

STUDENT VOTING AND ADVOCACY ON CAMPUS Students are able to use their voices and vote in upcoming elections. <i>Featured on Page 3</i>	STUDENT ATHLETICS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD Winthrop Athletics sees their biggest freshman and transfer class. <i>Featured on Page 4</i>	NO MORE EXCUSES: HOW THE CORNELL 7 IMPACTED ALL Following an incident in 2024, students voice their opinions. <i>Featured on Page 5</i>
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Winthrop’s new residence hall begins construction

Students on the lookout for new residence hall, expected Spring 2028.

Hudson Mize
Staff Writer

Winthrop has begun construction for a new co-educational residence hall that will contain 400 beds. The new hall, which is currently not named, is located where the previously demolished Wafford and Richardson residence halls sat. The reasons why Wafford and Richardson were originally deconstructed were due to different issues regarding their stability. “They were eight stories, there were some structural issues on the Watford side, there were also a lot of infrastructure issues inside the building,” associate Vice

President of facilities at Winthrop, James Grigg said. The new residence hall will be four stories tall with the overall building being 100,000 square feet and equipped with two elevators. The rooms inside the hall will contain two beds with the same standard metal furniture as other residence halls such as Thompson. The rooms will be 200 square feet each. Unlike other residence halls on campus, the new hall will have wet-core, or pod style bathrooms. Bathrooms will be located in the shared hallway and inside the bathroom suites which will be individual student rooms. Rooms will

contain a toilet, sink, and shower. “You have full privacy in the room” Grigg said, “you just have to go inside the bigger bathroom to get to the individual rooms.” The pod style rooms will be completely sealed and can be locked from the inside. There is no entrance to the rooms other than through the door. “During common times there may be an issue with so many people needing the bathroom, and there might not be enough rooms for everyone.” Shaun Whiteside, a senior middle level education major said. Jarad Russell, the director of residence life

said that there will be more bathroom options available than the pod style type. “Others are on the hall. It’s one door, you open it, close, shower, toilet, sink, and it locks.” Russell said. Due to the nature of the pod style bathrooms, both men and women will share the same floor and same bathroom suites. “There may be some [men/women] on this side of the hall, some on that side of the hall, and certain bathrooms will be designated, but for the most part people will still be intermixed like they are throughout campus.” Russell said. The new residence

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Winthrop police department Photo by Chase Duncan

Winthrop University sees upticks in thefts and vehicular larcenies during September

Thefts of bikes, scooters, wallets and a car have happened at buildings across Winthrop campus.

Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

Over a dozen vehicle break-ins, thefts and suspicious person sightings were reported in the Winthrop University campus area during the month of September. Winthrop University Police Department’s Chief of Police Charles Yearta emailed the student body on Sept. 15 to alert students of the sudden uptick of reported break-ins and larcenies. “WUPD has been notified by numerous victims that their vehicles were broken into and rummaged through while parked in the area of College Avenue,” Yearta said. “Victims also reported items being stolen off their porches and property, also within the area of College Avenue. Although some of the items have been recovered, other items have not.” The first entry involving vehicle theft

in the WUPD’s online daily case log for September was reported on Sept. 11. A victim reported that their bike was stolen from the rack located near the railroad side entrance to Walk2Campus, sometime between Sept. 9 and 11. The second incident was reported on Sept. 14, when a student contacted and spoke to a WUPD officer about an incident that occurred early in the morning on Sept. 8. The case log for the incident said that video footage shows “the subject appears to be [looking] into vehicles and walks up onto the back porch and tried to tamper with the back door.” The prowler then left the area. Another set of similar incidents was reported at a house on College Avenue on Sept. 14, where multiple victims reported vehicular larceny. One victim told the responding WUPD

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Sign at the construction site of Winthrop's new residence hall Photo by Zoey Molina

Mug & Maple brewing community in Rock Hill

Local coffee shop becomes the spot for conversation and community.

Dakota Gold
Staff Writer

What began as a place to grab a cup of coffee has grown into a favorite spot for the Rock Hill community. Mug & Maple, located in The Power House at 378 Technology Center Way, combines New England flair with a welcoming atmosphere to make customers feel at home. When the shop opened in April 2026, Nate and Kate Kingsley wanted to create more than another place to grab a quick cup of coffee. They envisioned a gathering place where customers could slow down, connect with others and feel like part of the community. For Nate Kingsley, that vision grew from a love of coffee that started at a

young age. Kingsley had his first cup of coffee at eight years old. When he began working for Espresso Dave’s in college, he developed a deeper appreciation for it and the business behind it. He knew at some point in his life that he would open a coffee shop. After moving away from the gym business, Kingsley decided it was time to turn that goal into reality. For them, opening a coffee shop is about more than just the coffee. They wanted the shop to reflect their values, including their approach to food and ingredients. Mug & Maple prioritizes healthy, real food, so they do not use seed oils or artificial ingredients. They use locally sourced milk and

