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Nov. 19, 2026 Winthrop University

ROCK HILL VOTES IN THE MIDTERMS

Rock Hill showed up and showed out for midterm elections on Nov. 3.

Featured on Page 2

SPORTS FUNDRAISER: GIVIINGTUESDAY

On Dec. 1, GivingTuesday launches to raise money for athletic programs.

Featured on Page 4

FIGHTING SPOILER CULTURE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Whether it is a new movie or TV show, spoilers are evverywhere.

Featured on Page 5



Winthrop alumni and presidental ambassadors line up for a photo
From left to right: Ayaris Bandini, Kathy Rozier, Judi Sale, Carole Coker, Dakota Gold, and Deborah Jeffery

Photo by Dakota Gold

Winthrop alumni reminisce during Homecoming Week

Generations of Eagles gather in celebration of Homecoming and reunion.

Dakota Gold
Staff Writer

Homecoming is a time where generations of Eagles gather at Winthrop to revisit old memories and reconnect with familiar faces.

Winthrop celebrated homecoming this past week with events from Nov. 10 to 14. The days held moments of reunion and memories as Eagles from over the years flocked back to campus.

At the Faculty and Staff Alumni Brunch on Tuesday, Nov. 10, many sported their "Proud to Work for my Alma Mater" t-shirts.

Alumnus Sean Pennington is the Assistant Director for Student Organizations and Leadership Development in Winthrop University's Department of Student Engagement.

Pennington received his bachelor's degree in mathematics in 2025 and graduated with a master's degree in education earlier this year. Immediately following his graduate program, Pennington began his work at Winthrop.

As a student, Pennington was involved in student government, Winthrop Baptist Collegiate Ministry, the Interfraternity Council and Pi Kappa Phi fraternity. He served as a Teaching Fellow, Winthrop Ambassador, student body president,

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Winthrop Men's Basketball seeks to get more students at games

Exploring alternative ways to attract students to basketball games.

Kellan Hudson
Sports Editor

Winthrop Men's basketball has already sprung into their season and are looking to continue to grow their attendance. Unfortunately, they are 0-4 after losing four close games, three by less than five points.

Still, the team shows a lot of potential with 11 new transfers added to this year's roster. However, a consistent topic amongst the Winthrop Athletic Department and basketball coaches alike is how they can get more people to go to games.

The Winthrop Coliseum seats 6,100 fans (not including standing room). The coliseum has not seen a crowd of over 6,000 since 2008. For the 2025 season, Winthrop basketball averaged about 1,572 fans per game (according to the Winthrop Athletics website). The average basketball attendance rate for mid major schools is 1,500 to 2,500, meaning Winthrop is on the lower side of that average. Most notably, the issue with Winthrop basketball's attendance is the lack of students at games. The student section is most frequently filled with other student athletes supporting their peers rather than the general student body of Winthrop.

It is not that Winthrop's general student body isn't interested in basketball or supporting Winthrop sports, it's just that the games are not promoted in the way many Winthrop students would hope.

Tyla Pugh, a junior special education major at Winthrop, said "I do think it [basketball games] could be more publicized. I don't really see a lot of advertisements for different basketball games. I'll have to, you know, ask a friend and ask a friend about what's going on. Definitely I could see more advertisement."

While social media

Continued on Page 4

Diverse people elect diverse people: How the 2026 midterm elections flipped seats

Historical wins make waves across the U.S. during the midterms.

Samiyah Heyward
Staff Writer

In the Nov. 3, 2026 midterm elections, voters flipped seats across multiple states. They elected a historically diverse slate of candidates from various racial, ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds for the U.S. House and Senate, many for the first time.

Winners included the first Native American senator, the first Muslim senator, the first openly gay senator and seven Black senators elected across multiple states, many of whom were also historical firsts.

In South Carolina, voters flipped a Senate seat, ending nearly three decades of Republican dominance, electing the first woman, Annie Andrews, to serve as state senator.

While voter participation during the midterm cycles typically drops in comparison to presidential cycles, the voter turnout this election year saw an unexpected increase.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, it was the second-highest turnout rate in a midterm year since 1914, exceeded only by the 2018 midterms.

An analysis published by National Public Radio (NPR) found that majority-Black counties across the South averaged an 86% turnout rate, which accounted for 10% of the electoral votes.

Furthermore, the Washington Post reported that Hispanic voters backed Democratic U.S. House representatives by a 65% to 31% margin, accounting for 8% of the total electoral votes. In comparison, Asian American and Pacific Islander voters backed Democratic U.S. House representatives by a 70% to 27% margin, making up 2% of the total electoral votes.

Cameron Ballew, junior political science major and vice president of the Winthrop College Democrats, further expanded on the importance of this recent midterm election.

"The diversity we saw in the 2026 midterms is notable. We haven't seen these milestones passed in decades, centuries almost," he said. " It gives a lot of promise [...] it gives promise to those people who feel like they are now more adequately represented [...] it gives more value to the vote of minorities and the vote of [LGBTQ+] people."

