Winthrop University – Academic Council
Friday, October 3, 2025 @ 2:00pm
Owens 103

Minutes

Current Academic Council Members

Cody	Walters	Library	Elected (College FA)	2027
Mike*	Sickels	CAS	Elected (FC)	2028
Timea	Fernandez	CAS	Elected (College FA)	2028
Kori	Bloomquist	CAS	Elected (FC)	2026
Kelly *	Costner	CESHS	Appointed (VPAA)	2028
Jessie*	Hamm	CAS	Elected (FC)	2027
Dan	Drane	CESHS	Elected (College FA)	2028
Justin	Isenhour	CVPA	Elected (College FA)	2027
Kelly	Ozust	CVPA	Appointed (VPAA)	2027
Anna	Romanova	CBA	Appointed (VPAA)	2026
Kevin	Parker	CBA	Elected (College FA)	2028
Ephraim	Sommers	CAS	Elected (College FA)	2027
Joy	Stapleton	CESHS	Elected (College FA)	2026
Paul	Wiegand	CBA	Elected (College FA)	2027
Brent*	Woodfill	CAS	Elected (College FA)	2026
Kristen	Wonderlich	CVPA	Elected (College FA)	2026
Gina	Jones	Rec and Reg	Appointed	
Victoria	Williams	Student	Appointed (SGA)	2026

*absent

I. **Approval of minutes** of the August 29th meeting

approved

II.   **Remarks from the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs**
(Sebastian van Delden) arrived late and remarks are within other discussions.

III.   **Remarks from the President of the Student Government Association – (**Victoria Williams) was not in attendance

IV.   **Reports from Standing Committees**
   a. **Committee on University Curriculum** (Paul Wiegand)
      i. Curriculum Actions – Appendix A
      all approved

   b. **General Education Curriculum Committee** (Kelly Costner)
      i. Committee actions – Appendix B
      all approved
      Dr. Wiegand wondered if some programs would have to re-evaluate their programs for accreditation regarding the quantitative and natural sciences
      Mr. Drueke said this recommendation would not change the requirement, just making it more clear. It would allow two sciences in the same area. There was concern about splitting humanities and arts.
      Mr. Walters noted this was just in discussion.
      Dr. Van Delden was asked about the marketing piece. He suggested re-naming—jazz it up a bit.
      Mr. Drueke said he was working with Malik Smith (DegreeWorks Coordinator) and Zach Abernathy (MATH professor) doing an analysis of courses being used to fulfil the Gen Ed. How many courses are actually being used? There are over 300 courses marked as Gen Eds. He said we need to reduce the list such as some 500-level courses with pre-reqs.
      Dr. Fernandez asked about a 500-level course that was a writing requirement, would that be in danger of being cut? Mr. Drueke replied that no, the pre-reqs don't meet the writing requirement.

V.   **Old Business**
   a. *Course repeat policy*
      Mr. Drueke mentioned that the BS in Business Administration (BSBA) is more like a progression policy for the program. Computer Science doesn't have this policy. Mr. Walters asked if we should push this? Dr. Wiegand said "push" was a strong word but maybe encourage a discussion.
      Dr. Wonderlich asked what the petition processed looked like (for the BSBA). Dr. Wiegand explained. Mr. Drueke said it was similar to university petition but college-focused. Dr. Wiegand said they have to have a separate petition process specifically for CSCI students due to accreditation guidelines.
      Dr. Bloomquist asked if this was something we were going to encourage at FC for colleges. He said this was just something to share that another department had done this.
      Dr. Isenhour said it sounds like we are not pushing a university repeat policy.

Dr. Wiegand said some data would be helpful to see if this was a huge problem. Ms. Jones mentioned CSCI labs, writing courses… Mr. Drueke mentioned MATH 150.

b. *GNED assessment committee bylaw revisions*
AC is recommending the changes regarding membership to the bylaws to FC. These were discussed at the last meeting.
Dr. Wiegand asked about how the membership was handled. Mr. Drueke said it was by appointment and approved by the Provost.
Dr. Isenhour said that when we see the data on Gen Ed courses, faculty who teach the most heavily used should be part of this committee.
Mr. Drueke said this would not go into effect until next academic year.
Dr. Isenhour mentioned that Dr. Noreen Gaubatz said we needed to do this for accreditation.
Regarding "bypassing the Gen Ed curriculum committee," Dr. Van Delden spoke to trying to make the process more streamlined and the re-structuring of committees. He thought they were following faculty governance, but a conversation was had with concerned faculty.
The recommendation to move this forward was approved.

