more than two semesters, Cassidy's intermediate sculpture class debuted "Sponsor Trees," two sculptures unveiled at Miracle Park this June. Collaborating students included Forest Rain, Gracelynn Mixon, Jesse Gross, Ken Stiles, Maria Emery, Oliver Bartow, Samuel Pach and Zoe Gumangan.

The to-scale, steel, blue powder-coated trees don metal leaves with the

names of donors on them, swaying in the wind for park-goers to see.

"We looked at all the parameters. I gave them drawings of what the site was going to look like, and we looked at where potentially we could put sculptures. We spent a lot of time brainstorming what kind of things we could make," Cassidy said. "We came up with lots of different things."

Not only was the class involved with the design process, but also the logistical elements of the piece. Students would present their work to Miracle Park, receive feedback, and make changes.

"How is this thing going to be safe? How are kids going to interact

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Reece Rhoads elevates for the spike

Photo by Jackson Stanton

The NCAA Strikes Again; the 5-for-5 Rule

The NCAA endures major changes with the passing of the 5-for-5 rule which grants athletes five years of eligibility.

Kellan Hudson
Sports Editor

The NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) recently passed a momentous and pivotal "5-for-5" rule, which changes the entire landscape of college

sports.

The 5-for-5 rule allows college Division 1 and 2 athletes to compete for five years at the college level. The five years start upon the player's arrival to campus or on their 19th birthday, whichever comes first.

Therefore, if an athlete enrolls late, they will not get to play five years.

The catch is that the 5 years must be competed in consecutively. If a player plays for four years straight, they could not

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Police Blotter



Chase Duncan
Copy Editor
Wild deer breaks into Sims Science Building, dies in building

Winthrop University Police Department officers responded to a report of a wild deer in the basement of the Sims Science Building on May 21. The officers requested dispatch to contact the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources upon arrival and afterwards determined that the deer was too wounded to survive its injuries. A SCDNR officer put the deer down with their department issued firearm and removed the carcass from the basement, according to the WUPD case log.

‘Biohazard’ car left in Coliseum parking lot for cleaning gets towed

A WUPD officer observed a suspicious vehicle in the Winthrop Coliseum parking lot on June 27. The vehicle appeared to have been towed by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department and marked as a “biohazard”, along with a cleaning service. The cleaning service employees told the officer that the vehicle had been brought to the Coliseum to be cleaned after an incident had occurred inside. The vehicle’s owner later arrived at the location and stated that he had received permission to have it cleaned at the site. The owner was informed that the vehicle would be towed and that it was not allowed to be cleaned in the Coliseum parking lot. The vehicle was then towed.

Man bangs on student’s apartment window at The Courtyard during the night

A WUPD officer spoke with a student on July 4 who said she heard someone banging on her Courtyard apartment’s window in the middle of the night. The officer conducted an on-foot search of the area with negative results. The officer then returned to the station to review camera footage with a notable sighting captured at approximately 4:48 a.m., where the subject was spotted looking into the student’s window.

Winthrop strategic plan Cont.

with Fort Mill on dual enrollment,” van Delden said. The final program is designed for non-traditional students and working adults, which includes pop up classes and micro certification programs. These will be short, low-cost and convenient for this demographic. The provost also mentioned he is exploring transplanting a graduate program to Fort Mill without complications, but this will take multiple years to accomplish. “We’re not trying to replicate the Rock Hill Winthrop experience. If you are a student who wants to come have a traditional high-impact experience with cultural events, in-person classes with the faculty, student clubs and organizations and a residential experience [. . .] that happens in Rock Hill,” van Delden said. The university does not want students taking classes at both locations, and faculty will not be shared between Fort Mill and Rock Hill unless they have an interest in hosting a pop-up class. Ultimately, the hope is that a Fort Mill campus will strengthen Winthrop’s reputation and presence in the region, be revenue positive and not take away from the main Rock Hill campus and experience.

Career Development and Improved Advising
“Winthrop: United in Excellence” not only

includes the creation of new academic degrees and a Fort Mill campus, but will work to improve advising and career development services for students. This will increase retention and set students up for success. Van Delden helped lead the creation of a streamlined, centralized advising model which will be a “major shift in how we do advising,” he said. The new model will roll out this fall, and was created after months of research and planning. In the new method, Winthrop students will be advised by a professional, non-faculty advisor, who is physically located within their academic college, for their first three semesters. After the first three semesters, they will be assigned a faculty member. “Up until this point, the way students get advised at Winthrop was somewhat uneven and not aligned with national best practices. We are very lucky though to already have extremely talented student services directors and advisors capable of managing this transition,” van Delden said. There are many benefits to this model, as it takes some of the burden of advising off of already busy faculty, utilizes experts trained in full-time advising and will hopefully increase the first-year freshman retention rate by 3.5% by Fall 2030. This method will also engage in “proactive advising”.