organic flavors, even using New England maple syrup in their signature “OG Maple” coffee, as they are from New Hampshire. Kingsley’s vision for the shop is a place where people can walk into a welcoming atmosphere. “I want you to immediately feel like we are friends,” he said. I’m guessing this is all from Mr. Kingley, may want to specify that he was the one you interviewed He wants it to be a place where customers can stay for a while, meet up with friends, and if nothing else, enjoy a cup of coffee. “I want to be the spot where people feel comfortable coming, regardless of who they

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Interior of Mug and Maple, located in The Power House Photo by Zoey Molina

Police Blotter



Chase Duncan
Copy Editor
Student forgets where they parked their car, reports it stolen

A person called WUPD on Sept. 18 to report that their car had possibly been stolen. The responding WUPD officer reviewed video footage which showed that the victim had left and did not return to her parking spot. The vehicle was later found parked in another lot. She forgot she parked it in the other location..

Fleeing motorcyclist turns himself in after evading police

A WUPD officer was on patrol on Sept. 27 when he observed a motorcycle cut across traffic at the intersection of Richmond Drive and Cherry Road. The officer gave chase but was unable to catch up to the fleeing motorbike. The motorcyclist later reached out to the officer and admitted that he was the one who fled the police car earlier that night. The driver was then arrested and charged with failure to stop for blue light, disregarding a traffic signal and not having a motorcycle license.

Shirtless man steals \$15 dollars after asking for \$1, no charges pressed

A WUPD officer responded to a report of a man with no shirt yelling near the intersection of Alumni Drive and Columbia Avenue on Sept. 29. The officer made contact with the person who said that a white man had asked him for \$1. The interviewed person said that when they took their money out which consisted of around \$15, the man grabbed the money and ran away yelling for help. The victim declined to press charges.

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Winthrop’s new residence hall Cont.

building also offers other facilities for student use. The laundry facilities will be located on the second, third, and fourth floors. “There will be a lot more study, meeting, hangout, and lounge rooms than in most buildings that you see today,” Gregg said. The lounge and study rooms offered in the dorm will vary in layout across the rooms. “We’ve learned through various design projects on campus that students want a variety. More study space, more different types of room furniture, larger rooms, smaller rooms, two person rooms, four person rooms, the more variety the better [students] are,” Gregg said. The standard study spaces will offer a table and chair, but there’s also going to be lounges where a student can rest on the couch and study. “We’re even talking of something for people who have touch sensitivity, enhancing noise cancelling, and light control.” Gregg said. Residence life has potential plans to move their office to the new residence hall as well. Russell shared that new offices will be located on the bottom floor of the residence halls in order to become more centrally located for students. The entrance of the new hall will face the entrance of West Thompson, and will have a porch area at

the front Behind the residence hall there will be a courtyard space which may potentially connect to a second residence hall. “When we started this process, we [even] talked about a second new residence... We have a rough footprint that would go adjacent to the building we’re [currently] building... Size wise could be a little smaller, so maybe 320 [beds] to 350 range.” Gregg said. Winthrop is currently designing a way to realign alumni drive to accompany the new residence hall; alumni drive, the road that runs along the railroad tracks to continue onto Cherry road will be changed to align with the traffic light. “[Alumni drive] would actually have a slight “S” turn come in at the traffic light between McDonald’s and Ishura. Gregg said. The residence hall will be completed before the road, Gregg said that the road may begin construction late 2027. Zaylyn Mcneil, a freshman mathematics major looks forward to the future projects but is apprehensive about parking. “I bet the Dalton lot is going to be a warzone, and it’s going to be impossible to ever get a spot there anymore, I’m going to have to walk from the other side of that scary Cherry road parking lot.” Mcneil said. The new hall was

heavily inspired by the residence halls at both Clemson and University of South Carolina. The price for the new residence hall has not been determined by the board of trustees and the vice president of finance and business of Winthrop. The inspections for the new residence hall should be completed by December 2027. The hall will have a miniature launch with limited student occupancy in January 2028, with full occupancy either orientation, June 2028 or August 2028. The new residence hall will target the incoming freshmen class of its launch year.

