

**WINTHROP PRESIDENT DAN MAHONY'S
PREPARED REMARKS
THIRD ANNUAL
STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY
10.16.18**

INTRODUCTION

Good morning. Thank you for being here for our third State of the University address, and my first in this particular venue. Of course, we moved this event to Richardson after closing Byrnes last month. The renovation of historic Byrnes Auditorium is one of the many exciting things happening on campus this year.

Before I talk about the future, I want to start by acknowledging the good work of everyone who has contributed over the last year to Winthrop's varied and significant accomplishments. I value the contributions from all of you—from faculty members to the facilities crew, from human resources and gift officers to admissions counselors and coaches, from our business office to the frontline staff supporting students. Without your good work since this time last year, there would be nothing for us to talk about today. For your efforts on Winthrop's behalf, I thank you.

I also want to acknowledge our Winthrop students who are attending today, as well as some of our good friends who have joined us. Members of the community, representatives of government, members of boards and councils—thank you for being here. We appreciate your presence and your interest in Winthrop University's future.

So here we are – we've wrapped up our second year of the Winthrop Plan. Results are in. Numbers have been added to reports. The metrics we talk about today will be uploaded to the website later this afternoon. But before we dive into all that...what can we say about Winthrop today?

As we completed our rebranding work for the university earlier this year, we shared some of what the research told us about the Winthrop experience: that Winthrop is a close-knit community of learners where students are cared for, supported and accepted by their peers and faculty mentors alike, that learning occurs in an environment that remains dedicated to excellence and innovation in education. This is what makes us stand out from peer institutions and why students say that Winthrop feels like home.

I would now like to share with you [a short video](#) that our communications and marketing team has created that refines some of the messaging that we have been incorporating into our outreach to prospective students and their families.

We belong here. You belong here. Come be a part of this family. That's a pretty powerful message that, I think, resonates across demographic groups and across generations. While the

experience we offer is certainly one of our brightest points of pride, there are others that we have accomplished over the last year and I would like to highlight now...

First, Winthrop ranked 8th among Southern public universities in the U.S. News & World Report's latest edition of America's Best Colleges. Additionally, Winthrop was in the top 20 institutions on the list of Best Colleges for Veterans, and, for the first time, we were ranked as being in the top 15 in the region for the quality of our undergraduate teaching.

The Princeton Review also listed the university among best Southeastern colleges and noted its diverse student body and beautiful campus. Money Magazine touted Winthrop in its "Best Colleges for Your Money 2018." And a number of other third-party endorsements were received as well.

While rankings certainly do not tell the whole story of an institution, I am proud of our long tradition of high-quality teaching and strong focus on providing a well-rounded student-centered experience that is consistently noted by these outside groups. We are well served by our emphasis on civic engagement opportunities, undergraduate and graduate research, and global awareness.

Secondly, I want to mention a theme of success that has become notable for Winthrop University in recent years. This success is in minority student achievement. I shared last year that the Education Trust's national report on black student success, and last year I shared listed Winthrop as #2 among top-performing institutions in the country. I want you to know this year Winthrop's black student 6-year graduation rate increased to 59.7%, which is higher than the overall institution graduation rate and 14 percentage points – let me repeat that: 14 percentage points – above the national black student graduation rate. As I have always said, the path to graduation involves hard work and dedication from our students, combined with strong support from our faculty and staff, so this is something for which we can all be proud.

A third point of great pride for me continues to be our commitment to undergraduate research. Undergraduate research, like other high-impact practices, helps us retain students and helps to better prepare them for opportunities after graduation. In the last year, more than 400 undergraduate students were engaged in research opportunities. Over 250 of these students, representing at least 30 departments and programs from all five colleges, presented or performed their scholarly and creative work in the annual Showcase of Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors—or SOURCE—event on our campus.