“These professional advisors, they’re responsible not only to plan your schedule for next year, but to proactively be taking a look at how you’re doing, your midterm grades and the like, and anything else that’s going on. Proactively reaching out to you to help get your resources and making sure you’re staying on track,” the provost said. The Division of Student Affairs, under the leadership of Vice President Shelia Higgs-Burkhalter, is set to receive a brand new career center office this semester. The new office is described as “a new physical location for the Center for Career Development and Internships is under construction in the DiGiorgio Campus Center,” according to a university press release. The center will be largely complete in November 2026 and is set to begin operations early January 2027. “It’s going to be an awesome, beautiful facility central to campus right there in Diggs,” “but we don’t want to have this beautiful space and not good programming around it,” van Delden said. The strategic plan includes creation of a new “career ecosystem”: a robust set of resources and staff which can help students with the planning and decision making process, provide mentors, allow students to articulate their career

goals and take classes which align with these goals.
Enrollment Growth
A key priority of the strategic plan is enrollment growth, which will help to increase funding and long term stability for the university. While a final head-count for the class of 2030 is not yet determined, it is estimated that enrollment will again increase by 7 percent this year. “That [7%] equates to approximately 350 additional students and 3,000 additional credit hours compared to this time last year. We also welcomed approximately 1,350 new freshmen and transfer students to campus this month,” detailed a university press release. These numbers outpace 2018 and 2019 freshman class sizes, which the provost said is “pretty amazing.” “Four years in a row that Winthrop is growing compared to the previous decade before that, which was not so much,” van Delden said. When asked if increased enrollment has placed a strain on Winthrop’s resources and faculty, van Delden disagreed. Professors have been flexible with class sizes and sections, and seem to be positive about the growing student body. “As far as I can tell, every student who wanted a bed in our current residence hall inventory was able to get it. Classes seem full,

but not overly full,” the provost said. Van Delden added that the university does not have a clear cap or target goal for enrollment numbers. His personal goal is to see Winthrop grow to ten thousand students, a significant increase. “Just me personally, I think this region needs a bigger university, so I think growth is good. I think growth though is tricky because you need to manage it well,” he said. York County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state and the nation, and will require a large educational institution to fuel economic growth and provide qualified employees. The city of Rock Hill is actively recruiting numerous companies to take root around Winthrop, such as a \$1.5 billion Octapharma plant. Managing growth well includes maintaining the personal touch of Winthrop University. “Students choose Winthrop because you get to develop real relationships with your faculty members. It’s a more supportive environment, smaller class sizes and a broad-based high-impact Liberal Arts education. We don’t want to lose those important aspects of why students choose Winthrop, and just as a broad stroke, once you get well past 10,000 students, you can start to lose that,” van Delden said.

Students weigh in on problematic RHPD flock cameras with county-wide petition

York County is concerned about their privacy, leaving students worried.

Hudson Mize
Staff Writer

A petition to remove Flock surveillance cameras from York County is on the rise as more residents vocalize their disinterest in them. The petition located on change.org with over 2,400 signatures calls on local governments and law enforcement agencies to remove the cameras which use an automated capture system to tag license plates and help law enforcement investigate crimes. Supporters of the petition say the cameras violate privacy, are easy to abuse, and store personal information. Law enforcement argues that the cameras help identify suspects and aid in arresting offenders. Flock cameras began working with Homeowner Associations (HOA) in 2017, originally for private neighborhood safety. In 2020, Flock pivoted to starting contracts with law enforcement agencies to create an interconnected surveillance network. As of July 2026, Flock has cameras in 49 states in 6,000 communities, having partnerships with over 7,000 law enforcement agencies. Brayden Brazil, a Winthrop sophomore and theater major, said he is against Flock cameras because they can be abused by police officers to commit criminal actions.

“Supposedly Flock cameras tag license plates whenever a car passes by, but I know they’ve been used for other purposes,” Brazil said. “I’ve heard that police officers will go and look at their ex-wives and stalk them to see where they are going, but that’s one of the main reasons I’m against them.” Brazil refers to a CNN article released on Aug. 26 which covers an officer that was arrested in Kentucky for stalking his ex-girlfriend over 2,000 times. A similar case happened in early August, with a Mooresville, NC officer arrested for stalking her former relationship using Flock cameras. Winthrop senior and mass communication major Joshua Prevette said he believes the data from Flock cameras is being used to support data centers and spy on the general public. “I have heard [Flock cameras] being abused more in a Big Brother style, very similar to George Orwell’s 1984, than I have any [helpful] use, all I hear is how they’re being used to fund data centers,” Prevette said. “I’ve heard people have illegally used Flock cameras to aid in the capture of immigrants, I’ve heard that ICE uses them.” Former Winthrop senior and art history major Matthew Hensley said he has concerns over the violation of privacy



Flock camera beside the Courtyard apartments

Photo by Zoey Molina

regarding where the cameras are placed. “Multiple times I’ve seen online of Flock cameras pointed at pools, or parks, somewhere that it doesn’t need to be,” Hensley said. “I understand that, maybe, they want to try and catch a suspect or perpetrator in action, but constantly being [under] surveillance and wondering if my life is being sold scares me.” Prevette said he also worries about his data and whereabouts being sold to companies for profit. “If a Flock camera catches me going back to my apartment with Walmart bags, then suddenly I’m going to start getting more Walmart targeted ads, or deals, or such,” Prevette said. Matthew Chavis, Public