"[A lot of] people don't really expect to see people who look like them, talk like them, or have the same gender or sexuality expressions as them to be elected [...] it gives a lot of hope for the future seeing so many diverse individuals being elected, and it didn't even take ten years or anything. All of this happened in one night," Ballew said.

A 2025 Pew Research report states that the current 119th United States Congress is the most racially and ethnically diverse in history.

However, they still fall behind national demographics primarily because White voters account for 74% of voting participants within Congress. In comparison, White Americans make up only to 58% of the general U.S. population. This 16-point gap has remained relatively stagnant since 1981.

Additionally, the Brennan Center for Justice reports that the racial turnout gap between White and non-White voters has consistently widened since 2012.

Ngân "Nancy" Nguyễn, senior finance major, emphasized the importance of voter turnout and how the increase in participation among Asian American voters highlights how communities often viewed as politically disengaged are becoming more influential in elections.

"This is one of the proudest moments I've had politically when it comes to my community," Nguyễn said. "Though the Asian American community tends to lean more towards the Democratic Party, in recent years Asian Americans have been leaning more right, especially the Vietnamese community, which I am a part of."

The conservatism seen in Vietnamese American communities is primarily due to their aversion to communist and leftist policies due to experiences with the Vietnam War.

NPR reports that Asian American voters swung heavily towards Democratic candidates by a 43-point margin in 2026, a 21-point shift from the 2024 election cycle.

"Vietnamese Americans are statistically proven to be the Asian ethnicity with one of, if not the highest,

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Graphic showcasing eight candidates who flipped seats

Graphic by IvyElizabeth Mann

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Police Blotter

Chase Duncan
Copy Editor

Group of juveniles indefinitely trespassed from campus for scooter theft

WUPD officers were dispatched to the DiGorgio Campus Center on Nov. 9 in response to a report of an electric scooter that was suspected to be stolen. Officers spoke to the victim, who said that an unknown person had taken his scooter from the bike rack outside DIGS.

While at DIGS, officers received a call that several people were at Phelps Hall attempting to steal scooters. Officers responded to the area, performed a search of the surrounding property and spoke with witnesses. They eventually located a group of individuals at the SubStation II parking lot.

The officers approached the group, who said that they had come to Winthrop to "mess around" and were previously riding the scooters but had left them on campus. All but one of the individuals were juveniles and were issued juvenile summons; the adult was issued a state citation for simple larceny $2,000 or less.

Ebenezer Avenue party shut down multiple times in one night for noise

WUPD officers were dispatched to a house on Ebenezer Avenue on Nov. 11 due to a noise complaint and upon arrival observed a large crowd at the residence. RHPD was dispatched to assist with crowd control and the house's resident was informed that the party was too loud.

The resident was then asked if anyone was checking identification for alcohol consumption and they said no. The party was then shut down and the partygoers dispersed from the property. The WUPD officer later saw a large group gathered in the Johnson Hall parking lot and made an P/A announcement instructing everyone to leave.

After the parking lot was cleared, the group returned to the Ebenezer Avenue house to continue partying. Officers returned to the house and the accused resident was cited by RHPD for a noise complaint violation. The party was shut down a second time and the dispersing groups later gathered in several areas including the Johnson Hall parking lot, Walk2Campus, The Nest and Scholars Walk.

The officer made repeated announcements for the groups to leave the areas and it took several hours for the areas to be fully cleared.

Midterm election results cont.

conservative votes in the AAPI community," Nguyễn said. "At one point, I feared that it would be this way forever, but seeing the results of the election genuinely blew my mind."

Nguyễn highlighted that this shift represented a significant moment of political engagement and unity within the Asian American community.

"Quite a number of Asian people prefer to stay silent due to our cultures, values and the belief that we're lucky enough to even be here [...] for a group that is only 5% to 6% of the U.S. population, this showed that we are finally united in the decision that we urgently need change in this country, so we showed up and showed out. I am proud of my community and our voting turnout more than ever," Nguyễn said.

Similar sentiments about the importance of representation and civic engagement were voiced within the Black American community.

Mylan Logan, sophomore psychology major, shared his perspective on the newly elected officials.

"I feel very represented in the people who were elected this new term, way more than I have in previous years [...] especially with the first Black woman governor and the first openly gay man as a senator. These groups, which both are marginalized and are a part of me intrinsically and socially, being seen for the first time in our government [...] is very liberating, to say the least," Logan said.

Logan added, "Not only would this mean that there are members of my community reaching new high heights [...] but it would also mean advocates in our law-making bodies, which helps me feel seen and reassured all the more, as I'm sure it does with others in my community."

While racial and ethnic identity shaped many voters' experiences in the election, age also played a notable role in how individuals viewed political participation.

Jamilatu Deme, sophomore business major, shared her experience as a younger generation voter.

"I figured there would be a higher percentage of younger voters in comparison to older ones [...] a lot of us didn't get to vote in [previous elections] so I knew that most of us who didn't get to vote would end up voting this election cycle," Deme said.

As communities reflect on the results of the midterm elections, a broader desire for responsiveness and consequential change from the newly elected has emerged.

