



STAFF CONFERENCE

Annual Report

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



MISSION:

(As articulated in the bylaws of the Winthrop University Staff Assembly)

The mission of Staff Assembly is to provide a forum for communication that enhances the work environment and values the ideas of all staff. We are committed to representing the interest and concerns of Staff Conference to the president, administration, and other members of the university. We are dedicated to promoting staff involvement both on campus and in the community; providing opportunities that enrich staff experiences; and encouraging a positive campus climate of support and respect among peers. The Staff Assembly fosters the mission of the university and serves to continue to make Winthrop University the best place to work.



ABOUT Us

- **Staff Assembly** – 14 representatives elected from each division by eligible staff.
- **Staff Council** – six officer positions (chair, vice chair, secretary, historian, parliamentarian and treasurer) within Staff Assembly.
- **Staff Conference** – ALL staff as identified by Human Resources. ALL staff are invited to the monthly meetings.



Staff Assembly Representatives

April Hershey, Chair, Academic Affairs

Jayne Charles, Vice Chair, Finance and Business Affairs

Kara Cauthen, Secretary, Academic Affairs

Lydia Johnson, Treasurer, Finance and Business Affairs

Kirk McSwain, Historian, President's Office

Thomas Cornelius, Academic Affairs

Johnathan Brabson, Athletics

Claire Mooney-Melvin, Athletics

Jessica Martin, Student Affairs

Jill Simpson, Student Affairs

Chris Johnson, Finance and Business Affairs

Tanya Pettus, HR, Employee Diversity and Wellness

Brittany Neely, Institutional Advancement

Katie Gawronski, Access & Enrollment Management



FOCUS OF OUR WORK

We have compiled our **Sixth Staff Conference Annual Report** to summarize milestones and successful accomplishments for the year.

Over the past year, the focus has been:

- Streamlining the Staff Conference communications process;
- Better utilizing the allotted Staff Conference time to cover issues; and
- Promoting staff engagement and providing opportunities to increase staff participation.

These areas of focus support our mission and build upon our work.

We encourage you to read about all that we have achieved together-- as Winthrop staff!



2019-20 MILESTONES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- CCIC hosted a **Pet Food Drive** in December. They collected over 100lbs. of food and volunteers were **featured on CN2.**
- Over 65 staff attended the annual **Ice Cream Social** after our October Staff Conference meeting.
- Staff Conference partnered with the Campus Safety Committee to offer Active Aggressor Training to staff during **Campus Safety Week.**
- As a result of staff interest in helping actively recruit students to the university, Staff Assembly worked with University Marketing & Communications and Admissions to produce and distribute “**Uniquely Winthrop**” accordion cards with many answers to the question, “Why should students choose Winthrop?”
- Jackie Concodora was selected to serve as the University Ombudsman.
- Our **Annual Holiday Party** took a trip around the world this year with an international theme and lots of yummy cookies! **Attendance was higher this year** by about 15 staff.
- In March, Winthrop said goodbye to President Mahony and **welcomed Interim President George Hynd.**
- In March, Staff Conference **moved to an online format** to safely share information and keep staff engaged despite COVID-19 restrictions.
- In June, Staff Conference featured a **video conversation with Interim President Hynd** to address staff concerns about the COVID-19 response.
- The Annual Kick-Off Social was unfortunately cancelled due to COVID-19, but instead Staff Conference hosted a **Virtual Drop-In Social via Zoom.** Over 40 staff attended.
- Staff Conference addressed **32** staff questions this year!



Standing Committee Highlights

Campus and Community Involvement Committee

Elections & Nominations Committee

Media & Communications Committee

Professional Development Committee

Recognition Committee

Staff Feedback Committee



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Winthrop Plan 2.2: Increase opportunities for students, faculty, and **staff** to interact with organizations in the community, with an emphasis on enhancing our impact on the surrounding community.

PURPOSE: Established in October 2014, this committee coordinates social, volunteer, and other activities to provide staff with opportunities to interact outside of their normal job roles. The committee has coordinated opportunities for staff to get involved with Food Truck Fridays in downtown Rock Hill; food drives; Pink Out Day; cookie exchanges; and the City of Rock Hill's annual Come See Me festival.

CO-CHAIRS: Chris Johnson & Judy Longshaw

MEMBERS: Carol Adams, Thomas Cornelius, April Hershey, Judy Longshaw, Chris Johnson, Kelly Shelton, De Wells, Shayna Foxworth

WHAT WE DO:

- Look for innovative ways for staff to be involved in community and campus events.
- Increase the visibility of staff in the campus and surrounding community.
- Help improve employee morale.
- Benefit students and others in need.



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Hosted Winthrop staff, faculty, and students at the Staff Conference table at two Food Truck Friday events.
- Dec. 2019: Hosted the Annual Staff Holiday Party with an International Theme and Dessert Exchange
- Dec. 2019: Pet Food Drive (Over 100lbs. of food was collected and volunteers were featured on CN2).



ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS

Winthrop Plan 3.1: Develop innovative approaches for increasing the diversity of the candidate pools for all faculty and staff positions and for increasing our success in attracting, hiring, and retaining diverse employees.

PURPOSE: Established October 2014, the Elections & Nominations Committee solicits and establishes a slate of representatives and conducts a fair and impartial election in accordance with the Winthrop University Staff Assembly bylaws. The committee educates staff on Staff Conference, Staff Assembly, and the respective roles therein.

CHAIR: Amanda Stewart

MEMBERS: Jessica Martin & Katie Gawronski

WHAT WE DO:

- Solicit nominations and holds the elections for those respective positions.
- Spotlight committee work to encourage staff members to join.



ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- This particular year was marked by high turnover due to members leaving the university for other job opportunities and retirements. Some members also shifted to other campus departments, meaning they could no longer represent their current departments.
- Conducted two mid-year elections to fill open seats and aided in the selection of a staff member to serve on the Ombudsman Advisory Board.

July 2019-June 30, 2020 Elections for Staff Assembly

Mid-Year Elections

October 2019: Jayme Charles replaced Linda O'Connor (Finance & Business Affairs), who left the university.

January 2020: Jill Simpson replaced Megan Baggarly (Student Affairs), who left the university.



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(Continued) July 2019-June 30, 2020 Elections for Staff Assembly

Leadership Changes

April Hershey replaced **Linda O'Connor**, who left the university, as Staff Assembly Chair in September 2019.

Jayne Charles replaced **April Hershey** as Vice Chair in December 2019.

The Assembly transitioned to a 14-representative model with an additional at-large seat as a result of the Office of Communications and Marketing being absorbed into the President's Office.



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(Continued) July 2019 - June 30, 2020 Elections for Staff Assembly

New Staff Assembly representatives beginning July 1, 2020

Leah Simmonds, Academic Affairs

John Kroft, Academic Affairs

Shea Maple, Athletics

Debbie Casperson, Finance and Business Affairs

Debbie Garrick, University Advancement

Jessica Martin, Student Affairs (2nd term)

Holly Cook, President's Office



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

PURPOSE:

Established October 2014, the Media & Communications Committee provides a means of communication through a monthly newsletter and social media presence. The committee also encourages and highlights a campus climate of support and respect among peers by providing outlets for staff members to see and even interact with their colleagues' achievements and milestones.

CHAIR: Kara Cauthen

MEMBERS: Maria D'Agostino, Kelly McGinnis, Kat Wilson, Kaye Hayes, Jayme Charles, Shea Maple



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month during the academic year.
- Serve as a point of contact for other committees to present information to all staff.
- Provide information, suggest story ideas, and/or prep the monthly digital newsletter.
- Manage the staff Facebook group.
- Publish the Staff Stuff newsletter containing information about upcoming campus events for individuals and families, opportunities for involvement as a volunteer, perks and benefits available to staff members, updates about new employees, campus news, and personal and professional milestones.



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Published nine issues of the Staff Stuff Newsletter.
 - Featured around **180** staff members.
 - Included seasonal and themed sections most months.
- Grew the Facebook group to **102** members, up from 82 at the close of 2018-2019. More staff working from home is a major contributor to this growth.
- Currently **474** staff members subscribe to the Staff Stuff monthly mailing list. This number is down from 516 after removing staff members who no longer work at Winthrop. Requests for subscription instructions has significantly increased this year.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Winthrop Plan 3.1: Enhance professional development and training opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators that increase the potential of the university to reach the various goals in the strategic plan.

PURPOSE: Established October 2014, the Professional Development Committee initiates staff development opportunities. The group looks at a wide variety of interests among staff members and looks to bring training and informational sessions to staff.

CHAIR: Marcia Willis

MEMBERS: Brittany Neely, Brittany Pigford, Cassandra Wright, LeeAnn Pounds, Wes Love, Alicia Marstall, Johnathan Brabson, Megan Baggarly, Shayna Foxworth, Linda O'Connor, and Nicole Chisari

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet on the Tuesday of the second full week each month of the year.
- Identify and plan programs and trainings that would further staff development.
- Plan annual professional development conference for staff.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Winthrop Plan 3.1: Enhance professional development and training opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators that increase the potential of the university to reach the various goals in the strategic plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Partnered with **SCWHE** (South Carolina Women in Higher Education) to host a seminar on Women in the Workplace with guest speaker, Dr. Mattell Jones.
- Hosted **an effective communication event**.
- Hosted a **Stress Management seminar** with a **free Zumba class** in partnership with the West Center.
- Hosted a **Procurement Card Q&A** with Mike Cupp from the Procurement Office.
- Hosted an event on **Mindfulness in the Workplace** in partnership with the university's EAP.
- Conducted a survey to assess **virtual professional development opportunities**.