Because I go to the SOURCE showcase every year, I can assure you that you would be amazed at what our students are accomplishing under the guidance of our exceptional faculty members. I'm blown away each time I attend this event to see how much of a leg up our students have in comparison to students at my former institutions. This is, again, an achievement that requires a significant institutional commitment, but I cannot think of anything more deserving of our support than experiences that set students apart from their peers when we send them out into their careers or future educational pursuits.

On that latter point—preparation for graduate school—I would also like to mention Winthrop’s Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, or the McNair Scholars. This program serves first generation, low-income, and underrepresented undergraduates and prepares them to be successful in Ph.D. programs. This year we received the third of five rounds of funding from the U.S. Department of Education for this program—in total, it is more than a million dollars Winthrop is receiving to have a lasting impact on these students. Last spring, one of the McNair Scholars, LaRaven Temoney was one of a few students in the country to receive a prestigious National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. She was also able to graduate from Winthrop in three years, I’m very proud of this program and the outstanding students, like LaRaven, that it serves.

I am also proud of the success we have seen over the last year in athletics. Our student-athletes are worthy of our admiration for the way they balance their academic, social and athletics experiences and do so with integrity and sportsmanship. Here are a few highlights...

I am pleased to note that Winthrop placed 65.4 percent of our student-athletes on the Big South Conference’s Presidential Honor Roll for the 2017-18 academic year. In addition, 19 of those student-athletes earned the Commissioner’s Award for having a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Together, the student-athletes had a 3.26 GPA, the highest ever for our athletes.

Our women’s tennis team finished its season as Big South Champions for the 20th time, and earned the program’s first opening round victory in the NCAA tournament by defeating Auburn. Doubles partners Megan Kaufmann and Lauren Proctor, who were ranked 23rd nationally, advanced to the quarterfinals of the 2018 NCAA Division I Women’s Tennis Doubles Championship.

Lauren was voted the Big South Conference Female Student-Athlete of the Year and earned the conference’s Women’s Player of the Year for the third-consecutive time. Women’s Tennis Head Coach Cid Carvalho took conference Coach of the Year honors for the 10th time in his career. The men’s tennis team also had an undefeated season in conference play and won the regular-season title.

Lacrosse standout Katherine Judge was named the Big South Conference’s Woman of the Year. Track and field standout Quemell Brave earned the Big South Conference’s indoor and outdoor long jump titles, and finished 28th in the East Preliminary Championship. He is Winthrop’s first male long jumper to qualify for a regional. Runner Olivia Paxton took the conference’s 10K championship title, while Jalen Hodges claimed both the indoor and outdoor titles in the high jump.

These highlights are just a few examples of the things that happened during the last year as we undertook Year Two of the Winthrop Plan. We will get to several more as we talk through the goals and the results over the last year.

Each year, we aim to make progress as we work toward 2025. We must elevate our reputation as an institution, and we must undertake initiatives that will help other institutions see what is possible. We seek to be a model for others of best practices and of what works—efficiently and effectively.

Our work has been guided by five strategic plan action groups that have provided leadership and coordination in developing and monitoring initiatives in the Winthrop Plan. Each is chaired by a vice president and includes faculty, staff and student representation. Approximately 75 members of our community are working collaboratively, engaging in spirited discussion and suggesting new ideas and modifications. I appreciate the leadership of all who are participating in these groups.

So let's talk about our progress over the last year, as well as look forward, as we pursue our goals to drive enrollment, retention, student success, diversity, and fundraising in our quest to be a national model for a student-centered university experience. As we go through this presentation, I will not comment on every metric, but there are a few I would like to highlight either because of the notable success in the area or need for improvement.

GOAL 1

One of our successes earlier this year was the launch of new branding for the university. Refining and highlighting what makes Winthrop special has proven to be vitally important to our efforts in recruiting, fundraising, and creating a focus for the pride we all feel for being a part of Winthrop.

Our new logo and related visual identity was positively received, and we continue phasing in aspects of the brand all across campus. As the video shown earlier illustrates, our primary focus was to emphasize what makes Winthrop unique and hone our messaging to better resonate with prospective students, support our efforts to grow enrollment, and increase graduation and retention rates—all of which are paramount to Goal 1 of the Winthrop Plan.

