



STAFF CONFERENCE

Annual Report

July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021



MISSION

(As articulated in the bylaws of the Winthrop University Staff Assembly)

The mission of Staff Assembly is to provide a forum for communication that enhances the work environment and values the ideas of all staff. We are committed to representing the interest and concerns of Staff Conference to the president, administration, and other members of the university. We are dedicated to promoting staff involvement both on campus and in the community; providing opportunities that enrich staff experiences; and encouraging a positive campus climate of support and respect among peers. The Staff Assembly fosters the mission of the university and serves to continue to make Winthrop University the best place to work.



ABOUT Us

- **Staff Assembly** – 14 representatives elected from each division by eligible staff.
- **Staff Council** – six officer positions (chair, vice chair, secretary, historian, parliamentarian and treasurer) within Staff Assembly.
- **Staff Conference** – ALL staff as identified by Human Resources. ALL staff are invited to the monthly meetings.



Staff Assembly Representatives

Jayne Charles, Chair, Finance and Business

John Kroft, Vice Chair, Academic Affairs

Katie Gawronski, Secretary, Access & Enrollment Management

Leah Simmonds, Treasurer, Academic Affairs

Holly Cook, Historian, Office of the President

April Hershey, Parliamentarian, Academic Affairs

Claire Mooney-Melvin, Athletics

Jessica Martin, Student Affairs

Katie Fowler Roach, Student Affairs

Chris Johnson, Finance and Business Affairs

Tanya Pettus, HR, Employee Diversity and Wellness

Debbie Casperson, Finance and Business

Shea Maple, Athletics

Debbie Garrick, University Advancement



FOCUS OF OUR WORK

We have compiled our **Seventh Staff Conference Annual Report** to summarize milestones and successful accomplishments for the year.

Over the past year, the focus has been to:

- Increase staff awareness of and participation in Staff Conference and staff committees
- Improve communication with staff

These areas of focus support our mission and build upon our work.

We encourage you to read about all that we have achieved together-- as Winthrop staff!



2020-21 MILESTONES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In place of our July meeting, we hosted a **Zoom social** where staff caught up with each other and chatted with President Hynd.
- We highlighted three of our staff committees in **Staff Committee Spotlight**.
- In our quarterly reports to the Board of Trustees, Staff Assembly started asking for support and sharing specific opportunities for involvement.
- Staff Assembly approved to contribute \$450 to purchase and retrofit a campus water fountain with a **water bottle filler**.
- Over 60 staff participated in the **Fall Staff Survey** which shaped annual goals for Staff Conference and staff committees.
- We celebrated the winners of the First Lady's Faculty/Staff **Pumpkin Carving Contest**.
- CCIC conducted a survey to gauge staff interest in a variety of causes to identify opportunities for next year's community service initiatives.
- The Spring Staff Survey had an incredible response of **over 265 comments**. These answers will guide activities in the summer and fall.
- Nominating a Staff Member of the Month became easier as the Recognition Committee redesigned their nomination form.
- **47 staff** participated in the **Professional Development Summer Conference** and heard from five wonderful presenters.
- CCIC collected **over 250 lbs.** of food during their spring food drive and **nearly 6,000 lbs.** of gently used clothing items during the MovingOnOut drive.
- Amy Phillips was awarded **Staff Member of the Year** at the annual Faculty/Staff/Retiree Ceremony.
- The Media & Communications Committee recognized six staff members who graduated this May.
- Staff Assembly welcomed **four new representatives** who will begin their terms in July.



Standing Committee Highlights

Campus and Community Involvement Committee

Elections & Nominations Committee

Media & Communications Committee

Professional Development Committee

Recognition Committee

Staff Feedback Committee



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Winthrop Plan 2.2: Increase opportunities for students, faculty, and **staff** to interact with organizations in the community, with an emphasis on enhancing our impact on the surrounding community.

PURPOSE: Established in October 2014, this committee coordinates social, volunteer, and other activities to provide staff with opportunities to interact outside of their normal job roles. The committee has coordinated opportunities for staff to get involved with Food Truck Fridays in downtown Rock Hill; food drives; Pink Out Day; cookie exchanges; and the City of Rock Hill's annual Come See Me festival.

CO-CHAIRS: Chris Johnson & Judy Longshaw

MEMBERS: April Hersey, Thomas Cornelius, Kelly Scott, Debbie Casperson, Dee Wells

WHAT WE DO:

- Look for innovative ways for staff to be involved in community and campus events.
- Increase the visibility of staff in the campus and surrounding community.
- Help improve employee morale.
- Benefit students and others in need.