VI. **New Business**
a. *GNED curriculum pause*
The Committee noted that the pursuit of new initiatives will be time consuming. and if the goal is to simplify the program, it would seem counterintuitive to continue its expansion. Therefore, the Committee requested a PAUSE in submission of nonessential inclusion requests beginning with Meeting 2 of the GNED Curriculum Committee and for the remainder of 2025-2026. Specifically:

- Any/all requests submitted by noon on Thu 2025-10-30 will be considered at Meeting 2 on Fri 2025-11-07.
- Requests after 2025-10-30 will be limited to those necessitated by other curriculum action impacting the current GNED list (or due to other special circumstances determined in consultation with Academic Affairs).

b. *Shared advising plan—See Appendix C*
Dr. Van Delden appreciates the work by this group. He hopes they're feeling optimistic about being here at Winthrop. The revenue for this semester looks good. He felt a sense of relief over this.
He wanted to share this for feedback.
Mr. Walters said feedback from Dr. Mike Sickels was that there were fewer touchpoints from the colleges.
Dr. Van Delden said he didn't want that to happen. He stressed that for FR there would be professional advisors and after first semester of SO, would be handed over to departments. He wants to make this a systematic thing that WU does. We should get 3-6% increase in FR retention.

Dr. Van Delden will present this at FC and will have another listening session on the 23rd.

VII. **Announcements**
Mr. Drueke said the commencement committee met and will be recommending only two ceremonies in May—no Thursday night. There will be smaller numbers that warrant this. There are only about 400 UG degree candidates at this point. This was due to the smaller FR class we had four years ago. We may need to do this for a couple of years.
Dr. Wonderlich mentioned that she hoped we honored Jo [Koster] in some way.
Mr. Walters reminded everyone that SURE posters are up until 5 PM today in Richardson Ballroom.

VIII. **Adjournment**
Meeting adjourned at 3:01 pm.

Appendix A

Winthrop University
Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum
Minutes

The Committee on Undergraduate Curriculum met on Friday, September 26, 2025. Participating were committee members Paul Wiegand, Amanda Hiner, and Shawnna Helf. Also attending were Cody Walters, Tim Drueke, Gina Jones, and Kara Traverse.

These 4 program change items (degree) were provisionally approved, and will be forwarded to Academic Council for action once a quorum has voted:

Program	Action
BA in ARTH & Museum Profession	New Program
BS in Ed Studies-Elementary	Modify Program: Remove suggestion of EDCO 505 for TECH requirement. Add that READ 290/590 can meet the HUMA requirement. Add EDCI 560 as an alternative to EDCI 360. Add EDCI 361/561, EDCI 362/562, and EDCI 591 to MAT accelerated track.
BS in Ed Studies-Early Childho	Modify Program: Remove suggestion of EDCO 505 for TECH requirement. Add that READ 290/590 can meet the HUMA requirement. Add EDCI 560 as an alternative to EDCI 360. Add EDCI 361/561, EDCI 362/562, and EDCI 591 to MAT accelerated track.
BS in Ed Studies-Special Educ	Modify Program: Add suggestion of EDCO 505 TECH requirement and note that MATH 150 is required for QUAN if pursuing the MAT. Update list of electives in the major core. Remove MATH 291, READ 290, and SPED 561

	from the concentration. Add SPED 507, 509, 515, and 519 to the concentration. Add MAT accelerated track.