For total headcount enrollment we fell short of our goals. Our application numbers were up across the board, but enrollment figures indicate we are below last year's number. As I shared when I spoke with faculty and staff conferences in the last couple of months, we know that what we have experienced is part of a national trend for regional comprehensive universities. While we are certainly not alone, that does not mean we are OK with the decline or do not have plans to improve the numbers.

In general, our enrollment growth in the future will not come from doing the same things we have always done, but rather from doing new things.

For example, this fall we added four fully online master programs, which enrolled 75 new students. We will be starting new cohorts every semester over the next year and the full impact of the program on our enrollment will be felt over the next two years.

We are currently seeking approval for a new Bachelor of Professional Studies targeted at adult degree completers and hope to enroll our first group of students in Fall 2019. The fastest growing segment of the college market is non-traditional students, and this program will help us to serve their needs.

We need to continue our work to be more transfer friendly, and we will be working on revision of the general education program in the next year in order to help make that a reality.

We will need to continue to focus on developing other new programs that will be what I call destination programs. These are programs that change the student's choice of higher education institution. In other words, the presence of the program at Winthrop will cause them to choose this destination and without it, we would not be considered. These include both academic and non-academic programs. The Bachelor of Professional Studies is one such program, but we will need more.

We also recently finalized an agreement with a financial aid leveraging firm to help us make better use of our scholarship dollars to meet the needs of our students. This will help us to be even more competitive when attracting new students.

While we are implementing these new recruitment strategies, we must continue to focus on the success of the students we have. Increasing the number of students who are on the path to graduation will certainly help to stabilize enrollment, and thanks to all of you there is much work being done in all areas of the university to impact retention in a positive way. While our retention rate continues to exceed that of similar institutions and our retention rates of the past, there is still room for improvement and we are currently examining some new options that will allow us to improve our targeted strategies.

On the other end, we are continuing to focus on improvement of our graduation rates. First, the bad news -- our 6-year graduation rate for this year is down 1%, so we did not reach our target for this year. But here is the great news. We already know the 6-year graduation rate for next year will exceed 60% for the first time as far back as we have tracked it. We know this because the 5-year graduation rate for that cohort is already 60%. Given the number of students still enrolled, it may reach as high as 63%. This will exceed our 2025 target, so we will increase our goal in this area.

Moreover, we have seen a significant improvement in the 4-year graduation rate over the last 3 years. It has improved by 7.7%. Again, this is an area where we are exceeding the success rate of similar institutions. Also, I should note that this improvement has had some impact on the enrollment numbers I cited earlier. We had fewer returning students this fall than in the past because more of them graduated more quickly.

However, this is a hit on our enrollment that we should celebrate because this is our goal – move our students to graduation as quickly as possible. And we are happy that we are doing far better in this area.

We continue to do well in attracting diverse students to our campus. While we fell just short of our diversity goal for this fall, it still exceeds the average in the state. Moreover, the diversity of our freshman class increased again this fall, indicating growth in the overall percentage in the future. One example of our efforts in this area over the last year is the implementation of the Winthrop Kaleidoscope Multicultural Prospective Student Visit Day, which is designed for high school sophomores and juniors who want an up-close look at what life is like for students of color on our campus.

I am pleased to note that for the first time since we started tracking this metric in the Winthrop Plan, we met our target on undergraduate student placement rate, at 91 percent. We are pleased to see this number improve as it is an indicator of the outstanding preparation our students receive for future careers and graduate school.

GOAL 2

Continuing to expand our new program offerings and redesigning current academic programs to better meet the needs of today's students and employers are critical to achieving our goals for enrollment and student success, while also enhancing the overall quality of the Winthrop experience.

As you can see, we exceeded our target for number of new and substantially redesigned programs in support of institutional goals.

