

**Winthrop University**  
**Staff Conference Meeting Minutes**  
**February 19, 2019**  
**Dina's Place**

Staff Assembly Present: Nicole Chisari, Julia Fockler, Kelly McGinnis, Alicia Marstall, Kara Cauthen, Thomas Cornelius, Cheryl Gomez, Lydia Johnson, Linda O'Connor

Absent: Johnathan Brabson, Jessica Martin, April Hershey, Wes Love, Brittany Neely, Kirk McSwain

Staff in attendance: Approximately 50

Meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m. by Nicole Chisari, Chair

This meeting was a Special Edition for the topic of Under-Grad Enrollment. Since a large number of questions had been submitted regarding this issue, Staff Assembly decided we should have a meeting discussing this topic.

All the information presented today, will be on the website later this week. In addition, if you have a question and it is not answered here, the answer will appear on the website. The meeting will conclude in our allotted time, if we are close to answering all the questions at 3 p.m., we may continue. If questions remain, they will be posted on the website.

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The floor was opened for questions, Eduardo Prieto thanked everyone for coming today.

Question was asked about interacting with students, do we still use regular mailings or are items electronically sent out?

Eduardo stated that some folks believe that print is not in vogue anymore. Most research states that the printed material is more for the parents. We use a multi-channel approach with emails/phone calls and printed material. The admitted student reception is another way we reach out to incoming students and the amount of those held has doubled. It is hard to get into the high schools now, since so many colleges and universities are trying to get in. We were one of the first universities to use text messages. We also notify students of upcoming events.

President Mahony stated that his son received a little bit of everything from schools where he applied. His children use his email, so he gets all the correspondence. Each student is different as to their needs and always one on one is the most effective.

Eduardo added that we have increased communication with parents in the past few years. We also try to track everything that happens. Research shows that females read emails more than males. So shorter messages are sent to the males to get them engaged. The last three years have shown that 20% of our students first become known to admissions when they actually apply. Some students do not want to receive any mail until applying to Winthrop.

How are we dealing with retention issues and what does admissions due to assist with this? Eduardo stated he was attending a meeting after this one to discuss this issue with the Enrollment Retention Committee. They are doing a better job and attempt to get all the information from different areas on campus to get the reasons for students leaving. If it is a financial reason, we try to get the student to

Financial Aid for help. Some items are in the works, so he cannot speak of those items yet. Will update us as more information becomes available.

The President stated that when a student loses their scholarship it has a big impact on the schools.

Eduardo added that we have a lot of work to do over the next few months. We are up about 1,000 applications and have approximately 700 new students so far. May 1<sup>st</sup> is the normal deadline for recruiting new students, but Winthrop will continue to recruit all year. We do have students that leave after the first week of classes.

He believes that the Winthrop staff does a great job of treating our students as customers. He believes this is important, as we should provide great customer service. He had an example of a cafeteria worker who knew the first names of students and would greet them every day. This helps to build relationships with the students. We live in a customer-oriented market now and if they are not pleased with the service, everyone will know.

Five years ago, 55% of students who graduate from college only attended one school. Now the percentage has dropped to 40%. This shows students are transient and they are looking around at other schools even though attending another one.

The President added that even though his son is currently attending college, he is still receiving emails from other institutions.

The President also provided information, as to why we hire consultants to do research for us. If we have a committee do the work, the consultants do, it would take much longer and no one has the kind of time that the consultants put into the work. The research that EAB provided looked at 200 measurable factors and they took the time to look at all the information. Consultants are hired by the university on a case-by-case situation and value. It is not that we do not have talented people; it is just that no one has the time to do this work.

Nicole thanked Eduardo and the President for attending today and letting us present this information. She also added that we need to be positive and speak positively about Winthrop so others see us favorably. Be positive and do not dwell on problems.

Next Staff Conference will be at Dina's Place on Tuesday, March 19 at 2 p.m.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 p.m.