

W.E.S.S. News

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Spring 2014

Special points of interest

- Community Service
- Alternative Spring Break (ASB)
- Scholars added to Presidents List

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From the Desk of Rachel Law, Director

The Eagle STEM Scholars Program promotes the success of students from groups that have been historically underrepresented in biomedical science, bioengineering, biochemistry, biology, chemistry and math. Winthrop currently has a diverse group of 42 Eagle STEM Scholars across the Fall 2013 (rising sophomore) to Fall 2011 (rising senior) cohorts. Through Spring 2014, the Fall 2011, Fall 2012, and Fall 2013 cohorts achieved group-average cumulative GPAs of 3.26, 3.44, and



Rachel Law

3.44 respectively. Twenty scholars were on the President's or Dean's List for Spring 2014 semester. In addition, approximately 19 Scholars are enrolled in Winthrop's Honors Program. During Summer 2014, thirty three scholars will be involved in undergraduate research: seventeen will participate in Winthrop's SURE Program; four were awarded Chemistry REU positions at the University of Notre Dame, one at St. Jude Children's Hospital, and one at the University of Tennessee. Six are WISE scholars, and six are McNair scholars, one of whom was both. Besides academics, scholars have contributed through service to the Winthrop campus and Rock Hill community.

Eagle Stem Scholars Get Involved in Community Service

The Eagle STEM Scholars Program is designed to develop a learning community for scholars. Besides academics, community service is an integral part of the program, helping a cohort to establish relationships with peers and the community. Community service gives students an opportunity to give back and feel a sense of accomplishment. This issue features Alternative Spring Break and last fall community service activities.

Michelle Corley, Julia Poppell, Leigha Stahl and Michala Tesney had the oppor-

tunity to give of their time and talents by volunteering at Second Harvest Food Bank. They worked together as a team preparing and packing boxes for shipment.

Sommer Barber and Rachel Taylor were excited about having the opportunity to volunteer at Horse "N" Around Therapeutic Riding Center. This organization enhances the overall well-being of children, teens, and adults through equine assisted therapeutic riding programs.

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My Alternative Spring Break to Harlan

by Leigha Stahl

I decided to travel to Harlan, Kentucky, for an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) with a small group of fellow Winthrop students. My ASB trip to Harlan, KY, and Norton, VA, was extremely rewarding. Besides learning about coal-mining repercussions, environmental impacts, Kentucky culture, and life in Harlan, we were able to plant trees, weatherize homes, and build trails. Now, I can officially say that I am a trail-blazer! Most of all, I learned that the coal-mining industry in Harlan and nearby counties is a blessing and a curse. While coal-mining provides the revenue for the town's inhabitants, it has grim environmental impacts that cannot be ignored. Also, now that coal-mining is experiencing a decline, people in the region are starting to suffer as the economy for coal plummets. Throughout our stay in Kentucky, we visited a mining museum, an old mine, dilapidated houses, and a swinging bridge.



On the environmental side, we hiked a mountain, witnessed the aftermath of mountain-top removal, and planted over 3,000 trees. While we experienced a few rough patches and bouts of bleakness for the region during our trip, the experience was worth it. By planting a multitude of trees and blazing a bike trail to boost tourism, we were able to make a lasting impact. Also, to help Harlan residents, we learned how to use caulking guns to insulate homes and reduce electric bills. However, one of my favorite activities was helping some of Harlan's forgotten residents: the dogs. Because the area is so poor and some people view pets differently from companions, there were a few dogs in Harlan that were not receiving the care and affection they needed. To help the animals of Harlan, we brought dogs hay for warmth, shelter and water; all the while, we gave them attention and love.

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An Alternative Spring Break

By Ashley Williams

One of the most anticipated breaks from school among college students is spring break. Spring break is typically associated with beaches, alcohol, and relaxation, and not so much with traveling with complete strangers, witnessing social injustices, and helping to bring hope to a community stricken with poverty and violence. However, this past spring break, I chose the latter, and to my surprise, it turned out to be the best spring break that I have ever had. Winthrop University's Alternative Spring Break program allows students the opportunity to reach out to communities beyond their own, to realize the fact that everyone has the potential to make an impact, and to see things from a different perspective. While many people find spring break to be an escape from the worries of Physics homework, studying Organic Chemistry, 10-page papers, and lab reports, Winthrop gives students the choice of also making one's spring break a personal journey through service learning. This can be defined as a method of encouraging student development through active participation in organized

service that is conducted in, and meets the needs of a community. During spring break, I traveled with 11 strangers from Winthrop University to Selma, Alabama, a town in which the rate of crime and violence is five times the national average and in which over 50 percent of the children come from poverty households. I gained more from this experience than I could ever hope to gain from spending my spring break on a beach.



