



# *The Winthrop Plan*

PREPARED BY  
THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE  
ON THE  
NATURE AND CHARACTER  
OF WINTHROP UNIVERSITY

February 4, 2006

## Background

In his Opening Address on August 20, 2002 Winthrop University President Anthony DiGiorgio announced his intention to form a cross-campus working group that would be charged with “a very far-reaching and challenging goal: To explore and examine for Winthrop what the nature and intellectual character of the university should be as we increasingly become a distinctive learning community.” The President appointed a task force in September 2002 and charged its members to “examine a broad spectrum of issues and options.”

The Task Force was asked to consult widely and to involve the Winthrop community through a variety of methods. The Task Force solicited faculty, staff and students for general and specific input via public forums, e-mails, through a website that featured a mechanism for anonymous submissions, and through exercises conducted in individual classrooms. Members of the Task Force also sought and received invitations to meet with student groups, faculty committees, and staff gatherings.

The result was a Report from the Task Force presented to the President in January, 2004.<sup>1</sup> It contained a Statement on the Nature and Character of the University that was presented first in its entirety and then discussed piece by piece to provide some background on why a particular concept was included or believed to be of importance. Also presented along with each segment was a series of recommendations related to the concept captured in that segment. The Task Force submitted its recommendations with the intention and expectation that any of the items listed would be considered and acted upon through Winthrop University’s standard processes for creating initiatives and revising existing policies.

In presenting that Report, the Task Force expressed the hope that the Statement on the Nature and Character of Winthrop University would become “the touchstone of our values and principles, consulted on a regular basis” and a “living document, continuously reflecting and informing our daily work”. That hope has been fulfilled to a significant extent. The Board of Trustees, the Council of Student Leaders, and the Faculty Conference have each endorsed the Statement. Substantial progress has been made on well over eighty per cent of the recommendations set forth in the Report. The *Vision of Distinction* has contained numerous objectives in each of the last two years related to these recommendations.

In the spring of 2004, President DiGiorgio asked the Task Force to continue its work. As stated in the 2005-06 *Vision of Distinction*, the charge to the group was to “complete the articulation of the themes, directions, and recommendations of the Report of the President’s Task Force on the Nature and Character of the University ... with existing planning documents and processes.” Throughout the period of fall 2004 to January 2006,

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<sup>1</sup> This document is available at:  
[http://www.winthrop.edu/president/nature\\_and\\_character/final\\_report.pdf](http://www.winthrop.edu/president/nature_and_character/final_report.pdf)

the Task Force employed the same methods of outreach, consultation and discussion across the Winthrop community used to fashion the original report. The result is the document presented here – an articulation of the ethos of the original Statement and Report in the form of a Plan to guide the University’s progress in the coming years. The Introduction that follows describes the structure of this document and its purposes.

As was stated in the original Report:

“If we mean what we say, if we actually hope to embody in practice what we pronounce as our values, we must, with premeditation, design and implement standards, processes, and programs to reflect these priorities.”

The Task Force is pleased to submit this document to the President for his consideration with a spirit of collegiality, dedication to this University, and with strong optimism for its bright future. We appreciate the opportunity we have been given to serve in this capacity.

- Frank Ardaiole, Vice President for Student Life
- Keith Benson, Associate Professor of Health Services Management
- Debra Boyd, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
- Clarence Coleman, Professor of Accounting
- Kimberly Faust, Executive Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees
- Cheryl Fortner-Wood, Associate Professor of Psychology
- Rich Fowler, Student
- Patricia Graham, Dean of the Richard W. Riley College of Education
- Mark Herring, Dean of Library Services
- Gloria Jones, Associate Professor of English, Chair of the English Department
- Katherine Kinsey, Associate Professor of Music
- Brien Lewis, Dean of University College (Chair)
- Michael Lipscomb, Assistant Professor of Political Science
- Sue Lyman, Associate Professor of Social Work
- Bethany Marlowe, Dean of Students
- Tom Moore, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty
- Tom Polaski, Professor of Mathematics
- Bill Rogers, Professor of Biology
- Seymour Simmons, Associate Professor of Art and Design
- Jonatha Vare, Professor of Education and Director of the Center for Pedagogy
- Roger Weikle, Dean of the College of Business Administration

# THE WINTHROP PLAN

## Introduction

With common purpose, we look to Winthrop's future as a distinctive institution that remains affordable yet uncompromised in our vision. The range of challenges facing higher education will not change our vision for the present and future: to be the very best public comprehensive university. We intend this plan to provide guidance for securing and allocating the resources and services necessary to support the current and anticipated needs of the University.