This 1 program change items (minor) recommended and forwarded to Academic Council for action:

Program	Action
Minor in Disability Services	New Minor

The following 27 course action items were approved at CUC Level and require no further action:

Course	Action
ARTH 300 Museums in Action	Modify Course: Change title from Methods and Theories of Art History (3). Update course description. Change prerequisite from ARTH 176 to HMXP 102 or HXCT 301.
ARTH 383 Monsters & Hero in Ancient Art	New Course
ARTH 398 Art Museum & Gallery Practices	New Course
ARTS 370 Fiber Art Studio	Inactivate Course
ARTS 370H Fiber Art Studio	Inactivate Course
ARTT 298 Art Appreciation	Inactivate Course
DANT 260 Dance Production	Modify Course: Update course description. Restrict course to dance majors.
EDCO 410 Education in a Democracy	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "Completion of all core courses except EDCO 402 or EDUC 403. Admission to Teacher Education Program" to "Completion of all core courses except EDCO 402 or EDUC 305. Admission to Teacher Education Program."
EDCO 410H Education in a Democracy	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "Completion of all core courses except EDCO 402 or EDUC 403. Admission to Teacher Education Program" to "Completion of all core courses except EDCO 402 or EDUC 305. Admission to Teacher Education Program."
EDCO 555 Topics in Ed	Modify Course: Change total number of credits students can receive for course from 6 to 15.
EXSC 375 Biomechanics and Kinesiology	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from C- or greater in BIOL 213 or BIOL 307, PESH 102 to C- or greater in BIOL 213 or BIOL 307, and PESH 102 or PETE 502.
MATH 370 Mathematical Modeling	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from C- or better in MATH 201 to C- or better in MATH 105 or MATH 201.
MUST 525 Instr Pedagogy and Literature	New Course

NUTR322 Food Composition Laboratory	Modify Course: Update course description. Change prerequisite from NUTR 222 to "NUTR 222 with a grade of C- or better, and either NUTR 221 or NUTR 223 with a grade of C- or better."
NUTR427 Medical Nutr. Therapy I	Modify Course: Change corequisite from BIOL 308 or BIOL 213/214 to BIOL 308 or BIOL 214.
NUTR471 Food & Nutr Mgmt II	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "NUTR 223 with a grade of C- or higher; NUTR 323 with a grade of C- or higher" to "NUTR 322 and NUTR 323 with a grade of C- or higher."
NUTR490A Practicum Experience	Modify Course: Change perquisite from "Permission of Instructor. Must have a 2.5 GPA. NUTR 421 (C- or higher) for Health promotion option students and NUTR 427 (C- or higher) for dietetic option students" to "NUTR 421 with grade of C- or higher and overall GPA of 2.5 or higher. Permission of instructor required."
PETE223 Adventure Facilitation & Lead	Inactivate Course
PETE250 Outdoor Pursuit & Target Sport	New Course
PSYC320 Cultural Psychology	Modify Course: Change title from Racial, Cultural and Ethnic Influences on Identity Development (3). Update course description. Change prerequisite from PSYC 101 or AAMS 300 and WRIT 101 to PSYC 101.
RELG230 Preaching as Public Speaking	New Course
THRA230 Wig and Wardrobe	New Course
WRIT365 Proposal and Grant Writing	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "HMXP 102 or HXCT 301 as a pre or co-req, or permission of the Chair" to "HMXP 102 or HXCT301, or permission of the Chair."
WRIT366 Technical Communication	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "HMXP 102 or HXCT 301 as a pre or co-req, or permission of the Chair. Students must attain a grade of C- or better in these courses" to "HMXP 102 or HXCT301 with a grade of C- or better, or permission of the Chair."
WRIT367 Technical Editing	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "HMXP 102 or HXCT 301 as a pre or co-req, or permission of the Chair. Students must attain a grade of C- or better in these courses" to "HMXP 102 or HXCT301 with a grade of C- or better, or permission of the Chair."
WRIT465 Rhet in Prof Workplace	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "Sophomore status. CRTW 201 or HXCT301 are prerequisites or corequisites for all WRIT courses above 199. Students must attain a grade of C- or better in these courses" to "Sophomore status. CRTW 201 or HXCT301 with a grade of C- or better.
WRIT465H Rhet in Prof Workplace	Modify Course: Change prerequisite from "Junior status. CRTW 201 or HXCT301 are prerequisites or corequisites for all WRIT courses above 199. Students must attain a grade of C- or better in these courses" to "Sophomore status. CRTW 201 or HXCT301 with a grade of C- or better.

