



WINTHROP UNIVERSITY



UNITED IN EXCELLENCE

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE
AUGUST 2026



ACADEMIC PROGRAM INNOVATION

PRIORITY: EDUCATE

PROJECT LEAD: SEBASTIAN VAN DELDEN

For advanced manufacturing engineering, Winthrop secured \$500,000 in extramural financial pledges to help start the program, which is reflective of community support for this initiative. Additionally, the curriculum and all courses have been fully built into the Coursedog course management system. Advanced manufacturing engineering is successfully on track to start the approval processes for a Fall 2027 launch. The new Bachelor of Health Sciences degree program was fully approved by our faculty, the Board of Trustees, and S.C. Commission on Higher Education. However, the bachelor's in aviation and business management did not gain FAA Part 141 approval in time for the targeted Fall 2026 launch date to enroll students. Once that final approval is obtained, the program will be set for a Fall 2027 launch.



OFFICE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

PRIORITY: EDUCATE, ENRICH

PROJECT LEAD: SEBASTIAN VAN DELDEN

Based on decades of research and reflecting national best practices, Winthrop sought to move to a centralized professional advising model which included coming up with a case load distribution, a proactive timeline and strategy, hiring three new team members, and reorganizing the existing team members into the new model. All of these goals were accomplished, and the new model will be followed starting in Fall 2026. While there are some final aspects of the new model to be fine-tuned, Winthrop will hopefully see similar retention improvements and student success that other universities achieve after moving in this direction. All aspects of this project were successful, thanks to the academic and administrative team tasked with this complex transition.



BRANDING AND MARKETING INITIATIVE

PRIORITY: EXCEL, EDUCATE

PROJECT LEAD: AMANDA JAMES

The university has successfully transitioned into the next phase of implementing the Winthrop brand, with continued momentum across campus. Efforts are now focused on expanding the brand into academic, advancement, and athletics communications while supporting admissions with high-priority marketing initiatives. As adoption continues to grow, we are prioritizing consistent execution, strategic media placement, and the development of new brand assets to ensure a cohesive experience for all audiences.



PRESIDENTIAL AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

PRIORITY: EXCEL, ENGAGE

PROJECT LEAD: AMANDA JAMES

The Presidential Student Ambassador Program is transitioning from planning to implementation as the inaugural cohort prepares for launch this fall. Key operational elements—including training, uniforms, scheduling, and support systems—are being finalized to ensure ambassadors are equipped to represent Winthrop at the highest level. This initiative will strengthen the visitor experience while creating meaningful leadership opportunities for students and supporting Winthrop's enrollment and engagement goals.



MODERNIZATION OF CAREER SERVICES

PRIORITY: ENRICH

PROJECT LEAD: SHELIA BURKHALTER

Winthrop advanced its comprehensive career development strategy from assessment to implementation, using the Career Ecosystem Analysis to establish Career Learning Outcomes and academic integration as initial priorities. Significant progress included mapping curricular and experiential opportunities for career integration, advancing institutional planning for Career Learning Outcomes, and advancing the new physical location of the Career Center from design and procurement phases into full on construction in July 2026.



ALUMNI SURVEY

PRIORITY: ENGAGE

PROJECT LEAD: KEVIN HUGHES

While the alumni survey initiative from FY 26 is still technically in progress, it will wrap up quickly. The intended timeline for this project was extended as the development of the survey content took considerably longer than originally anticipated and as described to Winthrop by our vendor partner. After working through final survey language over the summer, it is anticipated that the survey will be distributed to all alumni by the end of August. Following a one-month period of availability, the survey will close, and Winthrop will receive a full analysis of survey results by late September/early October.



CLUB SPORTS

PRIORITY: ENGAGE

PROJECT LEAD: CHUCK REY

Winthrop Athletics launched its Club Sports program under new director leadership in Mikaela Sites with a clear initiative: build a sustainable structure for club sports that grows enrollment, strengthens the student experience, and elevates Winthrop's regional and national visibility. The program delivered strong results closing the year with national Esports recognition, a new varsity-caliber club sport launch in Women's Flag Football, and a new community initiative in collaboration with Student Affairs to launch Inspire Soccer.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

PRIORITY: ENHANCE

PROJECT LEAD: BEVERLY GILLIAM

The Divisions of Human Resources and Academic Affairs collaborated to expand professional development opportunities and enhance employee engagement. Through the LinkedIn Learning platform, employees completed more than 1,100 courses and viewed over 5,400 instructional videos. Additionally, faculty participated in the CPE Virtual Academy, generating a total of 2,112 visits and 3,251 content views during the year. Approximately 112 employees also attended 14 Human Resources training sessions. The CampusWorks Organizational Effectiveness Assessment saw strong engagement, with 403 survey responses and 68 focus groups involving 320 employees. Finally, the Wellness Fairs, Welcome to Winthrop New Staff Orientation, and in-person New Hire Orientation all received highly positive feedback from participants.



CAMPUS SPACE OPTIMIZATION

PRIORITY: ENHANCE

PROJECT LEAD: KEVIN BUTLER

This initiative involved use of data to create and execute a plan of action to consolidate space use and to lease, repurpose or dispose of excess campus lands and buildings, updating the existing Campus Master Plan to support the desired outcomes of the strategic plan. The administration achieved some success by having a working session at the Board of Trustees annual retreat which allowed for the review of various options, discussion related to specific and general items, and overall direction that the board would like to see as the Campus Master Plan continues to evolve. Progress was made on disposal of some excess campus land and development of some high-value parcels.





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