Winthrop’s thefts across campus Cont.

building also offers other officer that someone attempted to break into their vehicle, while the other reported that someone stole their scooter off of their porch. Two days later on Sept. 16, a WUPD officer discovered multiple vehicles in the Ward parking lot had been burglarized between 12:30 a.m. and 9:30. a.m. One vehicle’s driver side door was damaged and a rear passenger window broken. While examining video footage, WUPD discovered that a car was stolen from the lot as well. The incident is still marked as “active” in the case log as of Sept. 20. On Sept. 17, multiple thefts were reported across campus. Two scooters were reported stolen from the Thurmond Building and near Dinkins Hall. The scooter from the Thurmond Building was stolen from outside room 306, while the other scooter was reportedly taken after its owner left it at a tree near the Dinkins lawn during an event. Additionally, a pair of AirPods were reported stolen on the same day by a student who said they dropped their wireless headphones in front of Rutledge while riding their scooter. The following day on Sept. 18, two incidents of burglary/larceny were

reported at Phelps Hall. The first incident involved a student who reported to WUPD early that day that their wallet had been stolen while working in Phelps Hall. The wallet had held items

reported later that night by a student who reported that someone had broken into their room and stolen items as well as money. The student had a video camera set up in the room which had captured

possession of a firearm on school property and possession of a handgun under the age of 18. A student reported that their skateboard had been stolen on Sept. 24. The student to

off. While the student looked for their missing bolt, they noticed that their skateboard had been stolen. The case was administratively closed due to lack of a lead. Two days later on Sept. 26, a WUPD officer responded to West Thomson Hall and met with a student in reference to their scooter being stolen from the bike rack outside the hall. The student that their scooter was locked up. The scooter was unable to be tracked by its serial number and the case is logged as administratively closed. The same day, a student reported that their bike had been stolen from Lee Wicker Hall. The student told the responding officer that they had secured their bike with a lock to the Lee Wicker staircase. The case is logged as administratively closed. The last reported case of larceny during the month was reported on Sept. 28 at West Thomson Hall, where an officer responded to a student’s report of their stolen scooter. The student said the scooter had last been seen when they chained it to the Thomson Hall bike rack before they left the area for the weekend. The case is logged as



Ward parking lot, located on Oakland Avenue

Photo by Bailey Wimberly

such as their Winthrop ID, social security card, a set of keys and other items. A search of the area was performed but did not uncover the lost item. The second incident was

video footage of the suspected person entering the room. The WUPD officer who responded to the call located the suspect and charged them with burglary, unlawful

the WUPD officer who responded to their call that they had been riding their skateboard near the West Center and Hardin Gardens when one of the bolts on their board fell

President Trump cuts back on direct student loans

The new Department of Education rule threatens to cut federal student loans to underpaying college programs and degrees.

Ta’Ni Miller
News Editor

Under the Student Tuition and Transparency System (STATS) and Earning Accountability rule, undergraduate programs across the nation will now be required to demonstrate that graduates earn more than the average high school diploma holder. Graduate programs will be required to demonstrate that their graduates earn more than the average bachelor degree holder. Great summary here With Winthrop’s longstanding history of being recognized as a leading college for education and teaching degrees, many students are now in danger of these cuts.

Student Tuition and Transparency System and Earnings Accountability rule Under Trump’s new law signed on July 4, 2025 and put into effect on July 1, 2026 after approval from the U.S. Department of Education, students pursuing careers in low-paying jobs may face financial trouble. All programs at higher education institution will be subject to the earnings accountability framework. This new law does not take into account an institution’s previous tax status or credential level. Additionally, the institution must have already participated in the Direct Loan program in the past five years. The new act could

be delayed for certain programs if the program prepares students for employment in occupations where the majority of workers receive tipped income. This is in adherence to President Trump’s “No Tax on Tips” policy, taken into effect at the start of the 2026 tax years. Qualified programs will have at least a one-year delay in the rule’s eligibility consequences. In addition, programs are exempt from automatic loss of Title IV eligibility if the program is not yet determined to be a low-earning outcome program. The institution and the Department must agree “to amend the institution’s program participation agreement to prevent students from

borrowing Direct Loans for the program for a period of at least five years.” Title IV authorizes federal student aid programs. The new STATS rule and Earning Accountability is part of a larger framework of President Trump’s Working Families Tax Cuts Act, also known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” passed in 2025. Programs who fail to meet the comparison threshold for earnings may include popular majors at Winthrop University that fall under the branch of arts and humanities, specifically educational degrees. These majors are predicted to have the highest failure rates under

the new act. Some of the most predicted majors include education, arts & humanities and social & mental health services. South Carolina also has faced a teacher shortage due to low pay and burnout. The minimum teaching salary in South Carolina is set by the state and based upon one’s educational level and years of experience. According to the National Education Association, starting pay for teachers ranged around \$48,000. The new loan change will pose challenges for students who rely on loan programs in order to afford the high cost of tuition, such as

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Business spotlight: Mug & Maple cont.

are, and for them to know that they will feel welcome,” Kingsley said. The focus on hospitality is one of the qualities, Kingsley believes, separates Mug & Maple from other coffee shops. While the shop offers fresh food and coffee,

Kingsley said the experience customers receive when they walk through the door is just as important. “We want you to smile and feel good while you are here. Hospitality to us is paramount,” Kingsley said.