Rock Hill midterm votes determines majority of state House seats

Rock Hill region picked 14 state legislators on Election Day to represent the Columbia region.

Ta'Ni Miller
News Editor



Signs surround in support of the newly appointed senator

Photo via Annie Andrews

South Carolina's general election took place on Nov. 3, with early voting from Oct. 19 to Oct. 31. This included the nationwide midterm election, with voters picking a senator, governor, along with various state seats.

The Senate and the House of Representatives were ruled by majority Republican seats following the second term presidential election of Donald Trump in 2024.

Democrats have looked to flip the seats blue within both areas.

The Rock Hill region includes three counties of York County, Lancaster County and Chester County.

Registered voters of these three regions voted for a total of 14 seats in Columbia, with one seat being for the Senate and 13 for the House of Representatives.

Democrat Dr. Annie Andrews won the U.S. Senate election and Republican Alan Wilson won as Governor, with Mike Reichenbach as Lieutenant Governor.

With Dr. Annie Andrews' win, the state of South Carolina has flipped blue within the Senate for the first time since 1998.

York County and Chester County had a majority vote for Dr. Annie Andrews, with Darline Graham winning in Lancaster County.

Senate Dist. 15 elected Republican candidate James Burns, who won the seat that serves the center of York County and a large portion of Rock Hill.

Democrat elected pick John King ran unopposed on the ballot for the Dist. 49 seat.

Clubs and organizations on campus have been encouraging students to be informed about the midterm election, fighting the common stigma that college students are not engaged with politics.

Midterm elections follow a recurring trend of having less turnout than the presidential election. Many voters remain uneducated about the impact of midterm and state elections.

Some classes have even given extra credit to students who are registered to vote and who went out to vote in this election. William Schulte, mass communication professor at Winthrop University, gave out additional points if students showed photo proof of both.

This included showing proof of voting registration through physical card or website screenshot and a photo taken at the polls. Higher points were awarded if a student went with a friend or family member.

One organization that advocates for voting within both state and federal elections is Winthrop Votes.

Voting ambassadors of this organization share information to students through social media such as Instagram on how to apply to vote, absentee voting, general voting information amongst other key facts.

Justin Feaser, senior marketing major, is the founder of Winthrop Votes and was inspired to create the organization in his sophomore year at Winthrop.

After seeing a lack of voting initiative on campus, he became focused on how to connect with Gen Z voters across campus.

"A slogan I've always used is 'meeting Gen Z at eye level.' To bring voting awareness to students, you have to speak their language. Millennials and Gen Xers don't understand that, so myself and other voting ambassadors have a unique angle and appeal to hopefully attract college voters." Feaser said. "This would include "street-style" interviews, consistent posts, video promotions, and raffles."

Feaser accounted that he saw a decline in voting interest for this current midterm cycle compared to when he first founded the organization in 2024 during the presidential election.

"Speaking to classes about voting this year versus in 2024 is like night and day… what was once met with genuine interest started to be met with confusion or boredom. South Carolina broke several voting records this year, though, so I think my perspective might be in the minority." Feaser said.

Students interested in learning more about voting initiatives on campus can follow the official Instagram @winthrop_votes for more information.

Student refund deposits now handled by outside service BankMobile

Winthrop students and Student Account Services provide their perspective on the new partnership, which includes the promotion of a BankMobile debit card for refund deposits.

Evi Houston
Managing Editor

Winthrop University announced on Oct. 21 that student refunds will now be processed by BM Technologies, also known as BankMobile, and First Carolina Bank. This will allow students to receive a traditional refund via direct deposit into an existing account or create a checking account with BankMobile.

If a student does not decide between these options, they will receive a paper check, which may take 10 to 14 business days to arrive.

Students were previously not able to have this kind of checking account specifically for their refund deposit, and with it comes the benefit of receiving funds on the same day they are issued from the University. With direct deposit to an existing account, the process can take one to three business days.

It is important to note that the BankMobile checking account includes a $3.99 monthly service fee. If the account has $300 in "qualifying deposits" every statement cycle, the fee will not be charged.

When choosing a refund method, the BankMobile website places the speed of deposit most prominently, with the titles of each option in small print below.

BankMobile advertises their account as a "full-service checking account," which includes fast access to funds, an immediate virtual card and the ability to use your card "anywhere debit cards are accepted."

The checking account is also advertised as an option for other direct deposit needs, such as mobile checks, payroll and cash via an ATM. Similar to the refund check, payroll can be deposited "up to 2 days early."

Despite the advertised benefits of a BankMobile debit card, many students are opting to follow the traditional route.

Valentina Tziotzos, junior political science major, and Sophia

Continued on Page 6

Winthrop alumni and Homecoming cont.

president of Pi Kappa Phi and as a graduate associate for Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Pennington was also a part of the Close Scholars Program. The Close Scholars Program is an undergraduate community service and leadership scholarship program.

"One of my favorite memories as a student was traveling to Japan with the Close Scholars Program. I had the opportunity to go to Japan with five other members of the program to gain a global perspective," Pennington said.