Information Officer at the Rock Hill Police Department, said that Flock provides safety benefits to the public by capturing, not tracking, license plates in order to send out timely alerts in the event of a dangerous crime. “Flock does not track license plates, they capture the plates as they go by the camera, it is not like GPS tracking,” Chavis said. “In law enforcement we have alerts, what that does is when a car travels past a Flock camera an alert is sent clarifying a car has passed a camera, only if a vehicle has a license plate that must indicate an alert.” For example, an alert would be used when the police department knows the license plate of a

vehicle during an amber alert. The flock cameras would capture the vehicle as it passed by the camera, sending a ping to the station which would direct the officers where to go. Chavis said that tagging a vehicle to track them could also be done manually. This is how the officer in Mooresville who stalked her boyfriend was able to track the vehicle she wanted. “They probably went into the system and entered that tag,” Chavis said. The Rock Hill public information officer said that Flock can only capture vehicles, not people. “It does not capture people, or bicyclists... you don’t even see the

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Miracle Park cont.



Miracle Park sign, located in Rock

Photo by Patrick Baird

with it? How is it going to be within the budget? Can we build it within budget? Can we build it on time? Do we have the technical skills to build this thing? Will it not blow over in the wind? All those kinds of things,” Cassidy said.

For the students involved, it was a great learning experience, according to Zoe Gumangan, a fine arts major and one of the sculptures’ designers.

“We always talk about the artistic side of making, but now we have the hands-on experience of actually having to work with whoever’s commissioning you, working within city regulations and public art,” Gumangan said.

“Sean always says, whenever you have a client, you really got to work with a client.” This communication was one of the main challenges of the project, Gumangan added.

“It’s not that they don’t know what they want; it’s more so they know what they don’t want, so it’s your job as the artist is sort of like, explain to them, and in the best way, whether it’s visual, words, meetings, whatever, what the final product will be.”

Fine arts major Jesse Gross also worked on the Miracle Park sculptures, and said that the sculptures also look great in a student’s curriculum vitae (CV), an art student’s

equivalent of a resume.

“I did learn a lot about, for lack of a better word, problem-solving, because

we did hit a lot of road bumps where they wanted to change the design or the colors or the size, or we had to

reformat because there were more donor names. It taught me a lot about figuring that type of stuff out,” Gross said.

It was also refreshing to be paid for a project, Gross added.

“There’s not a lot of student artist opportunities,” Gumangan said.

“You can get internships, you can volunteer within the community, but it’s really hard to get paid as a student artist on this stuff.”

Cassidy agreed with this sentiment.

“I think there’s a huge misconception about studying art, fine arts in art school. When I went to art school, no one ever talked about money, no one ever talked about how are

you going to make a living, how are you going to survive as an artist, and I think Winthrop’s done a very good job of trying to demystify the financial or commercial aspect of having a fine arts degree,” Cassidy said.

These real-world skills, getting paid for the work, were Cassidy’s favorite parts of the project, he explained.

“The thing I like the most is, I like students to understand their creative skills, their creativity, their imagination, their technical skills, their ability to ideate, that has value in culture, right? So they were all paid. The students were all paid by Miracle Park to make these models, to make the final sculptures.”



Student artwork featured at Miracle Park

Photo by Zoey Molina

Club spotlight: UnderDawgz

A new, inclusive dance group to start this semester and an interview with its founder.



Underdawgz staff poses for a picture at Convocation Picnic

Photo via Instagram/@underdawgz_wu

Gabriela Griggs
AC&T Editor

A new dance club called “UnderDawgz” has begun rehearsing on campus. Founded by senior dance major Ramiya Jackson, the group looks to provide students across departments a chance to connect with one another and share their passion for dance.

“I feel that UnderDawgz will bridge the gap between people that are majoring/minoring in the arts and the people who are not,” Jackson said. “This will give people... a chance to break free, let loose and have fun while learning dance and not having the feeling of... being judged or made fun of.”

This group’s formation

comes from a new Winthrop decision to charge students extra above the 15 credit hour threshold.

“I realized that moment forward that I would have to pay to perform if I was casted in dance pieces for Winthrop Dance Theatre because I always hit 15 credit hours or more every semester. That opened my eyes to what others may be going through,” Jackson said.

Beyond providing students with a cost-free creative outlet, UnderDawgz also prioritizes a positive and inclusive environment for its members.

“I created UnderDawgz to create a welcoming and inclusive environment not only for people [who already know] how to

dance but for people that [have] little to no dance experience. The purpose of UnderDawgz is to provide [a supportive environment] for individuals to explore and participate in dance, regardless of prior experience or skill level, [and] to offer affordable and accessible opportunities for students to learn, train, and grow in various styles of dance without financial barriers,” Jackson said.

The group looks to explore all aspects of dance, including performance skills. UnderDawgz combines various dance styles and techniques in an effort to provide the most beneficial experience to its participants.

Additionally, Jackson,

as a leader, brings a vast personal history of dance experience to her group.

“My dance experience [consists] of praise dance with my church, attending a magnet art school for dance and chorus through 6th-8th grade, being a member of my high school dance team for 3 years, being a part [of the] Winthrop Dance Theatre and department during my time here at Winthrop, being a member of Elite Dynasty for 2 years... and now being a member of [the] Winthrop Spirit Squad,” Jackson said.