Braden Heffner, junior exercise science major at Winthrop University, was one winner of Mug & Maple’s grand opening campaign where they hid keychains around downtown Rock Hill that gave recipients free coffee for a year.

They hid one on the pool deck of The Nest, which is an off-campus apartment complex where many upperclassmen at Winthrop reside.

“Before I even had the coffee, I already got great vibes from the place. Nate is a really good guy and he strives for community. Before the coffee, he focuses on hospitality, and that is the cherry on top,” Heffner said.

The Kingsleys want the sense of community to extend beyond the walls of the coffee shop.

Mug & Maple aims to give back to the community that loves and supports their shop. Each month they do something towards a nonprofit organization, school or local group.

On September 1, first responders could come in and get a free coffee,

and the month before that they worked with The Isaiah House, which is a transitional home for children awaiting placement.

“It’s just reaching out to the community, saying ‘Hey, we appreciate you guys and all the work you do,’” Kingsley said.

The community connection has become an important part of Mug & Maple’s identity.

Rather than serving customers and sending them on their way, Kingsley hopes the shop becomes a place people return to, not only for the coffee, but for the people and atmosphere that come with it.

Kingsley’s goal in the next few years for Mug & Maple is to expand to more locations, but first, he is focused on mastering the craft. Each

cup of coffee is made to the best of their ability.

His long-term goal for the shop is to make the Top 100 Best Coffee Shops list, becoming a spot where people go out of their way to try it.

As Mug & Maple continues to establish itself in Rock Hill, Kingsley hopes the shop remains true to the vision that inspired it in the first place.

The coffee shop is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, though weekend hours differ.

Mug & Maple is holding a “day rave” on Oct. 10 from 12 to 5 p.m. with free admission.

It will include music, live DJ sets, food and coffee, games and over \$1,000 in gift card giveaways.



Employee making drink inside of Mug and Maple

Photo by Zoey Molina

The generation that was never taught to vote

Students sit inside the stakes, not outside.

Samiyah Heyward
Staff Writer

Over 132 seats are up for election in South Carolina, and the effects of what happens, not just in the state but across the nation, is dependent on U.S. voters.

However, the group that is affected by this the most is also the one that is sitting in lecture halls and is the least likely to vote. That turnout gap between younger and older voters is not indifference, it is a missing lesson, and that makes this upcoming midterm election impactful to students especially, whether they decide to cast a ballot or not.

Voter participation and civic engagement are critical parts to the foundation of the United States. They directly affect the livelihood of each individual citizen across the country and will continue to do so for generations after. Yet, a significant portion of people nationwide are not educated in voter registration and laws or simply do not see a purpose in participating

at all.

People in Generation Z aged 18-24 are the second largest age demographic in the U.S., and yet compared to older generations aged 65 and up, their voter turnout is significantly lower. “In 2024, 47.7% of citizens between the ages of 18 and 24 voted, compared to 60.2% of 25- to 44-year-olds, 70.0% of 45- to 64-year-olds, and 74.7% of people 65 and older,” according to USAFacts.

Because of the lack of proper education regarding voter registration in recent years, many U.S. citizens lack the fundamental understanding of how the process works or why it matters. Many also fail to see how their individual voices matter.

“I have no recollection of being taught voting,” said Cameron Osbourne, sophomore political science major and Socialist Student Union president. “There’s the idea that every person should vote, but there was never really much about the procedures or the direct application of

voting.”

Landon Polansky, junior political science major and Winthrop College Republicans president emphasized the lack of proper education regarding voting as well.

“I actually taught most of the students how to vote [when I was in] high school”, Polansky said. “I lived in a really small town [with a] population of 300, so no one really voted [...] I was never taught [...] everything I learned was on the internet or in my [college] classes”.

That gap does not close when students arrive at college, and for those who study civic engagement, it is exactly where the cost of never being taught becomes most visible.

“It is extremely imperative for college students specifically to know how to vote, because 18 to 24 year olds are the lowest age demographic to be civically engaged,” Meaghan McLaurin, senior political science major and voting ambassador said.

“We’ve [recently] found [that] our lowest voter

turnout are our STEM majors, which is really interesting because they are such a large portion of not only our school demographic but also our country’s demographic [...] They have very important perspectives that need to be heard,” McLaurin said.

“I believe that voting is important.” Osbourne said. “I would say it’s, in my opinion, the bare minimum of civic engagement [...] people should be told and reminded of the importance of voting every year”.