"I tried new foods, learned about the culture, and even did community service while being there. This was definitely a highlight of my Winthrop experience."

Throughout his Winthrop career, Pennington found that his favorite part about Winthrop is the people.

"I have been fortunate to have faculty and staff who have made a meaningful impact on my life. I have also built lasting friendships and developed relationships with mentors who continue to encourage me and help me grow, even after graduation. I think it is the people who make Winthrop so special," Pennington said.

Winthrop wants alumni to feel connected to campus even after graduation. Pennington agrees that since graduating, he has been fortunate to make these connections, even outside of his work on campus.

"Winthrop has given back to me by providing the opportunity to stay connected with a diverse network of alumni. I have been able to build meaningful relationships beyond graduation, learn from the experiences of others, and be a part of a community that supports and inspires me."

There are many other graduates that have gone into the world, still holding a piece of Winthrop with them wherever they go.

Alumna Kelly Hall graduated with a bachelor's degree in theatre, a minor in education, and a K-12 Education Certification in 2008, and later received a master's degree in arts administration in 2022.

Hall worked as program specialist from 2019 to 2024 for the ABC [Arts in Basic Curriculum] Institute based at Winthrop. Here, she worked with schools across the state developing and assisting their arts programs and supporting their strategic planning and grant goals.

Following her many years at Winthrop, Hall returned to Beaufort, South Carolina where she currently works as a theatre teacher and director in Beaufort County School District. She was recently named District Teacher of the Year.

Theatre is still a huge part of Hall's life, as she serves as a part-time private acting coach and takes part in productions at her local theater.

Hall owes a lot of her theatre education to her time at Winthrop. She was involved in the dance and music programs, Winthrop Chorale and private voice lessons and took part in several productions, including playing Laurey in "Oklahoma!"

"I think my fondest memory at Winthrop was just the times that I spent in shows and in classes, and even in between classes hanging out in Johnson," Hall said.

Hall recalls being mentored and working with wonderful people while at Winthrop.

"All of my professors were wonderful. I enjoyed spending time in the costume room working with Janet Gray and Russell Luke, who have now since passed and my time working and learning from [Winthrop professor] Steven Gundersheim who prepared me well."

Hall shares the same feeling that Winthrop allows for alumni to have a connection to campus and a network with other alumni. She said that its history as a teaching training school not only benefitted her time as a student, but benefits her as an alumna.

"The connections that you make at Winthrop carry you forward in your career. Winthrop is one of the top if not the top school for educators. Just having that foundation of education classes and having that I attended Winthrop University, and graduated out of their teacher preparation program, looks really good on my resume," Hall said.

Alumni of all ages came home to Winthrop for Homecoming Week. Among those were members of the class of 1966, famously called "The Fairest Flowers of the Southland," who celebrated their 60th reunion this year.

When they were in school, Winthrop was an all women's college.

The alumnae traveled from across the country, including one who came all the way from Alaska, to reconnect with old friends. When asked about their favorite memories from Winthrop, many said the friendships they made were what they remembered most.

Other memories included sunbathing on the roofs of campus buildings, protesting the university's former school uniforms, attending lecture and artist series events and a campus visit from Betty Friedan, feminist and author, best known for her book "The Feminine Mystique."

As they reflected on their time at Winthrop, some of the "Fairest Flowers of the Southland" also shared advice for today's students.

Deborah Jeffrey encouraged students to appreciate their education, while Carole Coker reminded them not to give up when things become difficult.

"Make memories and write them down," said Judi Sale.

"Have fun and enjoy the moment, and enjoy the people you are with," Kathy Rozier joined in.

Their 60th reunion served as a reminder that while their time as students may have passed, the memories and friendships they made at Winthrop remain.

What's above Winthrop arts?

Examining Winthrop's unclear stance on AI art.

Kyan Feser
Staff Writer

Debuted on Oct. 26 in Winthrop's Elizabeth Dunlap Patrick Gallery, "What's Above Gary?" is the latest art installation by Rebecca Forstater, an interdisciplinary artist and assistant professor at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C.

The gallery is centred around the titular Gary, an anthropomorphic sock puppet who is "getting lost to the bots, and maybe is a bot," according to Forstater.

"He gets lost in this world of the internet, and he's trying to find his way out through the sky," Forstater said.

Massive, garbled Post-it notes line the gallery's walls; the ceiling is plastered with images of a digital sky and most importantly, a television loops an AI-generated video of Gary's mundane, internet-centric life.

Because of this video, and subsequently Gary's design, "What's Above Gary?" is one of the first galleries to prominently use AI at Winthrop, something Forstater expected mixed reactions to. "I'm on the internet," she said jokingly.

"I was expecting there to be some interesting questions, but I think that is the point of art, right? To be a place where we can have those difficult conversations and have them be talked about without the constraints of other external factors," Forstater said.

During a discussion panel on Nov. 12, Forstater said that her research into how money, data and imagery are exchanged in digital spaces deeply influenced "What's Above Gary?". She said she wanted to examine how, despite being made for the few, emerging technologies like AI are forced into everyday life.

