

WINTHROP UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP ON DIVERSITY

FINAL REPORT

The Charge

The strategic planning process was designed to determine how to best allocate Winthrop’s resources to pursue institutional priorities for the future. This particular committee (Table 1) was charged with developing 5 to 10 ideas to augment faculty and professional staff diversity. It was also assigned the task of charting the best course of action to achieve those objectives.

Table 1.
Members, Strategic Planning Group on Diversity, 2015-2016

Name	Classification	Area and/or Division
Shannon Smith	Benefits Administrator	Human Resources
Kinyata Brown	Staff/Director	Student Life (Diversity and Student Engagement)
Leigh Poole	Staff/Faculty	University College (International Center)
Rachel Law	Staff	CAS (CHEM, Eagle STEM Scholars Diversity Program)
Arenette McNeil	Staff	The Graduate School
Ellen Wilder-Byrd	Associate Vice President	University Relations
Khoi Tran	Undergraduate student	CAS/CBA (PLSC/ECON)
Adarrel Gadsden	Undergraduate student	CBA (BADM)
Daisy Burroughs	Graduate student	CBA (MBA)
Carol Marchel	Faculty	COE (CLES)
Willis Lewis	Faculty	CBA (ECON)
Adam Glover	Faculty	CAS (WLAN)
Jason Chung	Faculty	COE (PESH)
Adolphus Belk, Jr.	Faculty/Program director	CAS (PLSC/AAMS)

Defining Diversity

Numerous studies and longstanding research show that a diverse faculty and student body lead to great benefits in education for all students. Not only does the law require that colleges and universities have no individual or systemic discrimination, but sound educational practice requires it (Springer and Westerhaus 2006).

External evaluators have certified Winthrop’s record of achievement for years. In 2015, *U.S. News and World Report* named Winthrop one of the best institutions of its type for the twenty-fourth consecutive year. Moreover, Winthrop has earned similar accolades from *Barron’s Best Buys*, *The Princeton Review*, WiseChoice Research, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

Yet, if Winthrop is going to become one of the most outstanding public, comprehensive universities in the nation, then enhancing the diversity of its faculty and professional staff is of the utmost importance. After all, diversity is no longer a distant projection, but a reality, as it is our present and future (Smith 2015). According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau (2016), Latinos/as currently account for 17.4 percent of all Americans, followed by blacks at 13.2 percent, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at 5.6 percent,

and American Indians and Alaska Natives at about 1 percent. In South Carolina, those groups comprise roughly 35 percent of all state residents, with African Americans topping the list at 27.8 percent. Furthermore, demographers have noted that the American high school graduating class of 2025 will be one of the largest and most racially diverse in history:

Over the past two decades, the share of students graduating from public high schools who are white and non-Hispanic has declined dramatically – from 73% in 1995 to 57% in 2012, according to the most recent data available. In that time period the shares that are Hispanic and Asian have grown. [The Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education] projects that this trend will continue, with the public high school graduating class of 2025 being barely majority white (51%) (Fry 2015).

While American colleges and universities oftentimes focus on recruiting diverse students, there is also a dire need for more professors and professional staff persons of color to instruct and serve all students (Arnett 2015). For our purposes, **diversity includes** race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, and religion. However, in an effort to “diversify diversity,” we urge university leaders to also consider factors such as international status, age, and disability when hiring instructors and professional staff.

The Environment

We are not operating in a vacuum. In much the same way that the social movements of the 1960s made their way to American colleges and universities, contemporary movements have also manifested on numerous campuses (Fischer 1969, *The Chronicle* 2015, Cobb 2016). In fact, one researcher noted:

The challenge is that while the historic issues of diversity, which have occupied many in higher education over the past fifty years, have grown in their urgency, new issues are emerging. The context for diversity is shifting, and the rhetoric about diversity is increasing (Smith 2015, vii).

The urgency and intensity are self-evident if one examines events over just the current academic year. For example, in October 2015, a graduate student at **the University of Missouri** went on a hunger strike to challenge flagrant bigotry, micro-aggressions, and the lack of responsiveness from the university leaders. Although other students joined him, the protests did not garner considerable national media attention until members of the football team—acting in solidarity with the demonstrators—threatened to abstain from all football related activities until the school’s president resigned. President Timothy M. Wolfe did so just days later (Tracy and Southall 2016).

Such protests quickly spread to other institutions, large and small, public and private. Closer to home, on November 16, 2015, approximately one hundred and fifty students at **the University of South Carolina** staged a walk out to draw attention to their grievances. Student leaders presented a list of 12 demands to USC President Harris Pastides that included improved and expanded minority student recruitment, acknowledgement of gender identity and expression as protected classes, increased funding to the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, and mandatory diversity training for all faculty and staff who regularly work with students (Shain 2015).