Election day and student voting has always been an essential part of Winthrop’s campus culture. Since 2016, Winthrop University has received multiple prominent recognitions and seals for its large numbers in student voting turnouts and registration efforts.

Katarina Moyon, senior advisor of the John C. West Forum on Politics and Policy at Winthrop University and a Pericles Civic Fellow further elaborated on their efforts to engage student voter

participation.

“[We] have eight student voting ambassadors that [we] work with every year that we have an election,” Moyon said. “In this election cycle, the student voting ambassadors have done 43 classroom visits [in September] to help students find out about how to register and how to vote. And then we’re also working with ACAD, Writing 101, HMXF, and CRTW to ensure that voting and registration is mentioned in every classroom, if possible.”

Winthrop University has secured gold seal designations from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge across multiple election cycles, and has been frequently named as a Voter Friendly Campus.

“[During] the 2018 midterm election, [the institute] earned their first gold seal for its impressive student turnout of 41 percent, [...] this was more than [double] the number of student voters from 2014, going from 19.8 percent to 40.1 percent”, said the

official Winthrop website.

During the 2020 presidential election, the institution won its second Gold Seal for achieving a 74.5 percent student voter turnout which was a 17.8 percent increase from 2016.

“Winthrop is recognized nationally as an award winning campus, we want students to take pride in their [college] and keep the tradition going,” Moyon said. “Any student can send me an email anytime at moyonk@winthrop.edu, and I would love to hear if anybody has any ideas [for the future].”

Seats up for election in SC include but are not limited to: one U.S. Senate seat, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State and all seven of South Carolina’s U.S. House Congressional seats.

The voter registration date passed on Oct. 4, but registered voters in SC may vote from Oct. 19 until Election Day on Tuesday, Nov. 3. Classes will not be held on Election Day.



Winthrop SAAC launches ‘Golden Games’ to increase student attendance

A rotating schedule of featured games is designed to drive crowds to Winthrop athletics.

Ava Regitz
Staff Writer

Winthrop student-athlete leadership is looking to revitalize Winthrop pride with the introduction of Golden Games starting this fall. The Winthrop Student-Athlete Advisory Committee is inviting students across Winthrop’s campus to a highlighted game each week to cheer on the Eagle sports teams currently in season. The goal is to get more students involved in athletics across the board and grow the bond between regular students and student-athletes. “I feel like we’ve always been separated,” SAAC president Emmy Cardenas said. “There’s always kind of been a gap between the student athletes and the students, and we really want to feel like one big community together that everyone supports everyone.” Cardenas, a junior on the softball team, said SAAC wants to establish the support both ways. “We are going to try to

support student groups or organizations on campus more so that they also receive that support from us,” Cardenas said. NCAA legislation requires all active member institutions to establish a SAAC. The main duties include representing student-athletes in campus affairs, connecting teams across athletics and helping improve the overall student-athlete experience. The main focus of the Golden Games is to boost student attendance and support, but there is also emphasis in the initiative to build the team-to-team relationships within Winthrop athletics. “The idea is that if you are showing support to all of the teams, that support will eventually come back around to your team, but we have to build that community first that supports each other,” Cardenas said. A regular season game, senior night or a Big South Conference matchup can all be designated as Golden Games. As the chosen

game rotates between the active sports, students will have multiple opportunities to see Winthrop’s teams compete. Cardenas said SAAC understands people are busy throughout the week, but they want to make it as manageable as possible for people’s schedules. “The idea is that if you’re going to go to one game during the

week, go to this one,” Cardenas said. This is not SAAC’s first attempt to draw more student fans to games. Eagle Nights, last year’s program, had athletic teams themselves pick one game during their season to be spotlighted, but it did not have the effect SAAC was looking for. “They weren’t posted regularly and highlighted so that people were

remembering, and then it was also only one game,” Cardenas said. “So it was like, ‘Oh, maybe people come out,’ but all the rest of the games, it’s the same thing— no one’s showing up.” Beyond the cross-team support, the goal is to give casual fans or even first-time attendees easy access to Winthrop athletics. “The energy and the environment at games are

really what we all make it,” Cardenas said. “So if everyone shows up with tons of energy and enthusiasm and good competitive spirit, then the games will be really fun.” The remaining October Golden Games are women’s soccer versus Presbyterian on Oct. 14 and men’s soccer on Oct. 24 and 27 facing Gardner Webb and Furman, respectively.



Kevin Christensen looks forward for a pass

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Winthrop Athletics brings in 150 new student athletes from all over the world

The 2026-2027 school year marks Winthrop’s biggest freshman and transfer class.