Forstater further explained how "What's Above Gary?" questions AI perceptions, such as perceived environmental impact or what actually determines artistic value. To test these ideas, she trained a dataset locally and catalogued the length of the overall project.

In the end, there was little impact on her electric bill and the project actually took "a really long time," she said.

"You can be critical and curious at the same time, and sometimes I think that's the best way to understand something: is to explore it," Forstater said. "Allowing yourself to understand opposing viewpoints encourages nuance, as opposed to initial gut reactions."

However, not everyone shares the same sentiments as Forstater, as "a lot of students are really upset about it," said Mars Simpson, a Winthrop fine arts senior and co-founder of the Rising Artists of Winthrop club.



Winthrop students view the gallery

Photo by College Visual & Performing Arts



One of the exhibits, displaying use of AI

Photo by College Visual & Performing Arts

Simpson said a major concern among students is how deregulated AI seems within the galleries, and the precedent "What's Above Gary?" could set for them. If Winthrop greenlit Forstater's work for the gallery, then a senior's handmade exhibition is comparable to something generated.

"One of the concerns is how an AI senior show and a handmade senior show are going to be comparable in terms of both students paying for the same degree, and I don't think the department has thought of that or an answer to that, which is concerning," Simpson said.

Additionally, students in the fine arts department are given failing grades for AI use, but the department is currently promoting an AI exhibition, implying that generating art is a probable way to secure a gallery spot at the university, Simpson added.

"Getting inside of a university gallery is a big deal to a lot of us fine arts majors. So, being told that putting together a complete AI exhibition is okay, but then failing us for using AI, there's a lot of conflict there," Simpson said.

The Winthrop student artist said this conflict has only worsened student-director tensions in the department, as last year three art pieces, including one created by Simpson, were removed from the undergraduate juried exhibition due to nudity.

"Nudity is very accepted in art. So why was it not ok to put it in the Undergraduate Juried Exhibition? The gallery director told me that he couldn't put nudity in this show because it would upset the donors," Simpson said.

Simpson said that the gallery's controversy is being viewed as a positive sign by the gallery director and others in the Winthrop art department.

"The gallery director and everyone else involved said that, I quote, 'because the students are so upset that must mean that they're engaged with the exhibition. Therefore it must be a good exhibition,'" Simpson said.

"That really bothered me to hear that upsetting the donors because of nudity is completely off limits, and he just pulled work from the show to not upset donors, but when students are upset about AI, it's seen as a unit of measurement for success."

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Winthrop Men's Basketball cont.

pages like the Winthrop Men's Basketball Instagram or the Winthrop Athletics page are great platforms to learn when basketball games are, it's not fair to assume everyone follows the accounts. Pugh shared that she thought it could be more beneficial to do promotions on campus in areas where students are commonly visiting, like Diggs. Pugh said she thought putting flyers in Diggs promoting individual games as well as putting flyers around campus on poles where students will see them would be helpful.

"I think that it's really students not really knowing about, you know, a lot of things that's going on on campus. I know they'll send out emails, but those get lost so I feel like advertisements, more advertisements, would definitely help bring the crowd out," Pugh said.

Pugh shared that she and her friends really only attend the homecoming game for basketball each year, and while she's not the biggest sports fan in general, she would go to more games if she knew when they were happening and knew there was something fun tied to them. For instance, she felt having more themed games would peak her and other students' interest more.

"Thinking back to high school and like the different themes with high school, the black out, the white out, school colors, the neon, like different things to get the attention from students would definitely help out," Pugh said. Pugh believes engaging themes would help turn games into not just an event to support the team, but social events that students could get excited for. Winthrop does do some themed games, but she believes these should be promoted more.

Winthrop basketball does make a lot of effort to get students to games outside of some of the methods Pugh named. The basketball team will do giveaways during half times, promotions where they give the first 100 fans T-shirts or hats, and themes like white out. Students and community members interested in attending games should follow Winthrop basketball on Instagram to best learn about these promotions and ways to support the Winthrop Eagles.

For instance, last year the basketball team did a white out game for their game against High Point. The team strategically hosted the athletic academic awards for the student athletes during half time of the game in order to bring out more fans. It was successful in that nearly half the student athletes filled the student section. The high attendance rates of that game, particularly student presence, led to Winthrop beating High Point by 17 points.

Other colleges do games where they give students incentives to stay at games through all four quarters. The University of Maryland gave students who stayed through the fourth quarter of a specific football game the opportunity to enter a raffle for a semester of free tuition. This is a major incentive for students and a way to successfully get students to show up to one specific game, like a rivalry game.

Similarly, other colleges often play specific songs during different parts of the game. For instance, Tennessee Football always plays the song "Rocky Top" by The Osborne Brothers. This makes fans look forward to this point in the game and feel a sense of school pride towards this song. Adopting a song like this at Winthrop Basketball could be a great strategy towards developing school pride.



Photo by Jackson Stanton

Anthony Smith III pulls up for a shot

Winthrop Athletics hoping to build on record fundraising year

Dec. 1 marks GivingTuesday and more opportunities to raise money for programs.



