

Greetings Colleagues:

I write to you today with a message of affirmation. In the past two weeks, I have had the opportunity to meet with four external review teams, two for program review and two for accreditation. These programs just happen to represent all four of our degree-granting colleges. Reading the self-studies, seeing the amazing work that your teams put into planning for these program reviews, and then spending time with the external reviewers all provided me with a great window into the strength of your work in crafting and sustaining our programs and the strength of our students in their learning and its application. As I said to one of the teams, I was drawn to Winthrop by its commitment to provide and sustain programs with a high degree of quality. The current work we are doing to review our program profile and identify metrics for program health are also designed to strengthen – not weaken – that commitment and to ensure that we can provide the appropriate resources to sustain this high level of program quality.

Our decision to seek accreditation for any program we have for which there is an accrediting body also demonstrates our commitment to delivering powerhouse programs. Few institutions make that commitment. We do, and it shows. This is one of Winthrop's key institutional strengths, and this round of reviews provides abundant evidence of the return on that commitment.

One reviewer – a faculty member at UNCC – stated that he had no idea of the great work that was going on at Winthrop, right under his nose. After meeting with our alumni, he was struck by the depth of their accomplishments, the high regard in which they hold their former faculty, and their affirmation that they would not be where they are now were it not for the access to high quality learning that Winthrop afforded them.

Another reviewer stated that our students' writing and work samples demonstrate polish, insight, and professionalism to a level that affirms their career readiness and to a degree of depth that she does not see across all programs.

A third team praised members of our faculty for being true interdisciplinarians – embracing the unique learning and instructional opportunities that arise when we do not simply place different areas of learning beside one another but transform the questions and answers through interdisciplinary learning and problem-solving.

Finally, I heard praise for the strength of our programs in providing experiential learning that is closely tied to community partnerships as well as the economic and human growth opportunities that are abundant in the City of Rock Hill.

I write to recognize your accomplishments in so strongly demonstrating how Winthrop is exemplary in providing high quality programs; how Winthrop is a strong steward of place; and how – despite the many challenges we currently face and which we will surmount – Winthrop remains a mover in the arenas of access, equity, and social mobility for our students.

To our colleagues in economics, environmental sciences and studies, interior design, and sport management, well done!

Each of these programs is housed in a supportive nexus of other very strong programs in their respective departments and colleges. While we sing the praises of these four programs today, the moment is right to affirm that our programs are our power. They fuel faculty, staff, and administrative innovation and our students' future successes. As Provost, I commit to partnering with all of you as we work together to keep the Winthrop Program Profile high quality, sustainable, and responsive to our changing world.

Adrienne