Meanwhile, **Clemson University** students have also made calls to enhance diversity on their campus. In the process, they challenged administrators to confront the history of the institution by renaming Tillman Hall, a building named after former South Carolina governor and U.S. senator Benjamin Ryan Tillman, an unreconstructed white supremacist (Cary 2015). Some students, however, participated in counter demonstrations while others antagonized students of color both in person and on social media. In probably the most egregious incident, “someone hung bananas on a pole supporting a sign that honors African-Americans at Fort Hill, the plantation home-turned-museum that was owned by John C. Calhoun and later came into possession of Clemson University’s founder, Thomas Green Clemson” (Cary 2016).

A group of students occupied an administration building in response, and five of them were arrested for refusing to leave when university police ordered them to do so (Barnett 2016).

Finally, while Winthrop has not seen the tumult experienced by its counterparts at USC or Clemson, that does not mean things have gone swimmingly. In October 2014, two Winthrop alumni—Mike Fortune and Richard Davis—asked the Board of Trustees to drop Tillman’s name from the university’s main administration building (Douglas 2014). They expressed outrage that the most recognizable symbol of the institution was named after a man who enthusiastically facilitated black voter disenfranchisement and openly advocated murdering African Americans. In fact, Tillman boasted about his involvement in the Hamburg Massacre of 1876, which resulted in the deaths of seven men, six black and one white, after an all-black militia was attacked by a white mob. Nine months after Fortune and Davis made their appeal to the Board, someone defaced Tillman’s portrait with the words, “violent racist,” causing \$1,500 in damage (Douglas 2015). Following the nasty fight over removing the Confederate battle flag from the Statehouse grounds, state lawmakers shut down all efforts to rename historic buildings or monuments—including Tillman Hall (Marchant 2015a). Nevertheless, that did not prohibit Winthrop leaders from removing his name from the school’s top student academic achievement award (Marchant 2015b).

In summary, today’s students are challenging overt and color-blind racism, privilege, and power on campus and they have specific ideas about how to solve these problems. An analysis of student demands from **51 college campuses** found the following items atop most lists: increased diversity of professors (38 out of 51), mandatory diversity training (35), funding cultural centers (25), required classes for students (21), and increased diversity among students (21). “The demands at more than a quarter of these schools (14) included a deadline by which school administrators needed to agree or respond, or else face escalations of protests” (Libresco 2015). Thus, it is clear that organizers want something much greater than black and brown faces on recruitment brochures or websites. Rather, they want a campus-wide commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence with defined objectives and concrete plans for achieving them. Interestingly, an earlier generation of students articulated comparable requests during the 1960s (Woodyard 1991, Rooks 2006).

Where We Are: Diversity amongst the Winthrop Faculty and Staff

Given what is happening in higher education across the country and in our state, Winthrop has an opportunity to seize the time and do the right thing without first having to see its students suffer the pain of harassment or having to operate under the pressure of protests. Even so, we have a lot of work to do because so many friends of Winthrop seem to think diversity is something the university has already mastered. For instance, a recent survey of institutional stakeholders asked respondents to identify both strategic goals and competitive advantages. The results were stunning. Most respondents pointed to enrollment, money, salaries, tuition, and technology as the university’s greatest areas of need. Diversity, though, ranked in the bottom third of the responses. What is more, out of Winthrop’s many stakeholders, only current students and K-12 educators and administrators rated diversity among their top priorities for the institution. Yet, when asked what Winthrop does best, diversity appeared in the top third of all stakeholder responses.

We suspect respondents did not assign greater priority to diversity because they know that roughly 36 percent of all Winthrop students come from underrepresented racial or ethnic groups. The numbers for **university employees**, however, show there is room for improvement (Table 2). As of Fall 2015, whites accounted for nearly 80 percent of the Winthrop workforce. Blacks were the next largest group, comprising 16 percent of university employees. Latinos/as, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians or Alaska Natives, all together, accounted for about 4 percent of all employees. Roughly 3 out of every 5 Winthrop personnel were women.