Jackson brings her experience from both inside and outside of campus to her leadership. Alongside her dance major, Jackson is pursuing a minor in

educational studies. She aims to use both of these academic skills to not just lead the UnderDawgz, but also in her future career.

“Since 2023, I have been brought in to choreograph for a church’s praise dance team and taught at Richburg Dance Academy for 2 years. I feel that my years of training along with my practice to become certified as a dance educator in K-12 allows me to have a different approach on how to teach dance to people that [have] little to no experience. It allows me to be patient and able to know how to accommodate a range of people that [want] to learn dance while also having a great time,” Jackson said.

As for the group’s goals this semester, they consist of performances, regular practice, and even potential guest artist collaborations. UnderDawgz aims to not just hone skills, but also provide moments for campus to witness what the club has been working on.

“I just want everyone to know that there are safe places on campus where you can be free and let loose, especially when feeling [stressed.] I was always told that when things are going wrong in life, or you’re feeling stressed, to just let loose and dance it out!” Jackson said.

Students interested in joining can contact the group via Instagram, @underdawgz_wu.

NCAA 5-for-5 ruling Cont.

take a year off and then come back a year later and play again. This means that the 5-for-5 rule has also eliminated all redshirting.

Prior to this rule, athletes were granted four years to compete at the collegiate level, but sometimes those “years” were spread out over five or six years. Athletes who wanted extra time to adapt to the college game or who were recovering from injury, might “redshirt” a season, where they could practice with the team, but not compete in games.

In the old system, this would preserve a year of eligibility, but now this is no longer necessary as the athlete has five years to play regardless of whether or not they actually compete in any of those years.

There was no age limit on competing in college sports prior to the implementation of the 5-for-5 rule. It was not uncommon to see players in their mid to late 20s competing at the college level (this was particularly common amongst big sports such as football, hockey, and basketball). The oldest Division 1 college men’s basketball player last year (the 2025-2026 season) was Harvard’s Ramel Bethea, who was 29 years old.

The NCAA originally passed its 5-for-5 rule in order to make its rules simpler by eliminating complications with

“athletics redshirts, delayed enrollment/organized competition and other sport-specific rules, seasons of competition, and waiver opportunities” (NCAA, 2026).

The new 5-for-5 rule provides several benefits to athletes rising into the collegiate level.

It keeps the players competing in college sports college aged, and it also encourages players to finish their degree. Coach Hannah Vance of

on the sport and the athlete and the academic path that they’re taking, it could take someone five years to finish their undergrad.”

Allowing players an additional year of eligibility gives players more time to finish out a degree, which will likely lead to an increase

in graduation rates. On top of this, the 5-for-5 rule also encourages athletes who graduate in four years to consider enrolling in grad school

for their fifth year of eligibility. Coach Vance shared that “more often than not girls are on time to graduate in four years, so now this gives

everyone an opportunity to start or finish grad school.”

While coaches and players alike seem to be in agreement over the academic and age benefits of the 5-for-5 rule, athletes have their own fears, especially in the nature of injuries. For instance, junior Katie Beck of the Winthrop softball team shared that when she first heard of the new 5-for-5 rule she was initially disappointed.

“I was a little disappointed just because most of my teammates now get five years of actual playing time where my time technically got shortened due to my injury,” Beck said. “There are no medical redshirt exceptions, which was also a bummer, so now I’ll only get to play four full years.”

Beck had to medically redshirt her sophomore year when she tore both her hip labrums. This shows that athletes who get injured in college will technically play less years than their teammates who remain healthy all five years. She said that a downfall of the 5-for-5 rule is that it doesn’t necessarily account for injuries, especially for athletes who get injured for more than one season.

“I think that there should still be a medical redshirt. I think it’s kind of unfair, especially if an athlete gets injured twice throughout their career,” Beck said.



Winthrop Volleyball celebrates late in a clutch moment vs Virginia Tech

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Winthrop Men’s Soccer is moving in a new direction With a new coach leading the way and over twenty new faces on the roster, change is happening fast.

Natalia Barthel
Staff Writer

Winthrop men’s soccer is off to a strong season that is being propelled through an overhaul of the entire program. Under Coach Dale Parker, who was hired as the soccer coach in January 2026, the program has already rebuilt more than half of its roster while changing its entire approach to training, team culture, and matches. They opened the season with a win against the University of South Florida, a positive sign for a program that is pushing to reclaim its identity.

More than 20 new players joined the team this season, showcasing how much has been happening behind the scenes before the season ever started. Coach Parker believes that the overhaul was necessary after the program had struggled in recent years and had found itself in need of a fresh direction.

“The program definitely needed it,” Parker said.

“We needed a lot of fresh faces because we implemented so many changes behind the scenes during the spring... it’s a lot of recruitment to get over 20 guys at this level, especially into a program that was suffering in previous years, but there were a lot of players that really fit the mold, and they fit us characteristically as well as football players.”

With bringing in that many new players at once, team chemistry and

culture could have been easily disrupted. Instead, Parker said the returning players welcomed the shift.

“The returning guys were very welcome to it because there aren’t that many of them in terms of returning players. So they couldn’t wait for the level to go up, and obviously they’ve integrated really well with the new guys,” Parker said.