The following 7 course action items were approved at College Assembly Level and require no further action:

Course	Action
ARTH421 Saints &Bones in Medieval Art	Modify Course: Change title from Visual Culture of Medieval Pilgrimage (3). Update course description.
BIOL360 Peer Mentoring in Biology	Modify Course: Update course description.
NUTR226 Orientation to Dietetics	Modify Course: Change semesters offered from fall and spring to only fall.
NUTR227 Medical Terminology	Modify Course: Change semesters offered from fall, spring, and summer to fall and spring.
PETE248 Teaching Net/Wall &Target Gam	Modify Course: Change title from Teaching Net/Wall &Target Games (3:1:2). Update description.
SCWK443 Social Work Practicum Instr	Modify Course: Change title from Social Work Field Instruction. Update course description.
SCWK463 Social Work Practicum Seminar	Modify Course: Change title from Social Work Field Seminar (3).

Appendix B

GNED curriculum committee

Report to AC Fri 2025-10-03

Meeting held via Zoom on Fri 2025-09- 19, 2:00-3:30 pm

Motion: Approve the following courses for GNED inclusion.

Area	Course	Title	comments
HUMA	ARTH 554	Contemporary Art and Criticism	ARTH 454—former course number—already included
HUMA	WMST 330	Women and Literature	
INWR	ARTH 554	Contemporary Art and Criticism	ARTH 454—former course number—already included
ORAL	RELG 230	Preaching as Public Speaking	
PACT	MLSC 101	Introduction to the Army	
PACT	MLSC 102	Foundations of Leadership	
PACT	MLSC 201	Innovative Team Leadership	

PACT	MLSC 202	Army Doctrine and Decision Making	
PACT	PESH 109	Restorative Yoga	
PACT	PESH 145	Pickleball	
PACT	PESH 169	Intermediate Rock Climbing	

Provost van Delden joined the meeting and asked the Committee (instead of a task force) to explore the **GNED initiatives he outlined** in the opening FC meeting and report to AC/FC later in 2025-2026. Those are:

1. **Remove the "2 designators" rules**, including the "special character" restrictions

2. **Humanities and Arts** (6sh) → *Humanities* (3sh) + *Arts* (3sh)

3. **Quantitative and Natural Science** → *Quan* (3-4sh) + *NSCE/NSCL/NSCP* w/lab (4sh) + *Additional Quan or NSCx* (3-4sh)

4. Pursue **additional means of GNED simplification**, which might include a data-based suggestion to reduce the number of courses included in some categories.

Provost van Delden also asked if the Committee might consider **ways to market the existing/suggested GNED program**, perhaps as a themed package (see his example, *WU Flight Ready Core Curriculum,* in FC 2025-08-22).

The Committee **agreed to pursue these initiatives** to the extent possible within 2025-2026, and is currently exploring approaches.

TRANSFORMING ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND RETENTION THROUGH SHARED ADVISING
A Strategic Initiative for Winthrop University…

Implementation
(DRAFT WORKING DOCUMENT as of 09-24-2025)

Distribution of Freshman Advisees

The following table summarizes the approximate/projected caseload of each team member for Fall 2026. This is a fluid allocation as majors grow and contract in the future. The Executive Director is responsible for monitoring caseloads annually and carefully making adjustments if needed.

Team Member	Approximate Caseload in Fall 2026	Majors
OSS - New Executive Director	25-50	Advising load will start in Fall 2027. Possibilities: Small number of undeclared students, 1 or 2 specific majors, or a few students in each College.
OSS - Jessica Gladden (Director)	50-60	Undeclared majors – freshmen and sophomores.
CAS - Adria Belk (Director)	50-60	Individualized Studies, Integrated Marketing Communication, Mass Communication, Social Studies Education, Social Work
CAS - Sherri Wilson (Advisor)	160-170	Criminal Justice, English, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Religion, Sociology
CAS - New Advisor	130-150	Biology, Chemistry, Data Science, Environmental Sciences, Environmental Studies, Human Nutrition, Mathematics and future Health Sciences program
CESHS - Joanna Harris (Director)	70-80	Exercise Science and Sports Management
CESHS - Liz Moore (Advisor)	150-200	Human Development and Family Studies and Teacher Education (TED). TED students are advised by professional advisor until fully admitted to TED program – so, includes freshmen and sophomores
CBT - Jasmine Howze (Director)	50-70	Business Administration

