



**Palestinian Liberation**  
Jeremiah Williams

**Reflections**  
Jeremiah Williams

**Winthrop's shifting values**  
Raquel Simon

November 2023

Est. 1986

**THE RMR**

RODDEY MCMILLAN RECORD



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# THE INSPIRATION

Rev. Cynthia Plair-Roddey, a 1967 Winthrop graduate, is a trailblazer for change. She was the first Black student to enroll at Winthrop 10 years after the Supreme Court ended segregation in public schools with their *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Nine of her friends attended Winthrop alongside her. She was accepted to Winthrop College in the summer of 1964, where she earned a Master of Arts in teaching library science after having graduated from John C. Smith—an HBCU—with two bachelor’s degrees.



The Roddey McMillan Record (RMR) is named after both Roddey and Sheila McMillan, which is one of the many honors that the publication has received since its inception. McMillan was the first Black person to sit on the Board of Trustees in 1983. Before coming to Winthrop, she was one of the first Black students to integrate into the University of North Carolina and the first Black Senate attorney with the South Carolina Legislature after she earned her doctorates in law from the University of South Carolina. Both of the magazine’s namesakes have broken glass ceilings for Black women across the country. When the RMR was created by Gail Harris in 1986, she was inspired by these women to establish a safe space for minority students.

The purpose of the RMR is

“shine a light on the diverse cultures at Winthrop, focusing on the concerns facing the multicultural community on campus.”

# Winthrop Freshman Enrollment Up 22%

## What the numbers really mean for the University



The Winthrop board of trustees met in Carroll Hall on September 28. Though it was a public meeting, the meeting space was small, holding the board and two student journalists.

### Ravyn Rhodes | Editor in Chief

**F**reshman enrollment at Winthrop University increased to 867 from 709 this time last year, an increase of 22% overall.

Similarly, transfer student enrollment increased from 230 in 2022 to 268 in 2023, an overall increase of 17%.

The numbers were revealed during an unofficial enrollment report to the board of trustees in September. There were other positive results discussed at the meeting as well related to the goals of the university to increase enrollment and retention.

Joseph Miller, vice president for the Enrollment Management and Marketing Division, delivered the numbers during the meeting.

“Where we’re positioned right now is...a 90% return of undergraduate degree seeking students who were eligible to return to Winthrop from the spring semester,” Miller said.

Freshman and transfer student retention rates were at 73% and 17% respectively, indicating what the board called the best retention rates since fall of 2017.

Application numbers also increased 51% higher than last year, up to 536 completed applications.

Notably, board chairman Glenn McCall was not immediately impressed with the statistics, instead bringing attention to other less favorable parts of the report.

He also seemed to dispute the validity of the statistics reported on by fellow board members.

While the freshman enrollment numbers increased overall, graduate enrollment staggered, and the total number of degree seeking students fell from 4262 to 4216.

Total enrollment was also down from 4704 to 4685.

McCall’s main concern seemed to be how the numbers would be interpreted by the university financial committee.

In the [financial committee] meeting, most of the trustees will be looking at this total graduate and undergraduate number”, he said. “Be ready for the finance committee meeting, because these questions will come up.”

CFO Justin Oates did his best to defend the numbers to McCall and the rest of the board.

“There’s mainly a drop in graduate students....Some of the graduate numbers are the ‘pandemic bump’ that happened, where everyone thought they were going to change their jobs and go to grad school. That is kind of dying down now,” Oates said.

McCall indicated that the financial committee might be worried about “an entire story that isn’t being told.”

“We need to be prepared to say succinctly that the undergraduate is doing good. We’re not trying to pull any wool over your eyes; when you throw in graduates, it does show that we are down,” he said.

Stagnating enrollment and retention has been a hot button issue on campus since at least 2017, when then-President Daniel Mahony projected a 5% increase in student enrollment annually over the next 5 years, according to The Johnsonian.

“He also mentioned the introduction of online program and timeline initiatives as well as an increase in the amount of merit and need based financial aid received on campus,” they reported.

The COVID-19 pandemic stifled a lot of Winthrop’s growth.

“We need to be prepared to say succinctly that the undergraduate is doing good. We’re not trying to pull any wool over your eyes; when you throw in graduates, it does show that we are down.”