Parker has also brought a structured and data-driven approach to how the team and its staff prepares daily. The coaching staff tracks players closely and builds training sessions around those individual targets instead of attempting to fit everyone in a premade training plan.

“We’re very much into the data analysis and then the physical load that the players are under as well. We monitor all of that to make sure our training sessions match, and the individual players within that training session hit certain targets. We believe having all of our strong players fit and available throughout the course of the season is the best way to be successful,” Parker said.

Thomas Wilson, one of the returning players, has experienced the shift firsthand. He mentioned that the biggest change hasn’t been tactical so much as the belief that the team carries on to the field for each match.

“The biggest difference I’ve noticed is the overall energy and mindset of the

team,” Wilson said.

“There’s a lot more confidence and belief in each other this year. We want to play with a lot of energy, compete for every ball, and make things difficult for the other team. Everyone has bought into what the coaching staff is asking from us, and I think that has really helped us come together.”

Wilson also credited the new players with helping build the culture just as much as the coaching staff has.

“The new players have brought a lot of energy and different personalities to the team. They’ve fit in really well, and I think they’ve helped create a competitive but positive environment. Off the field, everyone has gotten close pretty quickly, which has helped us build chemistry on the field too,” Wilson said.

The team opened up the season with a win over South Florida despite having dealt with illness in the group before heading into the match, a result that reflected the belief that Parker said the group already carried.

“I felt like we had a lot of belief that we could go there. There were some players that were surprised, but we weren’t surprised as a staff. We know the level that this group can get to. We’re still pretty far away from the levels we can get to, but it didn’t surprise me that we opened up with a win there and performed like we did,” Parker said.

When asked about what

his short and long term goals for the program are, Parker didn’t shy away from what they’re chasing this season.

“We want to win a championship,” he said.

“That’s what we’re all in this for... every single day we talk about it, we speak about it. That’s the goal, and we might fall short, but the process and the steps that we take to try to achieve that, in itself, the byproduct

of taking those steps is we’re going to go in the right direction.”

Wilson said fans should expect that same hunger every single time the team takes the field.

“This team is hungry and excited about what we can accomplish. We’re going to keep working, competing, and bringing a lot of energy every time we step on the field. We want people to come out and support us

because there’s a lot to look forward to,” Wilson said.

For a program that is 11 years removed from its last championship, Parker said the goal is simply: give fans a reason to believe again.

“Hopefully, they can see that we honor the championship history of the program, but we’re also trying to write our own history now,” Parker said.



Dale Parker, Winthrop’s men’s soccer coach

Photo via Winthrop Athletics

Letter from the Editor: Change for the Better

Bailey Wimberly
Editor-in-Chief

Going into my junior year of college, I have been through many ups and downs. I have become involved in multiple organizations, even some in leadership positions. I was re-selected as the Editor-in-Chief of The Johnsonian for the 2026-2027 school year after my first semester with the title. Even with all of these accomplishments and achievements, I still cannot put my tongue on what I am missing. Within these last three years, I have been given the opportunity to work for The Johnsonian. While being part of this organization, I have always loved the process of journalism. In my freshman year, I was able to learn about journalism from behind the scenes with the interviews, photography, layouts, copy editing, and story writing from a first person perspective. In my time as editor-in-chief, I have grown fond of the administrative process of overseeing student journalism at Winthrop and I continue to learn new things everyday. In these years, I have experienced a lot of negativity, jealousy, and hatred. These experiences have come from many different sources, but nothing has come from a singular occasion. I have never understood some of these experiences. Many of them felt unfair, uncomfortable, or even unnecessary at times. As I continue going through my college years, I cannot put my tongue on this negativity and

the repeated cycle that it follows. Sometimes, it feels like a lingering shadow that follows people everywhere and that they are unable to see

a better job at that as I grew older, but why does that cloud linger, that dark shadowy cloud? I believe that it is caused by the hatred that many

who has experienced this, I want people to know that they are not alone and that hatred can be turned into love to empower others around

the main thing I want to focus on this year is promoting positivity and love over hatred. Last semester, I was able to write about Bad Bunny's

his halftime show, I began to live by that motto. I want people to feel loved and accepted instead of judged or shut down. Why do we have to put others down for us, as individuals, to feel better about ourselves? My goal with The Johnsonian is for everyone to feel uplifted and accepted. I want people to pick up the newspaper and feel excited to read about what we have next! I want to radiate positivity and beautiful energy from this outlet just like I am able to do in so many other things in my life. I want to leave you all with this, listen to Bad Bunny's message in the beautiful way he intended. Not only is it a message that unites people from across the world, but it shows how we can all come together. I want to emphasize this message while I am here at Winthrop University and encourage everyone to lean on each other, unite together, and love each other, no matter your differences. For the newly arrived class of 2030, this university is full of amazing people and opportunities. Find those opportunities and the people you want to be with. Do not be afraid to step out of your comfort zone because someone will be there with a pool noodle and a life jacket to catch you with a smile on their face. To all Winthrop students, welcome to Winthrop and thank you for supporting The Johnsonian and myself! Cheers to a new school year and let's all change for the better.