Photo by Ava Regitz

A road sign at the corner of Eden Terrance and Myrtle Street

Ava Regitz
Staff Writer

After a record-breaking fundraising year in 2025, Winthrop Athletics is looking to continue the wave of momentum and shape the student-athlete experience at Winthrop starting with GivingTuesday on Dec. 1.

According to last year's giving reports, Winthrop raised $11,707,016 across its fundraising campaigns, a 43% increase from the $8,799,489 total in the 2024-25 fiscal year.

In 2025-26, Winthrop Athletics raised over $1.9 million, the most successful year in Winthrop Athletics history.

Numbers like these are an important shift for mid-major Division I schools in the ever-evolving world of collegiate athletics. Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) opportunities and revenue-sharing models are becoming more relevant, forcing programs to either fall behind or shift strategy.

Winthrop Eagle Club's sole mission as the fundraising arm of athletics is to increase overall revenue in order to compete with the rising operating costs to run competitive programs. The fundraising from last year is a key to further support going into the winter season of giving.

"A lot of support included a variety of things, like student-athlete scholarships, sport-specific excellence funds, facility improvements and then other related priorities across athletics," Rebekah Cheney, director of annual giving, said.

Cheney also said there has been an effort to make giving feel important campus-wide, as well as an initiative by the Winthrop Division of University Advancement to invest in positions like the senior development officer for athletics. Currently held by Tommy Henry, it is a role focused on athletics fundraising specifically.

"Athletics and advancement both, in their own ways, have been trying to just enhance the culture of philanthropy across the institution," Cheney said.

In the past, athletic philanthropy has been used for projects such as improving the women's basketball locker room, offices and study room, and also providing turf to surround home plate and upgrading the weight room at Founders Field.

GivingTuesday, a global day of generosity and giving, presents a big opportunity for athletics to replicate the same kind of success it found last year. The Winthrop Impact Network (WIN) is responsible for bringing in major gifts and multi-year contributions to help programs, but there is also money coming from closer to home.

"A lot of it is from fans in the community, especially for athletics, that's a huge base for us in athletics is fans," Cheney said. "Rock Hill community members, parents, of course, are big supporters of their students, and then there's also alumni, especially local alumni who are investing in athletics."

Cheney noted that people's giving habits change based on the economic state of the world. Things like inflation or the cost of gas may influence decisions when it comes to discretionary income. Even so, she emphasized the value of the Winthrop alumni's continued loyalty when it comes to giving.

"I do think that a lot of people in the Rock Hill community and in the Winthrop alumni community really do have love for their time here, which is nice," Cheney said.

Momentum from this fall is followed up with athletics' major internal campaign, Bleed Garnet, Give Gold (BG3), which takes place in the spring. Cheney said BG3 is like Winthrop's own GivingTuesday.

"Everyone on our campus has an opportunity to raise their hand and say, 'Hey, this is what we need. This is what we would like to invest in. Will you help us?'" Cheney said.

Even if there are specific goals in place for different departments around the university, support is welcomed at any time for any program.

"We do have identified priorities across academics and athletics, but then even (with) gifts to every fund that's active, we are more than happy to accept it during BG3. Same for GivingTuesday," Cheney said.

Kellan Hudson | Sports Editor
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Social Media Makes Entertainment Spoiled Rotten?

Kira Rich
Editorial Editor

There was a time when you missed a movie's opening weekend there was a risk of hearing spoilers from friends. But now, missing a premiere can feel like signing away the right to enjoy the internet for weeks.

With TikTok edits and comment sections that seem to care little about anyone's viewing progress, it's become insanely difficult to keep the biggest plot twist of a movie or television show a secret. Entertainment has become a race and the audiences are supposed to keep up whether they like it or not.

This winter, the battle against spoilers will be universal, with highly anticipated releases like Dune: Part Three and Avengers: Doomsday. Fans will be rushing to theaters, social media will be flooded with reactions and commentary, and anyone who can't make the opening weekend will have to wade through a digital hellscape.

But why has it become an expectation to watch a movie on someone else's time?

Part of the problem is the way social media rewards immediacy. The sooner you react to a major plot twist, character death or unexpected ending, the more likely you are to participate in online discussions while they're active. Being late to the discussion means risking being excluded entirely.

Avoiding this is especially difficult on platforms like TikTok. A major revelation doesn't require a viewer to look for a movie or follow its fanbase. A surprise cameo, the end of a series,or the death of a character could just pop up in a random video. Even reading the comments can reveal more than an audience member ever wanted to know.

Platforms like TikTok and X also make it hard to dodge spoilers. You don't need to be under a certain hashtag or search for specific content to find coverage about a piece of media. If you like a show and have interacted with content about it recently, there's nothing stopping the algorithm from putting an edit with huge spoilers on your for you page. hypothetically lets say the video itself doesn't spoil anything, but the comments for sure will.

