

Leading Edge

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Retirement of Dean Jennie Rakestraw

After 44 years in education, Jennie Rakestraw, dean of the Richard W. Riley College of Education, will retire in December. Dr. Rakestraw started her career in education as an elementary teacher in her hometown of Gadsden, Alabama. After several years of teaching fourth graders, she attended the University of Alabama where she received her doctorate. She then joined the faculty at Georgia Southern University where she trained elementary teachers and later served 15 years as associate dean in the College of Education. Dr. Rakestraw assumed her position at Winthrop University in 2008.

In addition to her work as a teacher, teacher educator, and administrator, Dr. Rakestraw has been highly engaged in state and national initiatives. Currently, she serves on several boards related to education, including the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education; National Network for Educational Renewal; SC Center for Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement; and the Teacher Education Council of State Colleges and Universities. Over her career, she has worked diligently to improve teacher education and student learning, receiving almost \$29 million in grant funding, special initiatives, and fundraising to assist schools and teachers in both Georgia and South Carolina. Dr. Rakestraw has also been recognized with numerous awards such as the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's award for Exemplary Service to the Profession, Winthrop's Presidential Citation for Service to the University, as well as partnership awards like NNER's Michelli Award for Promoting Social Justice, the Clark Award for Exemplary Partner School Work, and TECSCU & TRG's Award for Exemplary Program for Clinical Practice.

Please join us in recognizing Dr. Rakestraw's many accomplishments and a very successful career!

Beth Costner (right), currently serving as the college's associate dean, will begin serving as interim dean in January 2022. For the remainder of the fall semester, Dr. Costner will continue to work closely with Dean Rakestraw to ensure a smooth transition to interim leadership.

Winthrop will be pursuing a national search for the next dean of the Richard W. Riley College of Education, whom we expect will start in July 2022.



COSMA Accreditation



We are happy to announce that our sport management program received reaffirmation of accreditation from the Commission of Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA). The period of accreditation extends for the next seven years. Dr. Jason Chung, director of our SPMA program, worked exceptionally hard on the self-study and site visit and navigated this process through many COVID-19 delays. Drs. Dan Drane and Lauren McCoy assisted throughout the accreditation process. Dean Jennie Rakestraw noted, "It was evident to me during the site visit that the accreditation team was particularly impressed with the caliber of our SPMA faculty and the quality and variety of experiences they provide students in the program." Please join us in congratulating Drs. Chung, McCoy, and Drane!

Leading the Way!

The Richard W. Riley College of Education at Winthrop University announced its 2021 Jessie Williams Little "Leading the Way" Award recipient this past April. The recipient is Allie Long, a fifth-grade teacher in the Greenville County School District.

The award is a partnership between John '02 and Jessie Williams Little '73 and the college's James and Susan Rex Institute for Educational Renewal and Partnership. It serves to recognize mentor teachers who offer crucial support and guidance to new and future educators.

As Bettie Parsons Barger, director of the Rex Institute, said: "Whether a teacher cadet instructor, a mentor to college students learning to teach for the first time, beginning teacher mentors, or those teacher mentors who just naturally support anyone who needs it - these are the positive role models on which we hang the hope of recruiting AND KEEPING the best and the brightest in education."

Long teaches at Ellen Woodside Elementary in the Greenville County School District and is a mentor to pre-service teacher candidates, beginning teachers, and veteran teachers. As part of the award, she received \$2,500 and a banner to display at her school.

According to Nathan Deese, assistant principal at Ellen Woodside Elementary, "One of Long's strengths as a teacher is relationship building. Whether with colleagues, students or parents, she works to support and engage them all in a positive way. Long shares this knowledge with those she mentors to allow them to be successful as well. She patiently guides and mentors each new teacher, whatever his or her needs may be."

For more information, including how to provide financial support to the "Leading the Way" initiative, please visit their webpage.



Student Spotlight

SHAPE America PE Major of the Year

SHAPE America—Society of Health and Physical Educators honored Stephen Berry of Winthrop University as a Major of the Year during the organization's 135th National Convention & Expo this past April. The award celebrates outstanding undergraduate students in the health, physical education, recreation and dance professions who are nominated by a faculty advisor or professor.

When asked about what it would mean to receive this award Stephen said: "Being recognized as the SHAPE America PE Major of the Year would be an incredible honor and encouragement for my pursuits in the field of health and physical education. When I began as a PE major three years ago, I knew that I would enjoy the major and that I would work hard, but I would have never expected to receive any sort of recognition for my academic efforts. As the semesters passed by, I continually grew in my understanding, conviction, and excitement for the field. I entered Winthrop interested in health and physical education, but I will be leaving as an advocate. SHAPE America played a critical role in helping me become an advocate for my field and excited to be a teacher. Likewise, I am incredibly flattered to even be considered for such an award and will be thankful for the opportunity for a long time."

Stephen's nomination came from Dr. Adam Keath, assistant professor of physical education, who explained why Stephen was deserving of this recognition: "Stephen has been a tremendous leader and advocate for physical education and helped to nurture a culture of caring in his student teaching placements. Working with Stephen is a great reminder of the joy of movement that is so important for kids to learn, and it's evident in his interactions with students that he has the character and drive to encourage students to enjoy physical activity for a lifetime."

Stephen graduated in spring 2021 with a B.S. in Physical Education.



Student Spotlight

President's Award for Academic Excellence

Winthrop University awarded four College of Education scholars the President's Award for Academic Excellence during May's Commencement ceremonies. The award is given to the student(s) with the highest GPA of their graduating class.