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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GOALS:

1. Improve communications with fellow staff members
 - A. Post Daily Digest messages
 - B. Conduct a Welcome to Winthrop session for new employees
 - C. Recruit more committee members
2. Provide meaningful service opportunities
 - A. Survey staff members to see what they are already doing
 - B. Conduct the annual holiday pet food drive for senior citizens – distributed by York County Council’s Meals on Wheels program
 - C. Conduct a food drive with faculty/staff/students and donate the items to the human nutrition department. Explore a community refrigerator option
 - D. Participate in Food Truck Friday (this is doubtful)
 - E. Work on landscaping at the community garden by District Three Stadium or at the themed gardens in Campus Green
3. Build community
 - A. Coordinate the staff assembly’s holiday party
 - B. Explore options for local education and advocacy efforts to fight poverty, for instance CROPWalk or collecting clothing items for local agencies
 - C. Create a Volunteer of the Year Award to recognize exceptional contributions



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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Picked up food items placed in bins around the campus from Oct. 19 to Nov. 20. The food helped stock the food pantry in the Department of Human Nutrition in time for the holidays.
- Coordinated volunteers on Dec. 12 who came out on a Saturday for a campus litter cleanup. The group, including Interim President George Hynd and his wife, Alison, collected 17.5 bags of litter in two hours.
- Collected 174 pounds of pet food from faculty, staff and students in December. The food was taken to the York County Council on Aging where their staff distributed it to seniors as part of the Meals on Wheels program.
- Conducted staff survey to see how many people on campus volunteer and to assess what their interests are in future projects.
- Worked on Saturday, Feb. 20 and Saturday, March 20, to conduct winter maintenance of the themed gardens around the Campus Green.



CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS (continued):

- Held litter pick up on Saturday, March 20, and Saturday, April 17. The total number of bags of litter gathered both days was 32.
- Placed green ribbons around campus trees in April to commemorate Mental Health Week. This was in addition to other areas sharing resource and educational information.
- Held a MovingOnOut donation collection and food drive from April 19-May 10. We collected nearly 6,000 pounds of gently used clothing and household items donated to Tender Hearts. We also collected 250 +/- pounds of food that was donated to Human Nutrition's Food Box, a food pantry located in Dalton Hall that serves the Winthrop community. The committee partnered with Oakland Baptist Church and the Student Alumni Council on the collections.



ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS

Winthrop Plan 3.1: Develop innovative approaches for increasing the diversity of the candidate pools for all faculty and staff positions and for increasing our success in attracting, hiring, and retaining diverse employees.

PURPOSE: Established October 2014, the Elections & Nominations Committee solicits and establishes a slate of representatives and conducts a fair and impartial election in accordance with the Winthrop University Staff Assembly bylaws. The committee educates staff on Staff Conference, Staff Assembly, and the respective roles therein.

CHAIR: Amanda Stewart

MEMBERS: Jessica Martin & Katie Gawronski

WHAT WE DO:

- Solicit nominations and holds the elections for those respective positions.
- Spotlight committee work to encourage staff members to join.



ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- This particular year was marked by high turnover due to members leaving the university for other job opportunities and retirements. Some members also shifted to other campus departments, meaning they could no longer represent their current departments.
- Conducted a mid-year elections to fill an open seat.
- We were able to fill vacated seats throughout the year despite challenges of being remote during those times and also to run normal elections this spring via our usual protocols.

July 2020-June 30, 2021 Elections for Staff Assembly

Mid-Year Election

January 2021: Katie Roach Fowler replaced Jill Simpson (Student Affairs), who left the university.

Primary Goal:

We are hoping to do some additional training with Qualtrics since Amanda Stewart is currently the only one on this committee well-versed in its use for ballots. We also want to step up year-round marketing to help ensure multiple nominees for open seats (which has been a challenge).



ELECTIONS & NOMINATIONS

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(Continued) July 2019 - June 30, 2020 Elections for Staff Assembly

New Staff Assembly representatives beginning July 1, 2021

Amanda Cavin, Academic Affairs

Katie Roach Fowler, Student Affairs (2nd term)

Craig Gero, Access & Enrollment

Kelley Kish, Athletics

Marcia Willis, President's Office



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

PURPOSE:

Established October 2014, the Media & Communications Committee provides a means of communication through a monthly newsletter and social media presence. The committee also encourages and highlights a campus climate of support and respect among peers by providing outlets for staff members to see and even interact with their colleagues' achievements and milestones.

CHAIR: Kara Cauthen

MEMBERS: Jayme Charles, Maria D'Agostino, Kaye Hayes, Shea Maple, and Kat Wilson



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month during the academic year.
- Serve as a point of contact for other committees to present information to all staff.
- Provide information, suggest story ideas, and/or prep the monthly digital newsletter.
- Manage the staff Facebook group.
- Publish the Staff Stuff newsletter containing information about upcoming campus events for individuals and families, opportunities for involvement as a volunteer, perks and benefits available to staff members, updates about new employees, campus news, and personal and professional milestones.



MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Published nine issues of the Staff Stuff Newsletter.
 - Featured around **130** staff members.
 - Included seasonal and themed sections most months.
- Grew the Facebook group to **122** members, up from 102 at the close of 2019-2020.
 - Approximately 90% have been active in the group in the last month.
- Currently **452** staff members subscribe to the Staff Stuff monthly mailing list. This number is down from 474 after removing staff members who no longer work at Winthrop. In addition, there were very few new requests for subscription instructions this year, likely due to the hiring freeze.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Winthrop Plan 3.1: Enhance professional development and training opportunities for faculty, staff, and administrators that increase the potential of the university to reach the various goals in the strategic plan.