Table 2.
Winthrop Employees by Gender, Age, Race, and Ethnicity, Fall 2015

Gender	Female	754
	Male	479
Age	Under 30	111
	30 – 39	252
	40 – 49	289
	50 – 59	301
	60 – 69	237
	70 – and older	43
Race and Ethnicity	White	977
	Black or African American	201
	Latino/Latina/Hispanic	28
	Asian	16
	Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	1
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	6
	Two or more races	3
Unknown	1	

Source: Winthrop Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services

Data on the gender, racial, and ethnic composition of the **full-time instructional faculty** also reveal some interesting findings (Tables 3 and 4). As of Fall 2014, there were 287 full-time professors on campus. Women, at 52.2 percent, were a majority of the faculty. Whites comprised 86.8 percent of all instructors, totaling 249 professors. Again, blacks were the second largest racial or ethnic group at 20 total instructors, representing 7 percent of the faculty. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (8 total, 2.8 percent) and Latinos/as (7 total, 2.4 percent) followed blacks. There was just one American Indian or Alaskan Native on the faculty.

Table 3.
Winthrop Full-time Faculty by Gender, Race, and Ethnicity, Fall 2009 and Fall 2014

		Fall 2009	Fall 2014
Gender	Female	139	150
	Male	135	137
Race and Ethnicity	White	240	249
	Black or African American	16	20
	Latino/Latina/Hispanic	6	7
	Asian/Native Hawaiian/Pac. Islander	12	8
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	0	1
	Two or more races	3	---
	Unknown	1	---

Source: Winthrop Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services

Table 4.
Winthrop Full-time Faculty by College, Race, and Ethnicity, Fall 2014

College	Total	White	Black	Latino/a	Asian	AI/AN
Arts and Sciences	139	118	10	6	4	0
Business Administration	41	33	5	0	2	1
Education	51	45	5	1	0	0
Visual and Performing Arts	54	51	0	0	2	0
University College	2	2	0	0	0	0

Source: Winthrop Department of Accreditation, Accountability, and Academic Services

Where We Want to Go: Recommendations and Discussion

In the 1990s, many institutions made a concerted effort to hire more black faculty members. The universities were propelled by a number of civil-rights lawsuits in higher education whose outcomes mandated swift action by states to remedy the effects of segregation in higher education and by White House guidelines reaffirming the need for affirmative action. These schools, including Duke University and the University of Michigan, sought intentionally to recruit faculty of color to their ranks.

However, 20 years later, though there has been an increase in the number of non-white faculty members overall, National Center for Education Statistics data show that increase has primarily been among Asian faculty members. The percentage of black professors on campus has increased only incrementally, while the number of Native American faculty has remained consistent over the last 20 years. (Female professors, however, have seen consistent, though modest, increases across all ethnicities.) (Arnett 2015).

Our task is difficult, but clear. In 2013, black professors represented just 5 percent of the full-time faculty at American colleges and universities. Shockingly, 96 percent of black tenured professors were at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), even though such institutions comprised only 3 percent of the nation’s 3000 schools (Strauss 2015). Latinos/as were an additional 4 percent of all professors, while Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders accounted for another 10 percent (Libresco 2015). Some look at these numbers and suggest there simply are not enough professors of color to go around. Others disagree, noting that there was “an almost 43 percent increase in the award of PhDs to blacks from about 7,000 in 1999-2000 to slightly over 10,000 in 2009-2010. Yet, the average increase in black faculty appointments at [traditionally white institutions] during the same period was about 1.3 percent” (Strauss 2015).

Consequently, Winthrop is just one of many institutions seeking to diversify its faculty. Some universities will do so by hiring new-minted professors fresh out of graduate programs. Others, however, will expand their faculties at the expense of their competitors, luring away talented, established professors with tenure, promotion, salary increases, greater research funding, and/or other benefits. If Winthrop is to succeed in this endeavor, then university leaders must leverage its strategic advantages to both recruit and retain great professors and professional staff members. Ergo, we put forth the following recommendations to improve faculty and staff diversity:

Table 5.
Recommendations

Proposal	Time	Cost
1. Diversify those responsible for hiring	Slowly	Expensive
2. Develop an institutional protocol for conducting faculty searches	Quickly	Little cost
3. Include diverse faculty members in the hiring process	Quickly	Little cost
4. Appoint a Chief Diversity Officer	Quickly	Expensive
5. Establish a fund or new salary line for competitive hiring and diverse F/S retention.	Slowly	Expensive
6. Establish endowed professorship(s) to recruit diverse senior faculty	Slowly	Expensive
7. Establish postdoctoral fellowship(s) to recruit diverse junior faculty	Slowly	Expensive
8. Updating the Winthrop website to reflect inclusive excellence	Quickly	Little cost

1. Diversify those responsible for hiring

Deans, department chairs, and faculty search committees hire faculty. Department directors and other professional staffers hire professional staffers. Therefore, while many institutions—including Winthrop—might benefit from creating administrative structures and supports to advance diversity, it is important to hire more people of color to serve as deans, department chairs, and department directors (Taylor, Apprey, Hill, McGrann, and Wang 2010, Strauss 2015).