-Glenn McCall

In Spring 2020, Winthrop’s total undergraduate enrollment, according to the student profile published by the university, was 4,399.

By Fall 2021, that number fell 500 students down to 3,973. That number continued to fall going into 2022 down to 3,740.

Students living on campus have felt the effects of Winthrop’s latest push to market the campus to new audiences, as Winthrop reportedly over-admitted students this semester. Just this fall, there were reports of students in Margaret Nance, Lee Wicker, and Thomson residence halls being forced to accommodate more students than rooms available with the addition of bunk beds in the rooms.

There were also too many students admitted to the Courtyard residence hall. The university struck a deal with the neighboring Walk2Campus apartments to house students in those apartments for the fall semester.

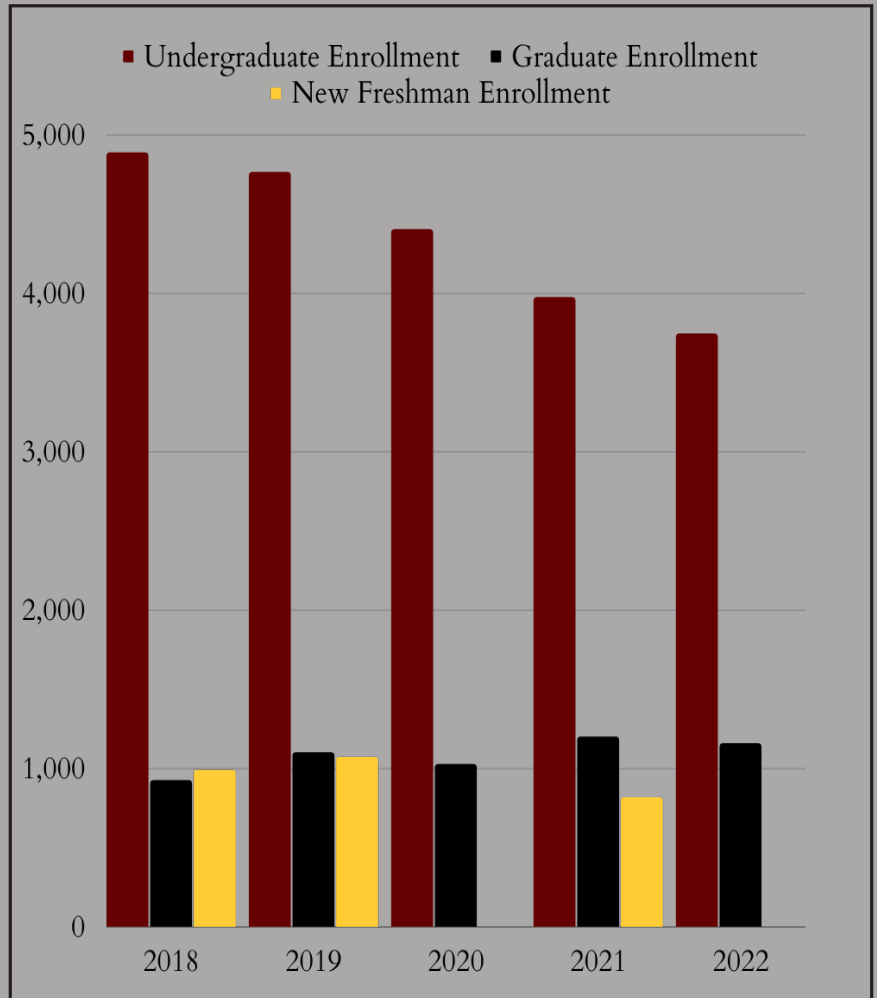
Though the board met for nearly three hours on September 28, they spent an hour and a half of the time in executive session.

Their agenda only allotted one executive session for the meeting.

Executive session is a confidential meeting only attended by voting members of the board.

Additionally, because of the extra time spent in executive session, the board had to meet again the following week on October 11.

It is unclear exactly when the board will meet next. The university website lists their next meeting on November 30, but the September 28 meeting was not listed on the website at the time of writing.




A bar graph showing declining undergraduate enrollment, along with other metrics.

