

Leslie Cook

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Leslie Cook is a new associate professor of theatre for Winthrop University's Department of Theatre and Dance within the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

Cook brings a successful record of teaching and designing costumes for theatre and dance within a liberal arts program and is passionate about her craft. She holds an M.F.A. in Costume Design from Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia, and a B.A. from St. Mary's College of Maryland. She was previously an Associate Professor of Costume Design and Technology at Longwood University in Virginia where she has taught since 2012. Leslie has designed professionally at the Firehouse Theatre, the End-Station Theatre, Wolf Trap Opera, American Opera Theatre, and National Geographic Television. Her scholarly research focuses on "costumes of the condemned", an exploration of evidence left by persons in extremis via their appearance and the kinds of deliberate messages chosen to represent them in their final clothing selections.

Leslie Cook was chosen from a broad applicant pool that the search committee narrowed to two finalists. Each finalist interviewed on campus with faculty, staff, students, and administrators within the university.

Daniel Gordon, chairperson of the Department of Theatre and Dance, praised the extensive work of the search committee. "I want to express my appreciation to the search committee members for the excellent work they did in making this selection from the highly qualified candidates," Gordon said.

Leslie Cook is a dedicated educator committed to student achievement. As her teaching philosophy expresses, *"I feel very strongly that my own success can only be achieved by theirs; by supporting them as people, enriching their present, helping them to understand their past, and preparing them for their future. I know that this is a time of great transition for them, and I can, even as I teach them life skills and artistry, teach them how to respond resiliently, maturely, and bravely to their lives."* We are excited to welcome Leslie into the Winthrop community, indeed a place where she belongs.

The Department of Theatre and Dance offers a B.A. in Theatre with concentrations in Performance, Design/Technical Theatre, Musical Theatre, or Teacher Certification (K-12), as well as a B.A. in Dance and a B.A. in Dance Education with Teacher Certification (K-12). The department is home to approximately 170 students and thirteen full-time faculty. Winthrop University is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) and by the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD). Winthrop's arts education programs (art, music, theatre and dance) are accredited through the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education. Accreditation through these organizations means that the Winthrop University theatre and dance programs meet the highest standards of excellence for faculty expertise, for quality of facilities, for curricular offerings, and for quality of artistic work.