This creates an environment where the audience is expected to consume media basically as soon as it's out. If you like waiting until a whole show has aired to binge it all at once, you have no way of enjoying it spoiler free. After every episode there will be conversations and updates on all platforms. Eventually it becomes a battle to enjoy media and still be present in discussions.

Audiences are partially to blame. People tend to be quiet about certain topics, or mute keywords temporarily when a big release is coming. You can't realistically expect the whole internet to shut up forever. There is also a difference between talking about a piece of entertainment and deliberately spoiling a major moment for someone else.

Still, basic consideration should not be an unreasonable expectation. Spoiling a major plot point without a warning takes seconds. If you give people a bit of context before you start talking about a recent release, they can opt in or out of being involved.

There are those who say that spoilers expire and that you can't expect people to wait for you if you take too long to watch something. While that argument may be somewhat valid, it overlooks the fact that not everyone has the same access to theaters, streaming subscriptions, or free time. Entertainment should not be another competition where people feel like they are falling behind.

The answer is not to ban spoilers, or to say that everyone should shut up until every person has seen the same movie. It's about understanding that people watch entertainment differently.

Some people love opening-night premieres. Others wait for a movie to come to streaming services. Some binge an entire season at once, while others take a week or two to finish one show. None of these approaches make someone a better or worse fan.

Entertainment should be fun, not another task to compete for people's time and attention. There will always be the next trending show and a curve ball twist. And before everybody's on board, the internet will have moved on to the next big thing.

Maybe audiences should be able to do the same at their own pace.

You don't have to have it figured out

College isn't about arriving as a finished person, it's about becoming one.

Natalia Barthel
Staff Writer

It's easy to romanticize college when you're not a student yet. You grow up believing that going to college will hand you a finished version of yourself, that you'll always be sure of the next step you're taking. But in reality, college is meant to give you the tools needed to discover who you really are. It's not instant, and it's not always pretty.

When most freshmen walk onto a college campus for the first time, they think they know exactly who they're meant to be. What their major is, what internships they'll land, what job they want after college and even what city they're going to move to in four years. It can be jarring when you believe you know everything about yourself but your mirror shows nothing but a shattered reflection.

We're slightly lucky to be living in a time where a lot of people do understand that the college experience isn't as traditional as it may have been 20 years ago. Not everyone graduates in four years and a lot of people start college without declaring a major. But even with this slight shift in the way our culture views the college experience, there's still a pressure put on students to operate on a timeline that no one is really sure of. You're expected to have declared a major by the end of your sophomore year, people push you to get an internship during your junior year, and family might expect you to have a job lined up for after graduation.

This timeline puts an unwarranted amount of pressure on students to figure everything out the first time around. Changing your major, or even changing your entire career path, feels like you wasted a semester's worth of time and money. You're scared that people are going to think you've lost your sense of direction, that you no longer know who you are.

In reality, changing your major or career goals can be a sign of growth. If you're a pre-med student who took a journalism class for a gen ed credit, loved it, and switched majors, that's not a failure. That's college doing exactly what it promised: teaching you about yourself.

Even when you find yourself on the right path, when you know what you're doing and where you're headed, it's impossible not to compare yourself to your peers. Social media has created an environment in which we only see other's milestones. You see the results of your classmates' hard work, but you also don't see the doubt that they may have carried with them throughout their entire journey there. It's hard to learn and accept that the milestones of others are not indicative of your own pacing or path, but it's the only way to relieve yourself of that external pressure.

It can be incredibly hard and exhausting to learn to accept that you have changed as a person. Outgrowing friend groups, hobbies, and the version of yourself that you left in your hometown can leave you feeling a grief that is hard to silence. You need to learn to honor and respect the version of yourself that you've left behind, while simultaneously staying open to where the new version of you is going. You don't need to erase your 15-year-old self, you just need to remain receptive to your future self.

As scary as an identity crisis can be, it means that you're paying close enough attention to yourself. College should be a time where you're allowed to be confused, allowed to stumble and allowed to restart. You need to be willing to fail in order to learn how to succeed. A lot of us will not have it all figured out by graduation, and that is completely okay.



Social media can contribute to negative identity narratives. Photo via Psychology Today



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Student refunds Cont.

Weihrauch, junior individualized studies major, both decided to send their refund payment into an existing account.

"I just want to do it the way that I know," Weihrauch said.

Still, the students were open to the new process when asked if they thought it was necessary.

"If it's easier on the university and on students then it's good with me," Weihrauch said. Tziotzos agreed that she supports streamlining the process.

Regarding the new debit card option, the students felt that it was not driven by student support, but did not see a problem with the addition.

"I don't think there's downsides [to the debit card], there's just not a lot of information about it from the university," Tziotzos said.

Weihrauch noted that there was not much student input regarding the new process.

In sharing her overall reaction, Weihrauch said, "It felt out of the blue [...] I think they were trying to get stuff done faster this year."

Remembering back to the fall refund process, "It was interesting that at the beginning of the semester there was a huge delay [in refunds] and now there's this new program," Weihrauch said.

The university cited that the purpose of the new partnership is to provide "more flexible options for receiving refunds," although those working in Student Account Services also referenced that BankMobile will help lighten the load placed on a small team.