CBT - Taya Andrews (Advisor)	125-150	Business Administration. Note: the unique new Aviation program will have a program director who is responsible for proactively advising these students along with the Flight School Assistant Chief Flight Instructor.
CBT - Agee LeMasters (Advisor)	125-150	All Computing majors, some Business Administration
CVPA - Anna Fredericks (Director)	80-90	Fine Arts and Music
CVPA - New Advisor	125-150	Design, Theatre, and Dance

2. Proactive Advising Strategy and Timeline

The following proactive advising strategy will be followed (approximately) by all colleges and programs for traditional high school students matriculating to Winthrop:

Summer   Freshmen are placed in schedules ahead of Orientations. During orientations, they meet their professional advisors and directors, are handed 4-year plans if applicable, participate in group advising and as needed answer individual questions, etc.

August   As needed virtual, in-person, and walk-in meetings leading up to the start of classes and through the add/drop. One touch-point with all advisees which could be an email, text, group welcome at New Student Assembles, etc.

September   All directors and professional advisors participate in Success Fest, and send a touch-base check-in email/text to all advisees. Virtual, in-person, and walk-in meetings as needed.

October   *Primary* month for "academic advising" planning next semester schedule. In-person meetings with all advisees required.

Nov/Dec   Answering emails, in-person or virtual meetings as needed for schedule follow-ups, overrides, SU discussions, change of major, help students in jeopardy, etc. NOTE: Transfer Orientation happens in November.

January   Welcome-Back email/text to all advisees in January. For students in between a 2.0 – 3.0 GPA, students who completed 12 or less hours, or other areas of concern for their major, or in the danger zone of losing scholarship or going on probation, tailor the message accordingly. NOTE: Transfer/Freshman Orientation in January which welcome new students to Winthrop.

February   Group session(s) by program/major cluster with available faculty to foster cohort relationships, talk about key resources, talk about career exploration and planning resources with CDI, undergraduate research opportunities, do some fun group activities, etc.

March   Primary month for "academic advising" planning next semester schedule. In-person meeting with all advisees required.

April/May   As needed, emails, in-person, or virtual meetings for SU discussions, change of schedule/major, etc. Encourage in-person or virtual meetings with all students in between a 2.0 – 3.0 GPA or students who completed 12 or less hours, i.e. in the danger zone of losing scholarship or going on probation? Happy-Summer email/text to all advisees.

August   Hand-off to Faculty Advisor unless undeclared, Teacher Ed, etc exceptional cases.

3. Additional Secondary Academic Support Programs

Additional "secondary" academic support programs are captured below, meaning student academic success efforts outside of this proposed new framework. In all cases below, these secondary advisors, mentors, faculty, and staff are able to make notes, send alerts, or document achievement, extracurricular activities, or concerns in the case management proactive advising system (TBD), which is accessible to and a key tool for Professional Advisors.

- **All Faculty and Staff:** All faculty and staff may assist with connecting academically vulnerable students to campus resources and providing academic coaching to help build skills needed for academic success. Referrals can be submitted for concerns regarding multiple absences (more than 3), consistent missed work, and/or lack of engagement.

- **Academic Success Center**: Students on probation will also meet with ASC staff for additional academic support. ASC staff also provide academic coaching, peer tutoring, coursework, and workshops for students to build skills for academic success. https://www.winthrop.edu/asc/

- **McNair Scholars**: McNair services help students increase their competitiveness for, apply to, and succeed in master's and doctoral programs. The program provides transformational research and graduate admissions supports and professional development opportunities throughout the junior and senior years. https://www.winthrop.edu/mcnair/

- **TRiO Achievers**: The TRiO Achievers program promotes academic excellence and gives members the tools necessary to get the most out of their undergraduate education to graduate and seek employment and/or attend graduate or professional school. First generation students, students with documented disabilities and other students who meet Federal financial guidelines are eligible to apply. https://www.winthrop.edu/trio/