2. Develop an institutional protocol for conducting faculty searches

If the Winthrop faculty is ever to reflect the rich diversity of its student body, then we must be more intentional about the hiring process (Taylor et al. 2010). [The College of Education](#) has an exceptional search committee policy. It emphasizes diversity and inclusive excellence and establishes clear guidelines for the entire recruitment process. The document reads, “The College desires to hire the most qualified candidates as the outcome of the search process; however, to increase the probability of successful searches that result in a generally diverse faculty in the College, proactive steps will be taken in the recruitment process.” Those steps include actively seeking out applicants (e.g., recruiting at conferences, contacting faculty alma maters for potential candidates, maintaining contact with Winthrop alumni pursuing terminal degrees), developing strong job descriptions, broadly circulating job announcements, carefully organizing and training search committees, and creating well-orchestrated campus visits for finalists.

The COE search policies and practices can serve as a model for all other Winthrop colleges. Thus, a new institutional protocol could emphasize:

- Developing diverse search committees.
- Formal training for search committee members (e.g., instruction on rules and regulations; guidance on recruitment and hiring “Dos and Don’ts”, implicit bias training).

3. Include diverse faculty members in the hiring process

Everyone has a role to play when it comes to developing and implementing a focused strategy to improve faculty diversity. Moreover, diverse faculty members ought not be expected to shoulder the load when it comes to promoting diversity. Nevertheless, some departments—if they have a diverse finalist for an instructional position—offer to set up a meeting between the candidate and other diverse professors (e.g., black faculty, LGBTQIA faculty). During these closed-door sessions, Winthrop professors share insight on what it is like to live, work, and play in the Charlotte metropolitan area. The meetings are also useful because they help identify potential mentors to guide new faculty members to tenure and promotion. We recommend formalizing these ad hoc groups to better assist with recruiting and retention.

4. **Appoint a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO)**

A serious commitment to diversity entails creating administrative structures and supports to direct the university's effort to attract and retain excellent professors and professional staff members. A CDO, located either in the Division of Human Resources, Employee Diversity, and Wellness, or in the Division of Academic Affairs, could:

- Coordinate training for faculty search committees.
- Strengthen guidelines for hiring professional staff.
- Conduct implicit bias training for academic department chairs (and at least one other department member), faculty search committee members, and department directors.
- Develop an evidence-based mentoring program for junior faculty and professional staffers.
- Conduct multicultural competency workshops for professors and professional staff members who work directly with students.
- Receive and analyze data on hiring across the institution.
- Serve as an institutional ombudsmen.

It would be highly impractical to expect one person to assume all of the responsibility for promoting faculty diversity at Winthrop. Therefore, we think a CDO must be supported by an administrative staff, graduate assistants, and a diversity committee. Members of the diversity committee, properly trained, could also serve as external members of faculty search committees.

5. **Establish a fund or new salary line for competitive hiring and diverse F/S retention.**

6. **Establish endowed professorship(s) to recruit diverse senior faculty.**

7. **Establish postdoctoral fellowship(s) to recruit diverse junior faculty.**

Items 5, 6, and 7 present an opportunity to align Winthrop's fundraising goals and its desire to promote diversity and inclusive excellence. For example, university leaders and institutional stakeholders could partner to establish a "**diversity reserve**" that might support faculty and staff recruitment and retention. Such a fund could also support faculty research or educational projects that explore some aspect of diversity.

What is more, the "[Fulfilling the Promise](#)" campaign provides an excellent example of how the university might pursue these efforts. In 2014, Winthrop marked the 50th anniversary of its integration by celebrating the stories of its first black students: **Dr. Cynthia Plair Roddey G'67**, **Mrs. Delores Johnson Hurt '68**, **Mrs. Arnetta Gladden Mackey '67**, and **Mrs. Sue Frances Meriwether Steed '67**. The events allowed community members to gather, remember, and reflect on the contributions of these trailblazing women and how they helped pave the way for future generations of Winthrop students. The programs also raised money for [The Roddey, Johnson, Gladden, Meriwether Endowed Scholarship](#), which honors the bridge built by these women by making resources available to promising minority students. This is especially noteworthy because the scholarship is named after women who are worth commemorating—as opposed to sick segregationists of yesteryear. We need more of this sort of creative thinking and collaboration.

8. **Updating the Winthrop website.**

Visitors to the Winthrop campus marvel at its beauty and inclusivity. Those who visit the university's website ought to encounter those features at every turn. In particular, the Winthrop front page, the faculty recruitment site, and the Human Resources page must showcase the institution's commitment to diversity and inclusive excellence. It is sometimes said that Winthrop is South Carolina's best-kept secret. Well, it should be a secret no longer.

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