

Hello All,

I write to you with a few updates from the Provost's Office on key team activities that are underway for spring 2021. We are all in "dig deep" mode right now, so I am writing to express my appreciation for the work you do each day to support student learning and success. Here are a few areas where we are at work this semester to improve some aspect of what we do:

1) Our ad-hoc personnel policies team (morphed from pre-tenure review team) is meeting next week to start discussions on recommendation C-1 from the Task Force on Tenure and Promotion, regarding analysis of how we use student course evaluations and the role they play in faculty evaluation. Many thanks to the group of folks charged with making recommendations for how to improve in this area.

2) The ad-hoc IT/Academic Affairs working group will get underway shortly, with Andrew Besmer and Patrice Bruneau as co-chairs. Many thanks to those folks for providing guidance on how to strengthen the intersections between IT and Academic Affairs at Winthrop.

3) SACSCOC work continues with our third drafting deadlines in the rear-view mirror and a QEP Topic Development Committee gearing up to identify how we can improve career readiness across the campus. Many thanks to the teams that are writing our reaffirmation report, and to the teams that are revising - and in some instances, creating - policies and procedures to ensure that we remain compliant with SACSCOC standards. Recent updates coming soon to the Policy Repository include:

- Winthrop University Institutional Repository Guidelines (Digital Commons) - many thanks to Dean Kaetrena Kendrick and DeAnn Brame for their work on this.
- Online Education and Student ID Verification Policies - many thanks to Kimarie Whetstone and her team for their work on this, with an assist from Craig Sauvigne and the folks working on Information Security infrastructure at Winthrop.
- Faculty Overload Policy - ALC crafted this to ensure equitable practice across instructional units.

4) The Center for Professional Excellence is hosting a panel titled "Considering Retirement? Advice from Your Colleagues." You can sign up at [winthrop.edu/thecepe](http://winthrop.edu/thecepe). The panel will take place Wednesday, February 10, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

5) Budget meetings for each leader in Academic Affairs are taking place, as we are reviewing fiscal year 21 and preparing to develop fiscal year 22 budget proposals. You will hear more from your deans, chairs, and unit heads soon. Leaders in Academic Affairs and Finance and Business Affairs are meeting frequently to make sure we provide clear instructions to inform the most recent phase of our multi-year efforts to build an activity-based budget that is responsive to our changing enrollments, fiscal outlook, and strategic goals. Conversations are also underway on how to deploy recent stimulus funds to students and for the institution. I know you have questions. Members of Senior Leadership are discussing options for sharing more information soon.

6) The Board of Trustees will hold its Annual Retreat on February 19 and 20. There are traditionally no committee meetings at the Retreat, but it does commence with a business meeting should there be any pressing items for consideration. Academic Affairs has shared proposals related to graduate tuition rates, summer tuition discounts, and fee proposals for consideration at the February business meeting.

7) Academic Master Planning conversations continue with a focus on the following areas:

- Review of college profile health to result in recommendations of areas requiring support, growth, transformation, and/or elimination.
- Transfer Pathways Project with York Tech College: kick-off conversation held February 2, with an aggressive goal of creating seamless transfer pathways between York Tech and Winthrop University beginning fall 2021.
- Program development outlook: what is missing from Winthrop's Program Profile? What should we add to remain responsive to regional workforce needs and student demand?

Undergirding the above three areas of activity are the foundational work we need to do through the QEP focus on Career Readiness as well as our Instructional Technology improvements.

8) A great resource from the Chronicle Teaching newsletter, recommended by Vice Provost for Student Success and Dean of University College, Jamie Cooper: [Teaching: Students Say Their Workload Increased During the Pandemic. Has It?](#)



[Teaching: Students Say Their Workload Increased During the Pandemic. Has It?](#)

A teaching expert dives into a pandemic puzzle: Instructors believe they're scaling back assignments. But students report more coursework.

[www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com)

9) A note on self-preservation: As we round out a year navigating the pandemic, signs of stress are everywhere. In higher education, we think of ourselves as resources for others - whether our primary function is to teach, support, or manage. But we all *need* resources and support as well. So here is my plug for the resources available to you at no charge as an employee of Winthrop University. These resources include virtual counseling sessions and tips on managing stress, financial advice, legal advice, and a great deal more. If you have never checked out the resources available, I encourage you to do so now. Do a wellness assessment and see what resources might be available to you through [mygroup](#) (username: Winthrop303, password: guest). Long-term stress can be difficult to manage for even the healthiest individuals. When I accessed the Mygroup resources today, I clicked on the Balancing tab, and under Mental Health, found articles on controlling anxiety and managing coronavirus grief. I hope you find something here that can help you restore balance in navigating your own pandemic path. Members of ALC are also discussing ways to provide programming to address your wellness needs this semester. Stay tuned.

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## Managing When the Stress Doesn't Go Away

Getting the job done and taking care of employees under conditions of severe, long-lasting stress can be one of the most difficult challenges a manager may face.








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Final reminder: [Provost Office hours are Fridays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.](#) Attendance is uneven, and that's okay. If you have questions any Friday morning, please pop in to say hello.

Best.  
Adrienne