- **LEAP**: The Learning Excellent Academic Practices (LEAP) Program is designed to assist students in making a successful transition from high school to college. The program provides academic guidance and support to a select group of freshman students at Winthrop University, including structured study halls and personal success coaching. https://www.winthrop.edu/leap/

- **International Center**: The International Center welcomes students from around the world to our campus in Rock Hill, South Carolina. It provides a wide range of services and programs to both new and continuing international student, including helping to answer questions related to obtaining an F-1 or J-1 student visa, traveling to the U.S. and maintaining legal student immigration status once you arrive. https://www.winthrop.edu/international/

- **Athletics Academic Services**: Athletic Academic Services within the Athletic Department are available to all student-athletes, regardless of scholarship status. While certain services may at times be mandated for certain student-athletes, all students-athletes are encouraged to discuss any academic concerns or problems with a member of the Academic Services staff. Athletic Academic services for student-athletes include, tutoring, study hall, and additional advising for course selection, relative to university and NCAA eligibility requirements, Confidential personal counseling or referral, and Assistance with career planning and choice of majors. https://winthropeagles.com/

- **Honors College**: Honors College students will have an Honors advisor to assist with the navigation of the various Honors program requirements, which include the selection of required community service engagements and culminating projects, as well as optional enrichment programs, mentorship, and other opportunities offered through the Honors College. https://www.winthrop.edu/honors/

- **Eagle STEM:** The Eagle STEM Scholars Program supports undergraduate biology, chemistry, mathematics, data science, environmental science, computer science, and cybersecurity students for matriculation into STEM Master's, Ph.D. programs, and professional careers. https://www.winthrop.edu/eaglestem

- **Teaching Fellows:** The mission of the South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is to recruit talented high school seniors into the teaching profession and to help Teaching Fellows develop leadership qualities. Teaching Fellows participate in advanced enrichment programs in Teaching Fellows Institutions, professional development opportunities during summer months, and involvement with communities and businesses throughout the state. https://www.winthrop.edu/ceshs/teachingfellows/

- **Call Me MISTER:** The purpose of the Call Me MISTER program at Winthrop University is to assist with the recruitment, training, and certification of students who are planning to teach in South Carolina's public schools. The program seeks to help build a group of educators by providing academic, social, and financial support to individuals interested in the field of education. This academic support includes a cohort system for social and cultural support and assistance with job placement. https://www.winthrop.edu/ceshs/callmemister

- **Close Scholars**: The Close Scholars Program supports and enables talented and committed students to develop the social consciousness and inner strength that comes from helping others, as well as a legacy with a rich yield to the greater community. Close Scholars gain leadership skills through participation in service and enrichment activities, the freedom and creativity to explore new service opportunities, and support from the program coordinator and other Close Scholars. https://www.winthrop.edu/student-affairs/close-scholars/

4. Tools and Resources (TBD)

All directors and professional advisors will use the following tools, and all programs will provide the following resources in a consistent format. Secondary academic support program staff and faculty will have accesso to these resources.

- **Proactive Advising Tool**: TBD

- **Degree Planning tool**: TBD

- **Course Rotations/Projections**: TBD

- **Pre-req flowcharts/maps**: TBD

5. Logistics (TBD)

TBD. Some open questions currently being considered include:

- *Can advisors be assigned to students earlier in the summer?*
- *What happens when a student switching majors/colleges in the first year? Do they switch professional advisors?*
- *When and how exactly do they transition to faculty advisor?*
- *Do we also assign faculty advisors or mentors to Freshmen? Will it create too much confusion? How do faculty differentiate freshmen mentees from sophomore/etc advisees? Is it better to have only professional advisor first then follow by a faculty advisor? With all the various advisors, is there is a way in the system to make obvious that the director or professional advisor is the "primary" advisor?*

6. Organizational Structure

This organizational structure within Academic Affairs ensures (1) communication and coordination across the university, (2) issues are being brought to leadership's attention in a unified voice with broad-based support, and (3) provides a potential pathway for career advancement for professional advisors. It also lends itself well to future phases, like hiring a health professions advisor or a College reorganization.