Kellan Hudson
Sports Editor

The 2026-2027 academic year marks Winthrop University’s biggest incoming freshman and transfer class ever, with roughly 150 new student athletes. The freshman and transfers are coming from across the United States as well as countries all around the world. This is exciting for the Winthrop Athletic Department because new faces mean new talent. Many transfers are from Europe, including student athletes from England, Denmark, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, and Slovakia. Outside of Europe, Winthrop is the new home to athletes from Japan, Egypt, Georgia, and Canada. The transition to life in South Carolina comes with unique challenges, both big and small, that add to the demands of being a Division I athlete. Yannis Kugel, a freshman sports management major on the men’s soccer team from Syke, Germany, noted these changes by stating “everyone [in South Carolina] drinks tap water. In Germany everyone drinks sparkling water, which is so much better.” The little things like this and adapting to a different way of life is something most American college students will never experience. There are even changes in the way the sport is played in different parts of the world. “Here everything is pretty fast,” Kugel said

when asked about how soccer is different in America than Germany. “In Germany, it’s more technical. You don’t shoot the ball long that much,” Kugel said. “In Germany, it’s more about composure to create chances.”

4-4-1 after having a one win season last year. Winthrop is currently third in the Big South for goals scored with 19 after just nine games while last year Winthrop only scored eight in a total of 16 games. What is it about

something she always hoped to do. “I’ve always wanted to play here just because I love competing and being around a team and to travel,” Manssen said. The transition to America is also weird for many of these athletes

20-year-old freshman basketball player from Ulm, Germany, hasn’t been in school for two years, making this transition abnormal. “I didn’t go to school since I was 18, so getting back to learning is kind of tough,” Cwik said.

growth can be seen across all sports. Now, with NIL money and players getting paid signing bonuses, Power Four (SEC, ACC, Big 10, and Big 12) schools are more appealing than ever before. This has its downsides for a mid-major school like Winthrop because when athletes have a successful year, they’ll then often hit the transfer portal in hopes of playing at a higher level or earning more NIL money. This makes it difficult to build power house programs because it means star players rarely last a four-year career at the same school. Former Winthrop basketball player Logan Duncomb, last year’s Big South Player of the Year, transferred to the University of Notre Dame for his final season of basketball eligibility. However, the transfer portal also has its perks because it allows struggling teams like Winthrop men’s soccer to completely rebuild. Winthrop men’s soccer had four players return from last season and therefore a lot of their success can be credited to their recruiting and use of the transfer portal. While the transfer portal and the increase of international recruits in college sports can be chaotic, it also helps athletes achieve their dreams. Winthrop has benefited immensely from these recruits and so have the players. “It was most definitely a dream of mine to play so I’m happy to be here,” Cwik said.



Joel Cwik, freshman from Germany

Photo by Jackson Stanton

Bringing in these athletes has had immediate positive impacts on Winthrop Athletics. Over half of the men’s soccer’s team are international transfers or freshmen. They are currently

Winthrop that draws in these players from all over the world? Every athlete has a different story, but for Lena Manssen, a freshman golfer from Hamburg, Germany, playing college in America was

because the education they received in their home country doesn’t always line up with the academic system in the United States. For instance, Kugel is a 21-year-old freshman. Similarly, Joel Cwik, a

Winthrop is a prime example of the growth in the transfer portal for NCAA athletes. From 2025 to 2026, the overall college basketball transfer portal increased 11.3% (Front Office Sports, 2025). This

The Cornell 7: No More Excuses

Kira Rich
Editorial Editor

For college students, “It was just a party” can sound like an explanation. For survivors of sexual assault, it can become an excuse.

The Cornell 7 are seven students of Cornell University who were accused of sexually assaulting another student at a Chi Phi fraternity house in 2024.

The case has come back to life nearly two years after the woman, publicly identified as Jane Doe, filed a civil suit claiming she was drugged and sexually assaulted by several fraternity members. New York Attorney General Letitia James has reopened the criminal investigation that previously concluded with no charges.

The legal process should run its course, but we should not ignore what this case says about college culture.

That is almost impossible, according to Cornell’s own data.

The percentage of undergraduate women who said they had experienced nonconsensual sexual contact during their time at Cornell increased from 23% in 2023 to 35% in the 2025 sexual misconduct survey.

“Approximately 50 % of respondents had experienced some sort of sexual harassment or gender-based harassment.”

Cornell is just one example of many. Almost half of women and more than 1 in 6 men in the United States have

experienced some form of sexual contact violence during their lifetime, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And more than 1 in 5 women and 1 in 31 men have been raped (completed or attempted).

Each of these statistics is more than a number. Each one is a human being. A person with dreams, ambitions, and their own story. None of them thought that they would end up scarred and traumatized, with their life trajectory totally altered.