Over the last year, the academic area has been busy developing new programs, concentrations, and minors. The following are new and being offered or have cleared all approvals... Ed.S. and M.Ed. in education leadership; M.S. in sport and fitness administration; M.B.A. concentration in sports marketing and revenue generation; B.A. concentration in music technology and B.S. in human nutrition concentration in chronic disease prevention; and new minors in communication studies, film and content production, financial planning, and Spanish for law and helping professions.

In addition, Winthrop, the Citadel, and Coastal Carolina joined Clemson to form the Consortium for Innovative Educational Practice, which allows students graduating from our new Ed.S. in Educational Leadership to meet all prerequisites for Clemson's Ed.D. in Educational Systems Improvement Studies. This path to a terminal education degree for our graduates will speed their time of completion and allow them to benefit from online and hybrid delivery options at off-campus sites across the state. Our first cohort began this fall with the option of those degree completers entering Clemson's program in summer 2020.

Last year at the State of the University address, I talked about the Accounting Mentoring and Professional Development program that was made possible for our students with the funding assistance of PricewaterhouseCoopers or PwC. This competitive program, aimed at students who are underrepresented in the accounting field, provides a significant leg up to those who dream of a career as certified public accountants. I'm pleased to update you that this program has doubled in size over the last year, which means twice as many accounting students are benefitting from professional development sessions, tutoring, cohort accounting classes, access to CPA exam review materials, ongoing scholarship support, an externship invitation, and a PwC mentor. This is an example of a program that can be a model to other schools.

Over the last year we also have continued our commitment to global and community engagement, which is a vital part of our Goal 2 initiatives. A course created by the International Center for study abroad has been nominated for national recognition with the Forum on Education Abroad.

Closer to home over the last year, faculty and staff broadly participated in drafting the Knowledge Park Action Plan that will guide development in the corridor connecting our campus to downtown. Under development for a number of years, Knowledge Park is a multi-faceted project meant to transform Rock Hill as a walkable, urban business district and a way of reinventing the original heart of Rock Hill. Winthrop will be included in a number of activities related to the development of Knowledge Park, including lab space for our exercise science program in the Lowenstein Building opening in 2019.

In other partnerships with the community, Winthrop continues to be a major player. We partnered with Comporium Communications on a new Bike Share program created to make it easier to access downtown Rock Hill and other areas of our community. Winthrop's two bike hubs – located at the West Center and Richardson Hall – provide the campus community with a free transportation option, all while promoting health and decreasing vehicular traffic.

Another transportation partnership will be happening this spring, as the university will be participating in the city's electric bus system, with two of the routes running through campus. This additional transportation option will greatly benefit our students, faculty and staff.

You may have seen news reports that the university is working with the City of Rock Hill and the York County Disabilities Foundation to provide land at Winthrop Park, off Eden Terrace near the Winthrop Coliseum, to build Miracle Park. This park will be a place where people with developmental disabilities can participate in baseball and other sports, as well as compete with other special needs children and adults as part of Miracle League teams. In addition, Winthrop faculty and students will be assisting with the programs at the park. This is an exciting initiative, one that is a source of great anticipation and pride.

GOAL 3

Goal 3 gets to the heart of the Winthrop experience because it focuses on the individuals--faculty and staff members--who support and nurture our students.

Before we talk about the Goal 3 metrics, I want to note that for the second year in a row, Winthrop ranked #2 among the four-year state institutions in a report from the S.C. Human Affairs Commission to the legislature. This is an annual report regarding affirmative action goals for women and minorities. While we increased our goal attainment from 83.5% to 84.3%, we still missed the #1 spot by only one-tenth of a point.

On the diversity of faculty and managerial staff, we continue to make significant progress. This is an area where I am proud to say that we not only exceeded our target, but actually reached our stretch target of 18%. Our creation of a diversity council, which advises university leadership and promotes collaboration and communication by bringing together representatives from stakeholder groups has helped set the tone for hiring.