Bailey Wimberly, Editor-in-Chief of The Johnsonian

Photo by Max Prosser

it or even recognize its presence. For myself, I have noticed the shadow and have worked my hardest to sway clear of it. I believe I have done

people hold deep down within themselves that they project onto others because they are not sure how to deal with it themselves. As someone

them instead of tearing them down. With this opportunity to speak to the student body about my goals for The Johnsonian,

halftime performance and highlighted his message, "The only thing more powerful than hate is love." From that day forward, after watching

Beyond the numbers of Winthrop

Kira Rich
Editorial Editor

Take 2,122 beds. Subtract 1,100 incoming students. Subtract another 871 sophomores. Suddenly, there isn't much room left. Winthrop University is growing rapidly. In the fall of 2025, Winthrop reached a total of 5,287 students, which was a 13% increase from fall 2022. Focusing solely on newly admitted freshmen, the Freshman class grew from 901 students in fall 2024 to 1,014 in fall 2025. That trend has continued into 2026. Winthrop reported a 7% increase in total enrollment compared with the previous year. The university also welcomed

approximately 1,350 new freshmen and transfer students for the fall semester. Enrollment growth can be great for a campus as it may bring in additional students with new perspectives and set the foundation for new opportunities. But with growth comes a certain level of responsibility. The university must ensure that its housing, academic resources, and student services continue to grow alongside its enrollment. In the last year, housing has been one of the bigger challenges for Winthrop. Underclassmen are guaranteed housing, but upperclassmen do not have that same luxury. As the university's student population grows, fewer

housing options remain available for juniors and seniors who want to continue living on campus, which ultimately puts the school's retention rate at risk. The issue isn't whether underclassmen or upperclassmen should be prioritized for housing but rather how much Winthrop's infrastructure and resources can advance to adequately accommodate its growing student population. Some upperclassmen are having to learn how to maintain campus involvement while simultaneously balancing work, assignments, and fighting the distance, while others are having to take a completely new approach to further education.

Winthrop junior and web development major Isabella Austin said that upperclassmen are losing money trying to find off campus housing to stay at the university. "The older students are having to transfer, or they're having to take gap years, or take semesters off. Or, you know, bleed out of their pockets to find somewhere else to live," Austin said. More students also means more demand for courses, classrooms, advising, dining, parking, recreation, and other campus services. Luckily, educational resources such as the language lab and writing lab have continued to prove themselves as easily accessible. However, upperclassmen find it difficult to be

involved in campus life due to long commutes, limited parking, and work schedules. "It's like every spot's taken up, so I have to go to the gravel lot and basically walk across campus, but even residents complain about not enough spaces in the resident lots", biology major Logan Houser said. Winthrop has acknowledged the need to expand housing and has planned to begin construction of a new 400-bed dormitory. Vertical construction will begin in January 2027, with construction aimed to be completed in Spring 2028. The project is a large investment for the university. The Board of Trustees approved the issuance of up to \$55.5 million in higher education revenue bonds to finance the new residence hall. But unfortunately, 400 additional beds will not fully solve the issue at hand. The university is adding students now. The new residence hall is not expected to open until 2028. That gap is where the university needs to focus its attention. It's important to identify areas for improvement in established communal spaces and housing, as many dormitories have not been renovated in

years. There have been recurring issues with mold, dysfunctional A/C and heating systems, and bug infestations. "I feel like we should be able to hold two truths, and you can build more housing and still fix the housing that is already harming your stimuli," Austin said. It should not be a decision of choosing between prioritizing newly admitted students and students who have already been attending Winthrop, as both groups deserve reliable, evolving resources. The admission numbers imply that students are seeking out and choosing Winthrop. The question is no longer how Winthrop can appeal to incoming students and raise admissions numbers but instead how it can maintain those numbers and support them without forcing existing students to compete for increasingly limited resources. Growth should expand beyond the student body to classes, academic resources, housing, and extracurriculars. Winthrop has the opportunity to expand on its recent enrollment accomplishments. But if the university wants to continue to grow, its infrastructure needs to be able to grow alongside it.



Outside of Walk2Campus on-campus apartments

Photo by Jackson Stanton

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Bailey Wimberly, Editor-in-Chief

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Flock cameras in York County Cont.

people inside the car if a capture is taken.” Despite Chavis’s and other defenders’ arguments for the benefits of Flock cameras, the petition claims there have been times when the system has failed. It showcases a current lawsuit in which a man’s license plate was incorrectly identified by a Flock camera in York County, leading to an unwarranted traffic stop and an officer holding the man at gunpoint. York County resident William McCaskill said that Flock is an unfortunate but necessary tool towards mitigating crime and capturing criminals. “It is a necessary evil,” McCaskill said. “There is already no expectation of privacy in public, if Flock cameras only do what they are meant to do then I don’t see the issue. If I had proof that they were selling my data or habits or whatever, then I would be more than happy to have them gone though.” Currently York County does not disclose any information regarding Flock cameras, such as the contracts, cost, or the data shared between the police department and the agency they have the contract with. “If our money are going to these cameras, then I feel like I should have a right to know what is being used, I should know exactly what the cameras are picking up or registering,” Prevette said. There are currently 26 Flock cameras in Rock Hill (5 of which surround Winthrop’s campus, one of them being at the coliseum) and 19 in York that are active.

Local Rep. Ralph Norman loses primary runoff for Senate seat

Norman loses to Darline Graham, sister of late S.C. senator, Lindsey Graham.