And yet, colleges, communities, and organizations fail time and time again to demonstrate what real accountability should look like.

Cornell said some expulsions and some suspensions resulted from an internal investigation. The university also said Chi Phi remains banned from campus.

The lawsuit from the alleged victim said that some of the students were given the opportunity to atone for their behavior by writing essays. Since then, Cornell has disputed the idea that the students were simply “punished with essays,” emphasizing that the university imposed a range of consequences, including expulsions and suspensions.

But the fact that “essays” became a part of the discussion when determining accountability raises many questions. When thinking about a crime as violent as sexual assault, the punishment should

ideally match the crime’s severity. So what exactly does accountability look like?

Some may argue that expulsions and suspensions are not enough. Others may argue that universities must follow their disciplinary procedures and protect the rights of students accused of misconduct.

Both can be true simultaneously.

Universities must uphold due process and make it clear that they take sexual violence seriously.

That becomes difficult when many details about individual disciplinary outcomes remain private because of student-privacy laws. Universities have to protect student privacy, but students also need to know that their university is willing to respond meaningfully when sexual violence occurs.

There is a difference between privacy and silence.

The public should not have to rely on lawsuits, leaked documents, and old investigations to determine whether a university has meaningfully responded to an alleged assault. College campuses have spoken out against sexual assault for years and encouraged students to report it all while promising that their concerns will be taken seriously. Unfortunately, those promises mean very little if students believe it will bring them judgment, isolation, or disbelief.

There needs to be true community and support awaiting victims if and



Cornell University's Chi Phi fraternity house

Photo via New York Times

when they decide to tell their stories. Nothing should have to be kept secret to protect the reputation of anyone or anything.

Cornell itself has acknowledged that sexual assault remains a persistent issue despite years of prevention efforts. Its 2026 Presidential Task Force on Campus Sexual Assault called for changes to campus culture and reiterated that preventing sexual violence cannot be treated as a one-time initiative.

That is the concept the universities need to grasp. A written policy on a website does not just stop sexual assault from happening. Neither do mandatory trainings or lectures that students complete once a year.

And neither does an open-ended investigation. Prevention has to become part of the culture.

Students need to have a firm understanding of consent before they even step foot on campus, not after a life has been fully altered for the worse. Friends and bystanders should know how to identify when something seems off and speak up.

Fraternities and similar organizations need set rules and oversight. And universities need systems that encourage survivors to feel heard and respected if and when they decide to speak up, rather than feeling like they have to prove themselves.

None of this requires abandoning due process. It requires recognizing that accountability and

due process are not opposites.

The Cornell 7 case will ultimately be decided through legal and university processes. Despite what further action is taken, the broader lesson should not vanish when the headlines do.

College is supposed to be where young adults go to discover themselves, build relationships, establish a community, and plan for the rest of their lives.

No student should have to anticipate sudden danger just because they decided to go to a party or trust a friend.

Universities can’t ensure that terrible things will never happen, but they can ensure that accountability will never be considered optional.

Being “niche and different:” why we are all performative

Examining Gen Z’s obsession with standing out.

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

About two years ago, I was invited to a rave for the first time in Charlotte. As a lover of dance music, I was ecstatic. Unfortunately, the bass-pumping experience I expected was far from reality.

The DJs were relegated to a stuffy, narrow room in the venue, whereas the large, reverberated hall was home to the event’s alcohol. Even worse, there were roughly 50 people in the DJ room at a given time, as opposed to the hundreds in the central room.

Throughout the night, I followed my friends around, only to spend about 30 minutes listening

to music and several hours talking to people I’ve never met. I watched countless photos be taken, and drinks were drunk, all without the backdrop of music. I remember asking myself, “did barely anyone come to dance?”

To any internet-savvy teen or twenty-something, the behavior I witnessed that night is nothing new; rather, it exemplifies a modern concept we know too well: being performative. It’s one thing to dance the night away until the sun rises, enjoying the collective euphoria; it’s another thing to take a picture proving you were there, racking up likes, and going on with your life.

Pinpointing the exact

meaning of performative behavior is difficult, but I see it as cosplaying an identity for the sake of being different, or pretending you’ve always identified with a subculture or trend when you just got into it.

An egregious example I remember is when my friend, a hardcore punk, was called a poser for not wearing a so-called “punk outfit” to a show. Anyone truly in the scene recognizes it’s about ideology and lifestyle first, not just your outward appearance.

However, following the disastrous rave I attended, I’ve come to terms with how everyone, including myself, is performative. Whether we like it or

not, as lab rats of a digital world, understanding our communal lack of authenticity is something that, ironically, could bring us all together.