Our Plan encompasses the *Mission Statement*, the *Statement on the Nature and Character of Winthrop University*, and six strategic elements through which we will fulfill and enhance this vision:

1. *University Community*
2. *Academic Life*
3. *Student Body*
4. *Facilities and Environs*
5. *Technology and Support Services*
6. *Partnerships and Collaborations*

For each of these, the Plan provides:

- “*Nature and Character*” descriptions that highlight the core values and purposes that guide our strategic planning, policy development, and resource allocation.
- “*Strategic Directions*”: our mid-to-long term goals. Achievement of these goals will move the University toward realization of its overall vision.

In addition, these broader goals are reflected in Objectives as outlined in the annual *Vision of Distinction*. These objectives are designed to accomplish the Strategic Directions and ultimately augment and sustain the University's nature and character.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Winthrop's mission is to provide a highly personalized, engaging and progressively developmental series of experiences in the context of a co-educational, public, and residential comprehensive university. Offering challenging undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education programs of national caliber, Winthrop is dedicated to serving the State of South Carolina as the very best public comprehensive university.

## **STATEMENT ON THE NATURE AND CHARACTER OF WINTHROP UNIVERSITY**

Winthrop is South Carolina's distinctive public comprehensive university. From our nineteenth century roots as the state's women's college, we have achieved and will continue to achieve national recognition for the quality of our academic programs and our commitment to student engagement. Our Piedmont home is in the heart of a small city that has emerged as a leader in a vibrant region preserving the positive elements of its history while embracing new social, cultural, and economic opportunities. Committed to serving the educational needs of the citizens of the state and the region, we bring the world to Winthrop and Winthrop to the world.

As a community of learners:

We center the Winthrop Experience on student development inspired by our commitment to the liberal arts traditions, to national caliber professional education, and to developing leadership and civic responsibility;

We nurture collective and individual growth, enlightenment, and transformation;

We value the search for truth through reasoned and disciplined inquiry, innovation, and free expression;

We embrace multiculturalism and the broadest possible diversity of people and perspectives;

We share a strong sense of place -- a beautiful, historic campus with a collegial, caring atmosphere; and

We fulfill and enhance the nature and character of the University through policies and resources that reflect and advance these ideals and aspirations.

## **1. University Community**

### **The Nature and Character of Winthrop's University Community**

Our focus on student learning, in academic and personal terms, epitomizes the Winthrop community. We believe that lifelong learning results from engagement in an educational experience that blends and infuses the most pertinent aspects of the liberal arts, professional preparation, and citizenship throughout the curriculum and co-curricular opportunities. We commit to ongoing professional and personal development, indicating a common understanding that what we learn is as important as what we teach. To this end, we expect all individuals to be collegial, reflective, and accountable. We cherish the gifts of all people and value individuals for the creations, achievements, and contributions with which they enrich our campus.

### **University Community Strategic Directions**

Winthrop will:

- Recruit members to the university community in a manner reflective of its nature and character.
- Recruit members to the university community who are reflective of its nature and character.
- Attract and retain students, faculty and staff from diverse and underrepresented groups and places.
- Provide support for and expect participation in appropriate and meaningful professional development.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities and strong incentives to retain faculty and staff.
- Enhance opportunities to attract and retain life-long learners.
- Communicate with parents regarding reasonable expectations of their roles in the ongoing development and education of students.
- Model and promote personal and institutional ethics and integrity throughout the university.
- Strengthen leadership development university-wide.
- Emphasize individual and collective character development university-wide.
- Promote individual and collective civic engagement as preparation for participating in American democracy university-wide.
- Encourage and value participation in, and appreciation of, the arts and athletics, acknowledging their contributions to the community.
- Strengthen policies and programs to increase lifelong wellness and reduce substance abuse.
- Increase and promote opportunities for all members of the university community to understand a diversity of people and perspectives.
- Implement innovative approaches and partnerships for the professional experience beyond the classroom.
- Ensure accountability and continuous improvement through constructive evaluation and assessment.

## **2. Academic Life**

### **The Nature and Character of Winthrop's Academic Life**

Guided by a strong commitment to outstanding teaching informed and enhanced by research and service opportunities for faculty and students, Winthrop University places learning at the forefront of all we do. We hold ourselves to high standards of scholarship and integrity and affirm the rights of all members of the community to express their views respectfully.

In a residential setting, we challenge high-achieving students with academic programs that meet nationally established standards of excellence. Winthrop recruits, maintains, and supports a diverse and inclusive faculty of national caliber.