STAFF FEEDBACK

PURPOSE: Established in February 2018, the committee identifies questions and topics frequently received at Staff Conference after they have been addressed with the intent to following up, monitoring, or researching said questions/topics.

CHAIR: Tanya Pettus

MEMBERS: Kirk McSwain, Whitney Hough, Leah Simmonds, John Kroft



STAFF FEEDBACK

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet on an as-needed basis.
- Research topics and questions frequently submitted to Staff Conference to provide more fulsome answers.
- Follow up on the progress of certain topics and questions to show progress.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Added a page on the Staff Assembly website to publish more in-depth answers to staff questions.



RECOGNITION

PURPOSE: Established October 2014, this committee supports and enhances the work environment, values the ideas of all staff, and encourages a positive campus climate of support. The committee strives to help staff members feel appreciated and to help them know their work does not go unnoticed.

CHAIR: Miranda Knight

MEMBERS: Amanda Marshall, Jackie Concodora, Callie Smith, Patricia Riley, Michele Smith, De Wells, Kara Traverse, Claire Moony-Melvin, and Wes Love

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet monthly either in person or via email to vote on the month's Staff Member of the Month nominations and to discuss other recognition ideas.
- Vote on nominees based on the nomination and assign points for a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place.
- Choose Staff Member of the Year Award from a pool of that year's winners.
- Procure prizes for the Staff Member of the Month gift basket.



RECOGNITION

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **36 staff members were nominated** for Staff Member of the Month.
 - **5 Staff Member of the Month Winners:** Tracy Holbert, Amy Phillips, Charles Yearata, Starr Albert, Maria Arrington-Ferguson



LEADERSHIP Q & A

Staff submit questions via email on a monthly basis for President Mahony, Interim President Hynd, and/or leadership to address at Staff Conference. Staff submitted more than 40 questions on topics regarding:

- Four-day school week
- Minimum training periods for new systems
- MATS Office update
- Water bottle filling stations
- Return to Work plan
- Salary Compensation
- Study update
- Gym memberships
- Trash on campus
- Work from home policies
- University accomplishments on social media
- How to get a raise at Winthrop
- United Way Campaign
- Interim President priorities
- Summer incentives for faculty
- PTO vs. Annual & Sick Leave
- Building Pests
- West Center re-opening
- Potential Furloughs
- Holiday calendars
- Enrollment and retention
- Recycling
- Website updates



GUEST SPEAKERS & TOPICS:

- President Mahony and Vice President for Access and Enrollment Management Eduardo Prieto discussed **enrollment and retention at the Winthrop and nation-wide level. Prieto also spoke a different time on new initiatives.**
- New Dining Services manager Bryan Harriss **introduced himself and Sodexo, Winthrop's new Dining Services provider.**
- Chris Johnson, Sustainability Coordinator, **provided information related to recycling & reduction in waste efforts being made by the university.**
- Hank Harrawood, Associate Athletic Director, **talked about our Athletics programs, the Eagle Club, and updated us on some outstanding student athletes.**



GUEST SPEAKERS & TOPICS (CONT):

- Shayna Foxworth, Student & Young Alumni Coordinator & Evan Bohnen, VP for Advancement, spoke to staff conference about **how well changes made for Homecoming Events were received this past year and how others may be implemented in the future.**
- **Sodexo has some great nutritional options available for all** and thanks to Cristina Caro, the Regional Dietitian & Wellness Manager, we are all up to date on them.
- Callie Smith, new student and family programs coordinator, **provided information about Orientation for the new incoming students and how it would look different due to the COVID pandemic.**



LOOKING AHEAD

1. Increase staff awareness of and participation in Staff Conference and staff committees.

Possible initiatives may include:

- Spotlights on staff committees in Staff Conference meetings and Staff Staff newsletter
- Maintain records of staff committee membership and participation

2. Improve communication with staff.

Possible initiatives may include:

- Regular surveys about staff interests and concerns
- Continued active participation in Welcome to Winthrop tours and other new staff orientation events
- Promoting resources related to Return to Work and Return to Learn plans.
- Boosting staff morale and creating opportunities for virtual staff support.



LOOKING AHEAD

- New goals/focus
- **COVID responses**
 - **Digital meeting formats**
 - **Professional Development opportunities**
 - **Staff communication & engagement in a virtual environment**



Staff feel more connected than ever to the Winthrop Plan and see a clear path to helping the university achieve its ultimate goals.



We are **ALL members** of Staff Conference.

Thank you for your continued involvement, dedication, enthusiasm and support.

Over the past four years we have accomplished some amazing things together.

Let's continue to come together, work together and continue to help make Winthrop University the BEST place to work!