So how are we all performative? Well, think back to a time before COVID-19, when social media was vastly different. Reels did not exist, TikTok was in its infancy, and, for the most part, I think everyone knew social media was fake.

For many, social media was the highlight reel. We’d post our once-a-month cool outing, feel special for a while, and move on. There was an unspoken understanding that, deep down, we were all just as boring as one another; our hyperbolic, online personas were just for show.

When the pandemic hit, this all changed. Social media became real life.

All of a sudden, our online personas were the central way we interacted with each other. If you wanted to make friends online, you had to have the most niche profile picture, the most niche reference in your bio, and the most niche song in your story to attract people. To stand out among the internet crowd, being conventionally boring was not an option.

Our social lives were dependent on optimizing

our presentation for the algorithm, and when the pandemic ended, we carried this behavior into the real world. Subconsciously, I think we all feel like there is a camera watching us at all times, and that if we’re ever caught being boring, then we’ve failed in some way.

Gen Z loves dehumanizing themselves, calling themselves “NPCs.” To the uninitiated, NPC stands for non-playable character, or the characters in video games that are fodder for the main ones. Of course, all humans are inherently interesting, but when social media is real life, humanity is overshadowed by exaggerated identities that perform well with the algorithm.

If the whole world is burning, then all we can do is stand out in it, and when everyone’s self-worth stems from standing out the most, life becomes a miserable contest of being different among the different.

Just like everyone else at that rave, a part of me was there to affirm my right to exist. The pandemic taught me that I have to be interesting to survive, so if I don’t attend niche or unknown events in my twenties, am I even alive? Am I an NPC?

In reality, my love of dance music was

irrelevant to my attendance. When we engage with social media at all, our lives start to conform to whatever we feel is a life worth living, at least per the trends at a given time. There’s always a tinge of performance (even when you like what you’re doing).

So, let’s admit that we’re all a little performative. We were all raised on YouTube, Instagram, and whatever social media we had on our iPod touches. What even is authenticity when we’ve been shaped by an algorithm our entire lives?

When everyone feigns authenticity, life becomes a business convention. We’ll engage in small talk, advertise our business (also known as ourselves) and base our self-worth on how many followers we gained after the event, marketing ourselves as if we’re a brand.

None of us know who we truly are, and if we humble ourselves and accept this fact, we can discover who we are together, not divide ourselves among an imaginary contest.

When you admit you want to try something new, rather than pretend it’s always been your identity, you open yourself up to the experiences other people are pretending to have.



Winthrop student enjoys a book in DIGs

Photo by Bailey Wimberly

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Student loan cut Cont.



The entrance of Withers Building

Photo by Zoey Molina

first-generation, low income, and racial minority students.

According to Winthrop’s 2025-2026 data set, the number of degree-seeking undergraduate students who were awarded federal aid and scholarships was a total number of 3341 students, out of 4,289 total enrolled students.

Marika Klinck, english and art education who is studying at Winthrop for a semester, shared her thoughts on the importance of creative fields in today’s society.

“I think we focus too much in school on analytical and rational skills, and I think that art is very important to learn something about oneself and about the environment. I think it is important for students to develop [these skills] to get to know themselves, their preferences and who they are. It is important for the soul,” Klinck said.

The data set also highlights how 75% of undergraduate students in the 2025 class borrowed federal student loans at Winthrop University. This makes a staggering majority of students

dependent on loan programs at Winthrop University.

13.31% of all students received a bachelor’s degree in Education.

History of Winthrop’s Education Degree

Winthrop was first founded in 1886 to “form a school whose mission would be the education of women as teachers” according to the Winthrop website. Named the “Winthrop Training School”, it opened its doors to a small class of twenty-one students in a borrowed, one-room building in Columbia, South Carolina.

Winthrop quickly gained state funding and moved to the permanent Rock Hill location in 1895. Today, the school boasts a wide variety of offerings to a coeducational class, achieving national recognition and prestige.

Educational degrees are primarily housed in the College of Education, Sport, and Human Sciences.

Teaching and educational undergraduate programs have grown substantially in size since its conception, now

offering early childhood education, educational studies, middle level education, physical education and special education amongst others. Graduate programs such as Masters in Education, Arts in Teaching, Educational Specialist and Doctorates are also offered both in-person and online.

Students are specifically prepared for the SC school system by completing mandatory school placements, where they work alongside teachers in the workforce to gain real-life interactive skills with students.

Undergraduate education students must complete a total of 120 hours and upon graduation are qualified for teaching certification in South Carolina.

A large number of students may be negatively impacted by the bill and unable to pay for tuition, leading to a switch in career plans or possible enrollment from Winthrop.

To learn more about STATS and President Trump’s Working Families Tax Cuts Act, visit the official U.S. Department of Education website.

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