The Alternative Spring Break trip to Selma, AL was presented to the student body as having a focus on civil rights and youth. However, instead of just learning about the history of the Civil Rights Movement as it occurred in Selma, AL decades ago, we learned from the point of arrival to the time that we departed, that the fight continues today. No one was prepared to learn that institutionalized segregation continues to occur in Selma and its surrounding counties. Upon learning of the social injustices continuing to take place in the very

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Corley, Logan, Manley, Ramirez and Stahl, Tesney, Williams Added to President's List for Spring 2014



Ashley Williams



Jessica Tesney



Olivia Manley



Michelle Corley



Jessica Logan



Leigha Stahl

Six Eagle STEM Scholars made the President's List at Winthrop University having achieved a 4.0 GPA for the Spring 2014 semester. Three sophomore students achieving this milestone were Jessica Logan, Olivia Manley and Ashley Williams. Three freshmen achieving this milestone were Michelle Corley, Leigh Stahl and Jessica Tesney. Jessica Logan is a chemistry major with a minor in math. She also plays soccer for the Winthrop Eagles women's team. Olivia Manley is also a chemistry major and is considering becoming a pharmacist. Ashley Williams is a chemistry major with a concentration in Biochemistry and is interested in becoming an anesthesiologist. Michelle Corley is a chemistry major with plans to work in an environment that involves working with animals. Leigha Stahl is a biology major and is interested in natural medicine, botany, genetics, nutrition, and biomedical research. Jessica Tesney is a chemistry major with a concentration in Business Administration and a minor in Biology. Her plan is to pursue a career in Radiology. We congratulate Corley, Logan, Manley, Stahl, Tesney and Williams on their outstanding academic accomplishments. ■

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town that the Civil Rights Movement was so deeply rooted, I became deeply aware of the impact that I and the 11 other representatives from Winthrop University could make. The Freedom Foundation and its volunteer workers who began the program in Selma that allowed colleges and universities to volunteer in the community and witness the issues that plague Selma found our diverse group to be a positive impact on the community just by our being there. Winthrop's focus on diversity is what made our group of students stand out, and is what allowed us to bond even more with the people in the community as well as with each other while on the trip. While there is a lot of pain and hopelessness in Selma, AL, being able to go to the elementary schools and interact with the students, meet the students who join together despite their differences to dance in the program called RatCo, and be welcomed warmly into strangers' lives and households, showed that there can be hope and love in the community as well.

While my spring break in Selma, AL, was composed of learning about the history of the Civil Rights Movement in Selma and Montgomery, meeting a strong black woman who participated in Bloody Sunday nearly 50 years ago as an effort to gain voting rights during the movement, hearing of all-white private schools and country clubs that still exist today, and a community stricken with violence and suffering, it was also composed of experiencing new things with new people, creating lasting memories, learning dances, and singing karaoke with people I did not know in front of complete strangers, and tons of laughter. Because of Winthrop University's ASB program, I was fortunate enough to be able to go on an Alternative Spring Break trip to service the community of Selma, AL, through helping elementary students to read, aiding in the construction of a building for an after-school program, and painting the curb of a community college, as well as learn more about myself. My Alternative Spring Break trip was an experience of a lifetime, and I would encourage others to get out and service communities other than their own as well.

COMMUNITY ... Continued from front

Kierra Montgomery, Alex Pinnix and Mikala Smith gave their time and energy to Winthrop's Homecoming Tailgate Recycling Project. One objective of this project was to reduce the number of recyclables being thrown away.



Camerun Washington and Shiannea Gathers participated in a project at Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church helping them get ready for their annual merchandise sale. The funds from this sale were used to help families during the holidays. Camerun said his experience volunteering with Oakland Avenue Presbyterian Church was a great opportunity to understand the purpose of volunteering.



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I am so thankful that I had the opportunity to spend a week with some truly amazing people and create lasting memories. Overall, I gained a greater appreciation for the small things in my life that I take for granted. What people in Rock Hill may consider everyday occurrences or normal life is entirely different from Harlan life. This

trip made me realize that my blessings are overflowing. My hope is that I was able to spread some love and create a lasting and positive impact on the Harlan community and environment.

Eagle STEM Scholars Program

101 Sims Science Building
Rock Hill, SC 29733

Phone: 803/323-4932
Fax: 803/323-2246
E-mail: eaglestem@winthrop.edu

The Eagle STEM Scholars Program was formed as a result of the INBRE II diversity initiative to effectively matriculate more students from diverse groups into biomedical science Ph.D. programs. Winthrop, because of its diverse population of students, is uniquely poised to increase the number of under-represented minority, low income and first generation undergraduates in South Carolina who matriculate into Ph.D. biomedical science, bioengineering, biochemistry, biology and chemistry programs. It is taking steps to move over the next two decades towards national leadership in this area.

We're on the Web
eaglestem.winthrop.edu