PURPOSE: Established October 2014, the Professional Development Committee initiates staff development opportunities. The group looks at a wide variety of interests among staff members and looks to bring training and informational sessions to staff.

CHAIR: Marcia Willis

MEMBERS: Brittany Pigford, Brittany Neely, Cassandra Wright, Nicole Chisari, Shayna Foxworth, Claire Weikle, Suzie Therrell, Holly Cook, Wes Love

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet on the Tuesday of the second full week each month of the year.
- Identify and plan programs and trainings that would further staff development.
- Plan annual professional development conference for staff.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In November, 2020 we offered a virtual Holiday Stress program
- In March, 2021 we offered a virtual Photoshop class
- In April, 2021 we offered a virtual Excel class
- In May, 2021 we had an in-person and virtual Summer Conference



STAFF FEEDBACK

PURPOSE: Established in February 2018, the committee identifies questions and topics frequently received at Staff Conference after they have been addressed with the intent to following up, monitoring, or researching said questions/topics.

CHAIR: Tanya Pettus

MEMBERS: Leah Simmonds, John Kroft, Nancy White, Debbie Garrick, Katie Roach Fowler



STAFF FEEDBACK

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet on a bi-weekly basis.
- Research topics and questions frequently submitted to Staff Conference and concerns mentioned in the Staff Satisfaction Survey to provide more fulsome answers.
- Follow up on the progress of certain topics and questions to show progress.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Added a page on the Staff Assembly website to publish more in-depth answers to staff questions.
- Published Staff Satisfaction Survey results.



RECOGNITION

PURPOSE: Established October 2014, this committee supports and enhances the work environment, values the ideas of all staff, and encourages a positive campus climate of support. The committee strives to help staff members feel appreciated and to help them know their work does not go unnoticed.

CO-CHAIRS: Michael Szeman & Kara Traverse

MEMBERS: Joanna Harris, Miranda Knight, Wesley Love, Claire Mooney-Melvin, Callie Smith, De Wells

WHAT WE DO:

- Meet monthly either in person or via email to vote on the month's Staff Member of the Month nominations and to discuss other recognition ideas.
- Vote on nominees based on the nomination and assign points for a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place.
- Choose Staff Member of the Year Award from a pool of that year's winners.
- Procure prizes for the Staff Member of the Month gift basket.
- Send new employees welcome cards/packets



RECOGNITION

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **6 staff members won Staff Member of the Month:** Anna Fredericks, Elizabeth Moore, Amy Phillips, Jeff Lahr, Jamie Ray, Telisa Simon
- **1 Staff Member of the Year:** Amy Phillips



LEADERSHIP Q & A

Staff submit questions via email on a monthly basis for Interim President Hynd and/or university leadership to address at Staff Conference. Staff submitted more than 40 questions on topics regarding:

- Change hours of operation
- Water bottle filling stations
- Return to Work plan
- Salary Compensation Study update
- Non-monetary incentives/morale boosters
- Trash on campus
- Remote Work/Telecommute Policy
- Merit raises
- Interim President salary increase
- Summer incentives for faculty
- Furloughs
- Enrollment and retention
- MFA login
- COVID vaccine
- New parking signs & fees
- Use of Space in Athletics areas
- University Budgeting
- EEAP policy/benefit/tax
- Renaming Tillman Hall
- BoT meeting availability to WU Community



GUEST SPEAKERS & TOPICS:

AUGUST The **Diversity Council** introduced the upcoming Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Workshops.

SEPTEMBER **Maria Arrington-Ferguson from IT** offered tips on how to set an out of office message when employees are on furlough.

OCTOBER The **Alumni Office** shared information about the changes to this year's Homecoming celebrations and promoted their Halloween Happenings event.

NOVEMBER **Admissions** and the **Graduate School** teamed up to share insights into admission rates and how the admissions process has changed in light of the pandemic.

DECEMBER **Recreational Services** and the department of **Human Nutrition** collaborated to help staff have a healthy holiday with fitness tips, recipes, and a cooking demonstration video.



GUEST SPEAKERS & TOPICS:

JANUARY Jackie Concodora shared some much-requested information about the **Ombuds Office** and how it can support staff.

FEBRUARY Jessica Brown from **Health Services** updated staff on the COVID-19 vaccine as the State moved to Phase 1b of the vaccination plan.

MARCH The **Elections & Nominations Committee** inspired staff to get involved by serving as a Staff Assembly Representative.

APRIL The **Graduate School's** April Hershey offered insight into the Employee Educational Assistance Program (EEAP).

MAY **Amanda Stewart** presented an update on the Affinity Groups on campus.

JUNE **Staff Assembly** presented the Staff Conference Annual Report.



Staff feel more connected than ever to the Winthrop Plan and see a clear path to helping the university achieve its ultimate goals.



We are **ALL members** of Staff Conference.

Thank you for your continued involvement, dedication, enthusiasm and support.

Over the past four years we have accomplished some amazing things together.

Let's continue to come together, work together and continue to help make Winthrop University the BEST place to work!