

**Statement Regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives at
Winthrop University
College of Arts and Sciences**

We acknowledge the complexities of navigating national discourse and evolving political landscapes, including all legislation and executive orders impacting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and those reducing opportunities in DEI, accessibility, immigration, curriculum, freedom of speech, academic freedom, and funding that may impact our students, faculty, and staff, and the broader community. Nonetheless, we, the faculty of Winthrop University College of Arts and Sciences, affirm our unwavering commitment to our students, faculty, and staff, and to the fundamental pillars of our academic mission, to include “a culture of belonging, courage, free expression, and open civil engagement.”

We understand diversity to encompass a wide range of human differences and identities, recognizing that including all types of people enriches our community and does not exclude or discriminate against any individual. We embrace initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of belonging on campus without the exclusion of any particular individual, group, or community. Our dedication to these principles is rooted in a deep understanding of their vital role in cultivating a rich and intellectually stimulating learning environment for all students. Diverse perspectives promote innovation and critical thinking while creating opportunities for students to pursue essential areas of study, thus enhancing their potential contributions to society and advancements in crucial sectors.

We support policies that cultivate an atmosphere of respect and inclusion. Policies against DEI, accessibility, immigration, curriculum, freedom of speech, academic freedom, funding for academic research, financial aid, and other vital university functions undermine our core mission to foster an intellectually vibrant learning environment. These policies weaken higher education's capacity to serve the public good and address the challenges of the 21st century.

We recognize the importance of targeted programs that address historical and systemic barriers to access and success. These efforts, designed to support underrepresented groups, are essential for ensuring that Winthrop University College of Arts and Sciences serves the diverse needs of our student body and the broader community. These programs are designed to advance opportunity and not to discriminate.

While we respect Winthrop University administration's need to comply with the various mandates and recognize the potential for retaliation, we deplore curtailing initiatives and opportunities that align with our mission. We reaffirm that our dedication to diversity and inclusion is aligned with the fundamental principles of justice and opportunity. We will continue to advocate for policies and practices that promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all members of the Winthrop University College of Arts and Sciences community.