### **Academic Life Strategic Directions**

Winthrop will:

- Sustain a campus environment that places profound learning and individual development at the center of its mission.
- Support graduate programs at a level that ensures high quality.
- Enhance academic support programs to help students meet rigorous academic requirements.
- Promote student responsibility for academic progress.
- Adapt the academic calendar and address scheduling issues to reflect academic values.
- Provide appropriate faculty support and other resources to enable each student to complete a meaningful culminating experience in the major such as a research project, service learning initiative, and/or internship.
- Foster students' understanding of international issues.
- Expand service learning programs.
- Revise faculty roles, responsibilities, and rewards as driving forces in transforming the University.
- Recognize the contributions and meet the support needs of adjunct and part-time faculty and staff.
- Strategically employ adjunct and part-time faculty in ways reflecting the nature and character of Winthrop University.
- Create a distinctive program of leadership studies.
- Provide opportunities that encourage methods of teaching and evaluation embracing multiple learning strategies.
- Use appropriate electronic and digital technologies to facilitate teaching and learning.
- Expand credit and non-credit experiences that challenge students to grow and excel.
- Adapt the academic advising system to meet evolving student needs while reflecting our academic values.
- Achieve and maintain national accreditation for each academic program for which it is offered.
- Use professionally recognized standards to develop comparable benchmarks for program areas where no national accreditation exists.
- Support information services that reflect current best practices.
- Enhance the recognition and support of faculty scholarship and faculty service as essential parts of the life of the Winthrop community.

### **3. Student Body**

#### **The Nature and Character of Winthrop's Student Body**

Winthrop University attracts a diverse, highly qualified, achievement-oriented, and socially responsible student body from South Carolina and beyond. Winthrop is an institution of choice for students from historically under-represented populations. Our graduates are prepared to become leaders in their professions and in their communities.

#### **Student Body Strategic Directions**

Winthrop will:

- Articulate and communicate high standards and high expectations that challenge students to excel.
- Enhance student development through coordination of activities in Student Life and Academic Affairs.
- Connect students to higher learning by offering experiences that enhance the academic and social culture of the campus.
- Increase financial aid while expanding incentives for on-campus jobs and University service roles.
- Develop a variety of residential learning communities.
- Continue to raise the academic profile of entering students.
- Expand programs to improve retention and graduation rates.
- Improve the accessibility and convenience of student services.
- Control the growth of Winthrop's enrollment to reflect the distinctive sense of personal connection that defines the Winthrop Experience.

## **4. Facilities and Environs**

### **The Nature and Character of Winthrop's Facilities and Environs**

Winthrop University engenders a strong sense of place, reflecting our architectural history in our continuing development. We provide, adapt, and maintain learning, residential, and collegial facilities of the highest quality. We actively pursue conservation of energy and natural resources, recycling, and other environmentally sustainable practices. As stewards of our environment, we preserve its natural features and habitats to facilitate learning and enhance the beauty of the campus.

### **Our Facilities and Environs Strategic Directions**

Winthrop will:

- Continually review, update, and communicate a comprehensive plan for the preservation and development of the University's campus.
- Continue implementation of the program of permanent outdoor exhibits and integrate public art into the University's planning processes.
- Preserve and maintain artifacts, documents, and other gifts and bequests.
- Model environmentally sustainable practices in construction and maintenance of the built environment.
- Preserve, protect, and expand natural areas and use native plant species throughout campus.
- Develop spaces for contemplation and reflection.
- Maintain and update student housing, recreational and activity facilities while expanding capacities consonant with the plan for the growth of the university.
- Renovate, adapt, and build academic spaces to accommodate changes in academic programs, student learning opportunities, and enrollment.
- Address safety and deferred maintenance to bring all campus facilities to optimal condition.
- Continue to adapt campus facilities to address the needs of individuals.

## **5. Technology and Support Services**

### **The Nature and Character of Winthrop's Technology and Support Services**

Winthrop provides technology systems and support services consistent with the best practices nationally. Advancing the work of our community members, we integrate appropriate technology into instruction, research, student life, and services.

### **Technology and Support Strategic Directions**

Winthrop will:

- Continue to provide a broad range of technology and support services to address the needs of a varied learning community.
- Continue to address technology infrastructural issues including access, system stability and data redundancy.
- Maintain and enhance advanced administrative and academic software applications to support the mission of the University.
- Maintain and expand the range of information access and other instructional technologies.

## **6. Partnerships and Collaborations**

### **The Nature and Character of Winthrop's Partnerships and Collaborations**

As an intellectual and cultural center, a leader in civic engagement, and an engine for economic development, Winthrop serves and is accountable to the people of South Carolina. We share Rock Hill's and the region's ongoing commitment to civil rights, economic renewal, and social justice. Recognizing our continuous interaction with the broader community and global society, we envision no boundaries to Winthrop's influences and collaborations.

### **Partnerships and Collaborations Strategic Directions**

Winthrop will:

- Broaden our global perspectives with international student and faculty exchanges and programs.
- Expand and enhance partnerships with P-16 schools throughout the state and region.
- Advocate to the broader community the importance of liberal arts education as the most appropriate preparation to produce an informed citizenry.
- Expand and support research, service learning, and internship opportunities that connect theory and practice and enrich the community.
- Develop and implement additional fundraising strategies and long-term marketing initiatives to support the current and anticipated needs of the University.
- Continue the University's strategic actions and involvement in local economic development and renewal.
- Advocate broader support among alumni and other affinity groups.
- Provide educational and cultural opportunities for the surrounding community by expanding and enhancing Winthrop's role.