In addition, we even have diversity teams in each of the academic colleges to ensure our continued progress in this area. We have certainly seen an increase in the number of minority applicants for positions across campus, which makes our hiring pools more diverse and sends a message that we are serious about ensuring all who qualify for positions at Winthrop can compete fairly.

The percentage of all full-time employees with salaries at or above the median is 35%, down a couple points from last year and short of our goal. You will recall that we were able to distribute \$402,000 in competitive compensation funding last fall. Funds were distributed across full-time employee categories with the objective to move as many individuals as possible toward the median salary for the comparison group. While efforts like these over a couple of years have been helpful to us making some progress, we are taking another tack and pursuing a broader compensation philosophy and implementation plan for the future.

You have likely heard from me and others during the past year about our classification and compensation study to review employee classifications, compensation, and pay practices. I am pleased to announce that the project has begun, and we are partnering with Sibson Consulting, a human resources consulting firm nationally recognized for its work with hundreds of higher education institutions in the country.

Reviewing employee classifications, compensation, and pay practices is one of the university's top priorities. The last time we conducted a comprehensive study was almost 20 years ago. This project will help provide updated direction for the development and maintenance of pay practices that should result in more competitive salaries that are in-line with the market over time. While this will not happen overnight, it will provide us what we need to develop a long term compensation strategy. It will also put in place tools and processes to help ensure pay

decision consistency for faculty and staff. You will hear more about specific objectives for the study in an announcement that I will send next week.

Finally, the Korn-Ferry Employee Satisfaction Survey was completed earlier this year. In the survey, 61% of respondents were satisfied “overall” with working at Winthrop. Through a different survey used during the 2015-16 academic year, the baseline for employee satisfaction was established at 51%. The 61% is a significant improvement and exceeds our stretch target for this year and our goal for 2025.

However, it is clear as we review the results of the survey that there is still more work to be done. Therefore, we will increase our 2025 target and stretch target for this particular goal. In addition, we are continuing to analyze the results of the survey and are conducting follow-up focus groups with faculty and staff to determine what strategies might help us to improve in this area.

One consideration is appointing a university ombudsperson as a means of resolving campus issues between members of the university community. Both the staff and faculty conferences this year have endorsed the idea of a neutral campus arbitrator.

GOAL 4

It goes without saying in higher education today, students have high expectations of the colleges and universities that they choose to attend. It is good news then that in facilities, technology and programs, Winthrop has had a good bit of success over the last year.

We surpassed our target on classrooms with upgraded technology, which is critical to our students’ educational experience. Thirty-nine classrooms were upfitted in the last year. Perhaps the most unusual initiative was a mobile computer lab developed in Thurmond that is equipped with 30 laptops and can be used throughout the building.

We exceeded our stretch target on number of online and hybrid programs with seven. Growth in this area is important as we continue to serve prospective and continuing students who need these course options because of their individual life circumstances.

While figures on our facilities expenditures indicate we are a little short of our target at \$13.1 million, some of that is related to small delays in projects that are currently being undertaken. We thank the legislature for the funds to complete a number of important projects, as well as roof repairs for Thurmond and Dinkins, the \$4.5 million Byrnes project, and the \$3.3 million received this year that will be allocated to several new projects.

GOAL 5

I have said from the beginning that the success of the Winthrop Plan ultimately rests on ensuring a positive financial position for the institution.

Financial stability and effective fundraising operations are crucial as we move toward our 2025 goal of becoming a national model for a student-centered university experience.

One of the measures we track as an overall indicator of fiscal well-being is the university's debt ratio or the total institutional debt to total assets—the lower the number, the better. I'm pleased to note that our debt ratio has dropped from a baseline of .539 to a ratio for 2018 of .45. This exceeds our stretch target, indicating that Winthrop is continuing to strengthen its long-term financial health.

Monitoring and strengthening our unrestricted net position is another way we gauge our fiscal well-being. Earlier this year our trustees looked at Winthrop's unrestricted net position from 1988 through 2018. There was a peak of \$20.4 million in 2008, a subsequent low point of \$10.6 million in 2013, and now we are back up to \$20.2 million currently.