Dakota Gold Staff Writer

South Carolina Rep. and Rock Hill resident Ralph Norman lost to Darline Graham in the primary runoff election for the senate seat that took place on Aug. 25. President Donald J. Trump endorsed Darline Graham after the passing of her brother and former South Carolina senator, Lindsey Graham. South Carolina governor Henry McMaster appointed Darline Graham to serve the remainder of her brother’s term after the late senator’s death on July 11. Lindsey Graham died unexpectedly from a ruptured aorta caused by chronic heart disease. The late senator Graham previously won the Republican primary on June 9 and was to face re-election in November. During a Myrtle Beach rally on Aug. 21, Trump endorsed Darline Graham to honor the late senator. “I’m doing this to honor Lindsey. That’s why I’m here. So, Darline, we got to win that race,” Trump said. Darline Graham inherited the South Carolina senate seat from her brother who had been in office since 1995. Graham tells South Carolinians she wishes to stay in office and honor

her brother’s legacy full term. Darline Graham graduated from the College of Charleston with a bachelor’s in sociology and from South Carolina State University with a master’s in rehabilitation counseling. She advocates for disability rights legislation and helped to undo a subminimum wage policy for people with disabilities when the state legislature voted to end it in 2022, according to PBS News. Before the election, she served as commissioner of the South Carolina Commission for the Blind and worked at Clemson University for the South Carolina Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. Darline Graham faced backlash during the candidate debate against Norman for her answer on a question surrounding national security and the significance of Taiwan and the South China Sea. “I’m just going to be honest here. I’m not that informed on national security,” Darline Graham said. Her brother was known as a “foreign policy hawk,” often advocating for Ukraine and Israel, and was a loud voice on defense policies and military presence. This response brought into

question her ability to follow in her brother’s footsteps. Norman is noted to have foreign policy experience through being a five-term congressman and member of the House Freedom Caucus. His Senate campaign focused on his political experience. The primary election was expected to be close with Darline Graham’s endorsement and appointment by McMaster to serve in her brother’s place. Ultimately, Darline Graham won the nomination with 52.5% of the vote. She will face democrat Annie Andrews in the midterm election this November. Kelsey Medcalf, student body president of Winthrop University, interned for Norman this summer. She interned for his office in Washington D.C. and was a part of his campaign team. Her duties consisted of things like taking phone calls, sending physical mail, taking concerns by email and any additional job the congressman needed. Medcalf was present for interviews, committee hearings and even on the House floor. Medcalf said that campaigning is phone call heavy. The abrupt election meant the



Ralph Norman speaks to the crowd

Photo by Patrick Semansky

campaign team had to get the word out there as soon as possible. It was difficult for Norman to gather a campaign team quickly because the majority of his previous team left for Alan Wilson after his loss in the governor race, according to Medcalf. This may be a key reason why he was not able to rally more support in the Senate runoff. Norman’s campaign focused on fighting for South Carolina and putting America first. Medcalf agrees that he puts his effort towards caring for his people. “I see him as if South Carolina was a person,”

Medcalf said. The most common complaint about Norman that Medcalf noticed during the election was that he went against Trump’s “big, beautiful bill.” Medcalf said the story does not align with what the media said. Norman did not agree with the first draft and would not let the bill pass until it best benefitted his state. “He sat in with legislators who called the president, and they wrote it and he argued about things he believed should be changed. Once they were changed, he passed the bill and has been backing it ever since,”

Medcalf said. Since the loss in August, Norman has returned to serving in South Carolina’s 5th congressional district. On Sep. 2, Norman posted on the social platform X addressing the election. “I respect the decision of South Carolina voters, and I congratulate Senator Darline Graham on winning the Republican nomination. I will support our Republican nominee in November because defeating the Democrats and protecting our conservative values must remain the priority,” Norman said. The midterm election will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 3.