       Provost (Sebastian van Delden)
           Assistant Provost for Student Success (Leigh Poole)
               Executive Director of Student Advising and Success (TBD)
                    OSS Director of Advising and Academic Services (Jessica Gladden)
                    CAS Director of Advising and Academic Services (Adria Belk)
                        Professional Advisor (Sherri Wilson)
                        Professional Advisor (TBD)
                    CBT Director of Advising and Academic Services (Jasmine Howze)
                        Professional Advisor (Agee LeMasters)
                        Professional Advisor (Taya Andrews)
                    CESHS Director of Advising and Academic Services (Joanna Harris)
                        Professional Advisor (Liz Moore)
                    CVPA Director of Advising and Academic Services (Anna Fredericks)
                        Professional Advisor (TBD)
                    EXAMPLE FUTURE PHASE: Health-Professions Director

TRANSFORMING ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND RETENTION THROUGH SHARED ADVISING
A Strategic Initiative for Winthrop University…

Original Whitepaper

Executive Summary

Winthrop University stands at a critical juncture in advancing student success outcomes. With fall-to-fall retention rates fluctuating between 65% and 75% over the past two decades, the university has an opportunity to implement evidence-based practices that can substantially improve student persistence and graduation rates. This white paper presents the case for establishing a shared academic advising model that maintains the benefits of college-based proximity while leveraging the proven advantages of coordinated professional advising services.

Research from institutions nationwide demonstrates that universities implementing shared advising models—where both centralized coordination and college-based services work together—achieve retention rate increases of 3.5-7.6 percentage points and graduation rate improvements of 5.3 percentage points compared to purely decentralized models.

Current State and Opportunity

Winthrop University educates 4,216 students across four undergraduate colleges, with 36% eligible for Pell grants and significant diversity in student demographics. However, our current advising structure presents challenges that limit student success:

Retention Challenges: Currently, 27.2% of first-time, full-time freshmen and 50% of part-time freshmen do not persist to their second year, representing significant lost tuition revenue and unrealized student potential.

Academic Performance Gaps: Only 56.7% of full-time and 66.7% of part-time students successfully complete all courses in their first semester, indicating a need for more proactive academic support.

Advising Inconsistencies: Faculty advisors currently determine individually how students receive help, when, and how often, with no university-wide policies ensuring consistent quality or frequency of academic advising services.

The Evidence Base for Shared Advising Models

A comprehensive study analyzing academic advising structures at 260 U.S. undergraduate-serving research universities found compelling evidence for shared models:

- **Shared Model Performance**: Institutions with shared advising models achieved mean first-year retention rates of **88.9%** and six-year graduation rates of **78.6%**
- **Quantified Impact**: Moving from a decentralized to shared model results in a **3.5% increase in first-year retention** and **5.3% increase in six-year graduation rates**

Georgia State University demonstrates the potential impact of coordinated advising approaches:

- Increased six-year graduation rate by **23 percentage points** through comprehensive student success initiatives including their GPS Advising system
- **Eliminated achievement gaps** based on race, ethnicity, and income
- Reduced time to degree by nearly a full semester, **saving students $21 million annually**

Northern Arizona University successfully implemented a hybrid model like what Winthrop proposes:

- Maintained advisors' physical proximity to college faculty and students
- Shared reporting structure while preserving college connections
- Achieved **standardized load balancing** and improved resource allocation

Winthrop's Strategic Response: The Academic Success & Advising Initiative
Proposed Shared Model Structure

Executive Director of Academic Success and Advising: A new leadership position reporting to the Assistant Provost for Student Success, providing unified coordination and strategic direction while preserving college autonomy and expertise.

Shared Supervision with Embedded Service: Student Services Directors and Professional Advisors will maintain dual relationships—reporting to the Executive Director of Academic Success and Advising for professional development and standards while continuing their embedded service within college offices. The Executive Director will work collaboratively with deans and Student Services Directors to explore optimal role definitions and workload distribution, ensuring that essential non-advising functions currently performed by Student Services Directors continue to be supported effectively within the college structure.