We've also clearly seen success with our total endowment assets. As you can see, for the second year in a row, we are ahead of our stretch target. This increase is the result of many factors, beginning with our investment adviser. Vanguard continues to outperform benchmarks at a low cost to our Foundation. We have also continued to cut our endowment management fee, so that we are more closely aligned with those percentages relative to endowments of similar size nationally. This has helped to grow the endowment and to increase the number of scholarships we can award.

In unrestricted gift revenues, we fell short of our goal for the foundation's 2017 fiscal year. Unfortunately, our alumni giving rate also fell significantly last year. While some of this was due to a vacancy in the annual giving manager position during the prime donor solicitation period, we simply need to do better.

We hope a new giving option, the Winthrop Leadership Society, will help turn those revenues around this year and in the near future. This society recognizes donors who pledge annual gifts to Winthrop in one, or multiple, gift areas for a five-year period.

Since it began, approximately 51 donors have made pledges through the Winthrop Leadership Society. All of us who have made pledges believe this is important for Winthrop's present and future and will significantly improve our financial stability.

So far, we have raised almost as much as last year for the annual fund, but we just entered the most important period for any annual giving program, the last 90 days of the year. Through our continued solicitation of Winthrop Leadership Society members, upcoming phonathon, and other solicitation efforts, we can well exceed last year's performance and reach this year's goals.

However, we will need the support of our alumni and friends. Every gift, no matter how large, makes a difference. It makes a difference in our giving rate, our annual fund total, and most importantly in our efforts to provide scholarships and other support for our students.

We also exceeded our target and stretch target for student scholarships. It is critical that we provide the support necessary for our students, as many still struggle financially. 45% of our students are Pell eligible, and most are currently relying on some scholarship support. The only way to help these students and to continue to increase student scholarship support is through fundraising.

There were also some other financial successes in the past year. Athletics exceeded their fundraising and sponsorship goals for the year and raised the most scholarship dollars in department history. We have put more focus on external events over the last year, and this is generating additional revenue, with the potential for far more in the future. In addition, the new contract with Sodexo will provide much more revenue and support back to the institution.

CONCLUSION

I want you to know that all of the information I've presented, as well as the specific results of each metric in the plan, is being uploaded to the website today. Check out Winthrop Plan on the left side links of my webpage. I hope you will take a look at the information, and let me know if you have comments or suggestions.

Let me end here with a few final thoughts. I have faculty and staff members often ask me what they can do to help with the goals we are not yet achieving. Honestly, there is not one answer. When we talk about enrollment, clearly those who are involved with developing the new online programs are directly involved. However, we are not starting online programs in every discipline, so this is not a way that everyone can participate. I can use other examples in which a group is heavily involved, but most of us are not heavily involved. Still, there are many ways that everyone can participate.

We can all suggest new ideas. We do not have the time or resources to do all of them; in fact, I think only about 10% of the ideas I have suggested over the years have happened. Still, we do always consider them and some of the best changes I have seen at universities started with someone saying "what about this?"

We can all make potential and current students feel welcome here. I have heard so many stories about faculty and staff who made the difference in someone's decision to come here or stay here, and sometimes involved a simple gesture like an offer to help someone who was lost.

In public settings, we can all be cheerleaders for the university. We have so much to be proud about at Winthrop and we can all take advantage of opportunities to demonstrate that pride.

Because our faculty and staff are among the best with regards to staying in touch with our graduates, we can all help with identifying alumni who we need to keep involved in the university in the many ways that alumni can stay engaged.

We can all continue to contribute to providing the outstanding Winthrop experience that has earned the respect of our peers. This not only changes lives, but it develops alumni who are loyal to the institution and want to do what they can to help us succeed.

If we all do what we can, I do believe we will move forward in a positive direction on each goal in the Winthrop Plan. I am proud to be your president, and I thank you for everything you do and for joining me today for the State of the University.