Allee Campbell '21 (exercise science) is from Spartanburg. She was a member of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority serving as Honor Council Chair and on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. She was the president of Order of Omega, Chief Student Marshal and on the Student Leadership Staff for the Office of New Student and Family Programs. This fall she is pursuing her master's degree in public health at the University of South Carolina.

Mary Gump '21 (special education) is from Bluffton. She was involved with the Teaching Fellows Program and was a First Year Experience Peer Mentor, Special Education Ambassador and a lead tutor and residential mentor for the Winthrop Think College Program. This fall she is teaching at Clinton High School.



Lauren Quesada '21 (special education) is from Bluffton. She was involved in the Teaching Fellows Program and served as a Student Marshal and Special Education Ambassador. She was a member of Phi Kappa Pi, the Council for Exceptional Children, the International Literacy Association and worked for Winthrop Think College. She teaches at Jefferson Elementary School in York.

Katrina Sides '21 (elementary education) is from Goose Creek. She was involved in the Teaching Fellows Program, was an Academic Success Center Peer Tutor, Winthrop Ambassador, member of the International Literacy Association and worked at Macfeat Laboratory School. She teaches third grade at Johnson Elementary School in Columbus, Georgia.

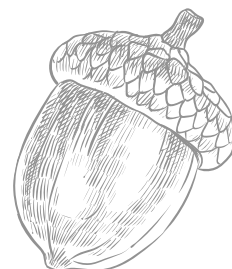
Staff Spotlight

Joshua Johnson



Joshua Johnson joined our College of Education staff this August as program coordinator of the Winthrop Think College. However, Joshua is not entirely new to our campus. He completed his undergraduate degree here at Winthrop University in special education, multiple & severe disabilities. During his time as an undergraduate, he worked as a peer mentor for the Winthrop Think College Program. Upon completing his undergraduate degree, Joshua has worked for multiple Inclusive Post-secondary Education (IPSE) programs across the nation in various roles. During his professional experience at the University of Northern Colorado, he spent his time working with students to find meaningful and competitive employment in the community and building statewide collaborations with universities and adult agencies to increase the accessibility of IPSE programs throughout the state.

Joshua spends his time on-campus continuing to support college students with disabilities in achieving their lifelong goals of independence, employment, and social integration through his work with the Winthrop Think College Program. One of the joys of his professional work is seeing students naturally included in on-campus activities and events.



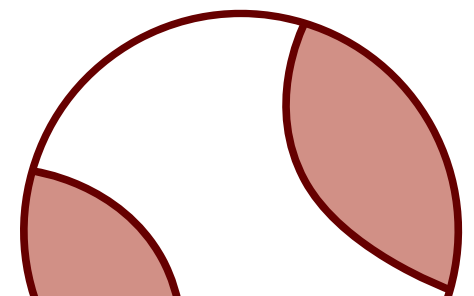
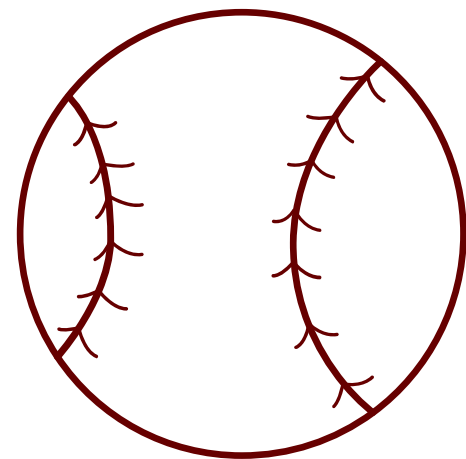
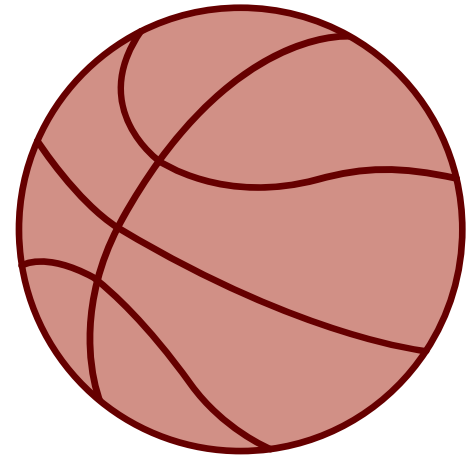
Program Spotlight

M.S. in Sport and Fitness Administration



The Master of Science in Sport and Fitness Administration (SPFA) degree program provides a path for students to translate their interests into a career focused on the business of sport or fitness. This business administration focus allows for career flexibility for program graduates. SPFA Program Director Lauren McCoy, J.D., noted, "Our graduates work in a variety of fields related to sport and fitness, including campus recreation, facility management, personal training, coaching, and physical education. As the sport and fitness industries continue to grow, the flexibility provided by our curriculum gives our students an advantage to either work towards a specific field or take time to find their niche in sport and fitness administration." The curriculum includes core courses in legal issues, facility management, and leadership along with other courses specific to each degree track.

Recently, the program underwent changes to provide the sport management track as a fully online degree through Wiley Online Learning. The goal for this change is to extend the availability of the program for sport management students while continuing access to exercise science laboratory facilities for fitness administration students. Access to online education is becoming increasingly important, especially for graduate programs and working professionals, but it is also necessary to continue the access to facilities for on-campus students who may be interested in pursuing a terminal degree with a research component.



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