Enhanced Professional Advising Capacity: Winthrop will work toward ensuring all first-year students have access to trained professional advisors who specialize in General Education requirements while working closely with college faculty and staff. Additional transfer peer mentors will provide enhanced support for transfer students' transition and success.

Initial Implementation Framework

Phase 1: First-Year Professional Advisor Focus (Fall 2026 Goal)

- All first-year students assigned to Professional Advisors embedded within their home college
- Some students may also have faculty assigned as secondary advisors where required by accreditation or departmental needs
- College of Business & Technology already implementing this model successfully
- College of Education, Sport & Human Sciences positioned to join implementation soon
- Specialized expertise in General Education navigation while maintaining college identity

Future Phases: Expanded Shared Model
- Subsequent expansion to second-year students and faculty mentoring for upper-level students will follow as resources and federal funding opportunities become available
- Timeline dependent on securing additional funding sources beyond initial university investment

Evidence from Winthrop's Early Success

The College of Business & Technology provides compelling local evidence for shared advising impact. After implementing professional advising for first-year students in Fall 2023:

Business Administration Major Retention:
- 2019-2022 average: 59.5% retained in major
- 2023 (shared model): **64.9% retained in major**
- **6+ percentage points above university average**

Computer Science Major Retention:
- 2019-2022 average: 39.1% retained in major
- 2023 (shared model): **43.6% retained in major**

University Retention Improvements:
- Business Administration: increased from 67.0% average to **74.8%**
- Computer Science: increased from 67.5% average to **74.4%**

Implementation Strategy and Timeline

Phase 1: Leadership and First-Year Focus (Fall 2025 - Fall 2026)

- Hire Executive Director of Academic Success and Advising and additional professional advisors
- Establish shared reporting relationships with Student Services Directors
- Conduct comprehensive assessment of current Student Services Director roles and responsibilities to ensure essential college functions are preserved
- Add transfer peer mentors to enhance support for transfer student success
- Achieve goal of all first-year students having Professional Advisors by Fall 2026
- Evaluate and potentially implement case management technology to support proactive student outreach
- Develop standardized policies and procedures in collaboration with college leadership

Future Phases: Dependent on Additional Funding
- Expansion to second-year students
- Comprehensive faculty mentor training and transition programs
- Full shared model implementation across all undergraduate years

Financial Impact and Sustainability

Revenue Generation Through Retention

- Each additional retained student generates approximately **$14,600 in annual tuition revenue**
- A 3.5% retention increase would retain approximately **82 additional students annually**
- Total additional revenue: **$1.2 million annually**
- This revenue stream can support ongoing costs of expanded professional advising staff

Cost-Effectiveness Evidence

Georgia State University's analysis showed their advising program **generates more revenue than it costs** by retaining students who would otherwise leave, while simultaneously improving student outcomes.

Alignment with Winthrop's Strategic Goals

This initiative directly supports multiple objectives from Winthrop's Strategic Plan:

Goal 1 - Academic Programs: Improve teaching effectiveness and streamline paths to graduation through enhanced advising coordination.
Goal 2 - Institutional Management: Cultivate a robust advising ecosystem focused on personalized guidance and support for student success.
Goal 3 - Fiscal Stability: Improve student retention and graduation rates while diversifying revenue sources through enhanced student success outcomes.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The evidence strongly supports implementing a shared advising model at Winthrop University. With documented success at peer institutions, strong theoretical foundations, and promising early results from our own College of Business & Technology, this initiative represents a strategic investment in student success that will:

- **Increase retention rates** by 3-7 percentage points
- **Improve graduation rates** and reduce time to degree
- **Generate sustainable revenue** through improved student persistence
- **Enhance student satisfaction** with advising services
- **Preserve college identity** while adding coordinated professional expertise

The recommended approach of hiring an Executive Director of Academic Success and Advising immediately, followed by systematic implementation focused initially on first-year students, positions Winthrop to achieve measurable improvements in student outcomes while maintaining the valued autonomy and expertise of our academic colleges.

The evidence suggests this is an opportune time to act. With retention rates fluctuating and student needs evolving, Winthrop is well-positioned to implement this evidence-based solution that respects our existing college strengths while enhancing student success outcomes.

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