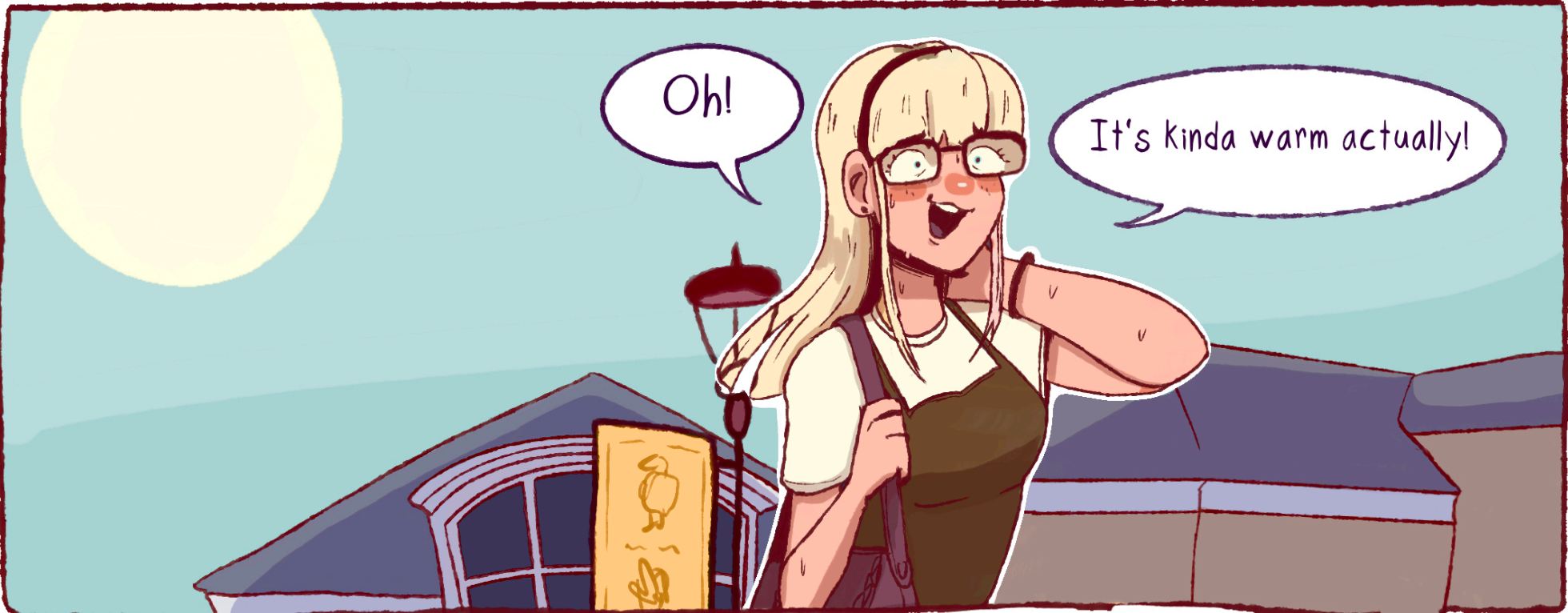


September 10, 2026

Start of a new semester means a stylish new wardrobe!

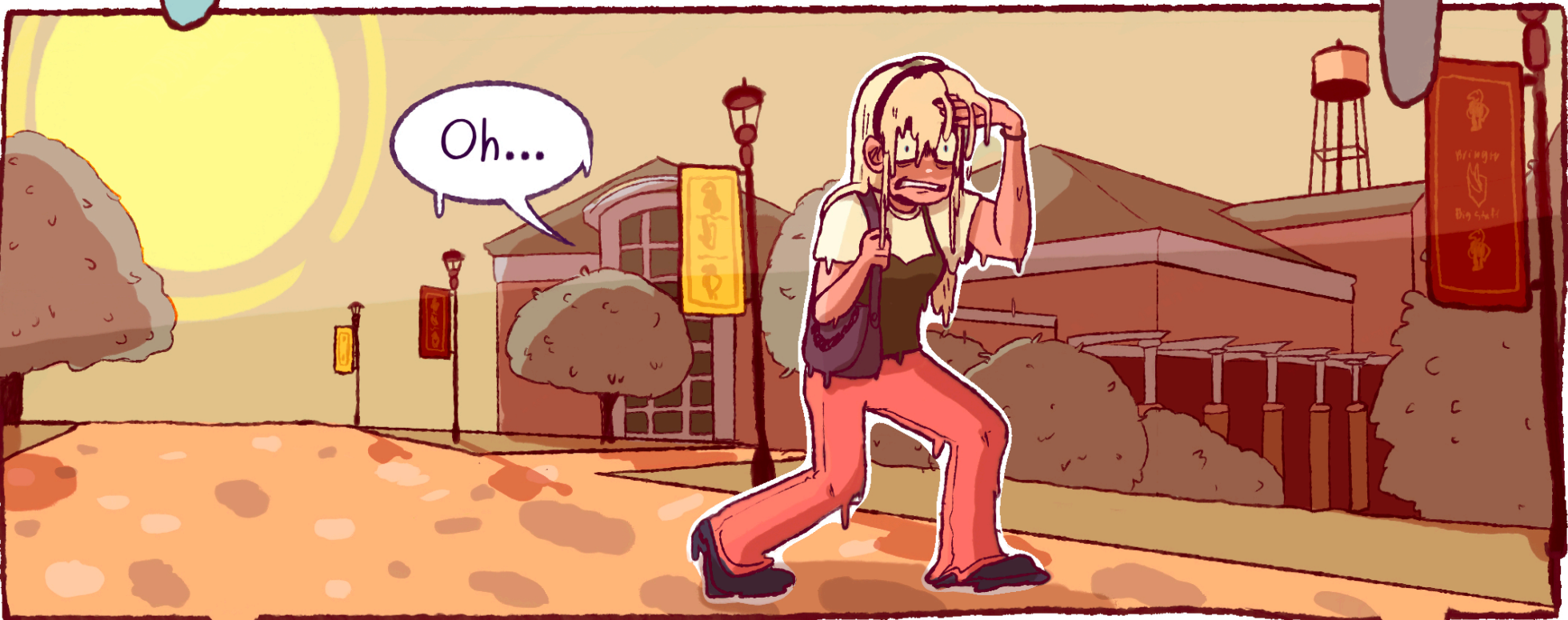


Absolutely NOTHING is going to stop me from looking awesome.



Oh!

It's kinda warm actually!



Oh...



Oh no...
This is not the look I was going for...