

Staff Stuff

Brrr...
IT'S CÖLD.



Winthrop held its combined December Commencement ceremonies on Dec. 19 at the Winthrop Coliseum. **Above: Gabby Jacobsen '25**, assistant to the dean of the School of Graduate, Continuing, and Online Education, earned an M.B.A.

Left: Kyle Conrad '20, '25, admissions counselor, earned his second Winthrop degree, a Master of Liberal Arts degree.

Not pictured: Cara Manning '25, program assistant in Records & Registration, earned her Bachelor of Professional Studies degree.

Spotlight on Staff Assembly: Maura Conway, data coordinator, CAS

Maura Conway, data coordinator for the College of Arts & Sciences, has taken on the role of Staff Conference Chair. Conway has served on Staff Assembly and is on both Staff Conference's Professional Development and Media & Communications committees.

Conway has worked for Winthrop since June of 2019. She was initially hired as a program assistant for Fine Arts and Design, but eventually moved into CAS. She is also an instructor of sociology, ACAD, and HXMP.

She holds a B.A. in sociology and history and an M.A. in sociology, both from Marshall University (Go Herd!, she said).

Conway loves to sing (anyone want to buy her some Gorillaz concert tickets this year?) and discuss books, history, and music



spanning most genres and eras. One of her most recent reads is *The Bog Wife* by Kay Chronister. Her favorite movies include *Amadeus*, *This is Spinal Tap*, and *Carnival of Souls*.

Born and raised in Huntington, West Virginia, she now resides in Tega Cay with her husband, daughter, and two cats.

You can reach Maura via email at conwaym@winthrop.edu.

Kudos to... Upcoming Author, Maria Linn!

*Maria Linn '94, director of institutional research, has sold publishing rights to her upcoming novel, **Serenity and the Soul in the Wall**. Publication is scheduled for 2028.*

Q: What was your inspiration for this book?

A: The book's setting was inspired by the home of my childhood best friend. Her parents ran an oceanfront motel in North Myrtle Beach and lived in a small apartment over the office. I spent many weekends in that unique, magical place. As for characters, the older sister in the book, like my own, is a Korean adoptee. My sister arrived when she was two years old, about a month before I was born. Growing up, she loved to tell people we were twins just to see their reaction. I never read a book with a family that looked like mine, so that was a core inspiration.

Q: How does it feel to have your work come to fruition?

A: I've been writing poetry since I was 10 years old, but prose used to intimidate me. I started writing novels 15 years ago. This is the second I've completed (currently drafting number six!) and it has had a LONG, winding journey from completion in 2019 to publication. The book deal still doesn't feel real



to me! It's simultaneously thrilling and terrifying to imagine strangers and people I know reading it...because they'll basically see the inside of my brain.

Q: Any advice for aspiring writers?

A: Writing can be hard, but it's so rewarding and empowering. It's how I process information, how I think, and it forces me to go through life being curious, observant, present, and empathetic. I honestly wish everyone had a regular writing practice. My advice — and something I'm constantly striving for — is to approach writing with an attitude of playfulness and joy rather than work and drudgery, and to focus on process over outcomes.

Staff Out and About



Members of Staff Conference's **Campus & Community Involvement Committee** (specifically this time, **Kelly Scott '90, Brittany Pigford '99, and Chris Johnson '99**) ventured to the York County Council on Aging to drop off donations from the pet food and supplies drive, held back in December. Thanks to everyone who donated! This is always a success every holiday season.

A reminder that the committee is also continuing to collect plastic bags to go toward Winthrop's **6th BENCH!**

Charlotte Symphony to Perform in Byrnes Auditorium



WHAT: Charlotte Symphony Orchestra live performance

WHEN: 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 17

COST: \$15 general admission; students free; children 0-18 FREE w/ the purchase of an adult ticket

Purchase tickets online now.
You can even pick your seat!

Tax Time Help

It's everyone's favorite time of year: tax time! Once again, **IRS VITA-certified volunteers** will be on campus to help the campus community file taxes for the 2025 season. This is a free service, and you do not need an appointment.

Volunteers will be in the campus center from 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on the following days:

- *Feb. 7, 14, 21, and 28
- *March 7 and 28
- *April 4 and 11

Transformative Learning

Do you enjoy gardening and beautifying campus, all in the name of service?

The **Office of Sustainability** has several opportunities coming up on campus, including a spring litter clean-up and an Earth Day clean-up.

Check out the opportunities and sign up via Eagle Impact.

New Hires

* **Katrina Cassier**, student success coordinator for dual enrollment, Enrollment Management & Marketing

* **Shamaya Felder**, generalist and training coordinator, Human Resources

* **Courtney Ferry**, assistant volleyball coach

* **Gordon Howard**, campus safety officer, Campus Police

* **Carrie Jimison**, RN, Center for Student Wellness

* **Dale Parker**, head men's soccer coach

* **Adam Watson**, police officer, Campus Police

HAVE AN AWESOME COWORKER? DO YOU KNOW A STAFF MEMBER WHO WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND? NOMINATE THEM FOR STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH!

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?



Did you know that, thanks to **Lydia Johnson '16**, the HR bulletin board is updated on a monthly basis with job postings, employee information, and much more? The bulletin board is located on the third floor of Tillman Hall, near the restrooms.

Keep a lookout in the Daily Digest because Johnson, the benefits program assistant in Human Resources, also posts often about the MYgroup monthly newsletter, TIAA financial webinars, and much more.

[You can view an example here.](#)