Lexxus Rain, fiscal technician at Student Account Services who has experience handling refunds, added some context to this new change.

"Ultimately, this partnership is about improving the student experience," Rain said.

"Our goal is to provide students with the quickest and easiest way to access their refunds. Partnering with BankMobile allows us to do that. BankMobile will handle the bulk of the communication to students concerning their refunds, including instructions for setting up direct deposit and reminders about check cashing."

Rain listed specific student benefits such as more communication and reminders, multiple options for receiving refunds and options for those who do not have a U.S. bank account.

She clarified that while Winthrop pays BankMobile to handle refunds, they will not receive any financial benefits in return. Additionally, students will receive the same amount of money regardless of if they deposit into an existing account or create a BankMobile checking account.

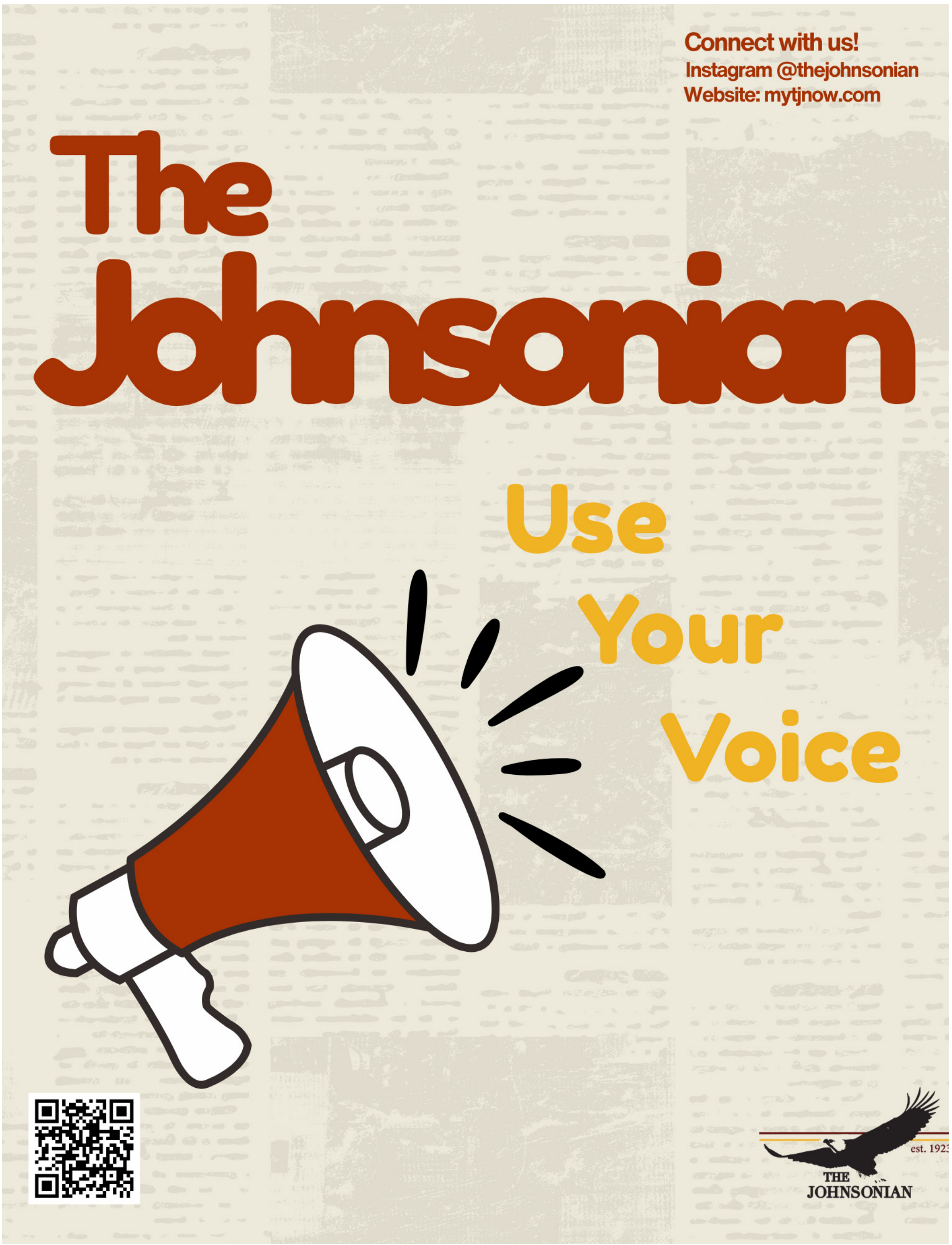
Student Accounts Services has seen some student confusion from the transition, but Rain said the department is ultimately "excited to hear feedback from students and identify opportunities for improvement ahead of the busy spring refund season in January."

Students can reach out to Student Account Services at any time via their email, SAS@winthrop.edu and webpage, winthrop.edu/sas.



Photo by Zoey Molina

Outside view of student account services in Tillman.



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COMIC

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