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## Reflections

**Jeramiah Williams | Staff Writer**

*Dedication: To my Dad, my sister, and my brother, to every black woman whose work is never done but rarely celebrated, to every black man who feels that they are only worth what they can sacrifice, to every black trans\* and non-binary person who feel rejected by the very community that should make you feel safe in your own skin, your value does not go unseen, your struggle does not go unnoticed, and your voices do not go unheard.*

Maya Angelou once said “If you don’t know where you’ve come from, you don’t know where you’re going.” It’s difficult to discuss modern race relations in this country, with any kind of depth or honesty, without acknowledging the past. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was only signed 59 years ago, *Brown v. The Board of Education* was only decided 70 years ago, and there are people still alive today who remember these landmark moments in civil rights and remember what life was like before them. The most influential decisions in America’s past and the people who helped make them do not just metaphorically live with us; they literally do in some cases, and if we are going to talk about where we are going, we have to discuss how we got here.

In last month’s edition, we spoke to thirteen Black students, professors, and administrators to open up a conversation on the pains, problems,

passions, and powers of Black scholarship and Black excellence. To honor those who have fought for Black liberation and equality before us and to do right by the generations coming after us and looking up to us, this month we continue that conversation with some serious self-reflection. How can there be an end to black oppression without an end to the colorism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia practiced within the black community? How can we break generational curses, heal generational trauma, and close the generational divide without acknowledging how we might perpetuate these vicious cycles? Why should we even reflect on these things? In the simple words of civil rights leader, former chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and congressman John Lewis “If not us, then who? If not now, then when?”

To begin grappling with these questions, one has to grapple with the massive scale of a project like Black advancement in the United States. Conservative scholar and economist Thomas Sowell put it best when he said “The history of the advancement of black Americans is almost a laboratory study of human achievement, for it extends back to slavery and was accomplished in the face of the strongest opposition confronting any American racial or ethnic group. Yet this mass advancement is little discussed and seldom researched, except for lionizing some individuals or

compiling a record of political milestones.”

There is no easy or simple way to uplift a people from centuries of enslavement, inspire within them the will to stand firm and stand together against racial violence and legalized oppression, all while preserving their individuality and respecting their choice to not want to change the country. Black people are not a monolith, being Black is not a progressive or conservative cause, and no identity should be diminished because they do not feel they have the power or the desire to dismantle systems of oppression that have arguably been embedded in American culture since its inception. But after the end of the American Civil War, the question many Black people were forced to answer was “Where do we go from here?” One popular answer was education.

While W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington disagreed on a great many things, they both believed that education, whether it be classical or industrial, was necessary for black advancement and liberation. In 1903, DuBois wrote “The Talented Tenth”, arguably one of his most important and studied essays to date. In the essay, he argued that Black people should seek collegiate education and become directly involved in social change, but that only a special “Talented Tenth” would ultimately result in the equality of opportunity and access so many desired.

“The Negro race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional

men,” wrote DuBois. “The problem of education, then, among Negroes must first of all deal with the Talented Tenth; it is the problem of developing the Best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.”

The idea that education is liberation and that exceptional Black people will be the ones who bring liberation to those less exceptional lives on in the ethos and operations of so many diversity initiatives and scholarship programs today.

What has not lived on in popular memory is the true origin of the Talented Tenth or the theory’s 1948 revision “The Guiding Hundredth”. The term was only popularized by DuBois, but was invented by a white man, Henry Lyman Morehouse (the man for whom the historically-black Morehouse College was named).

When Morehouse discussed his Talented Tenth, he said, “The tenth man, with superior natural endowments, symmetrically trained and highly developed, may become a mightier influence, a greater inspiration to others than all the other nine, or nine times nine like them.”

While DuBois also pushed these exceptional men to be ethical and self-sacrificing and, contrary to popular belief, never thought that going to college was required to be a part of the “Talented Tenth”, the elitism and exclusion rooted in the idea of a Talented Tenth is clear. It’s the very reason why DuBois wrote “The Guiding Hundredth”.

In it, he argued for a “group-leadership” that was morally grounded, aware of domestic and global issues facing black people, and that would create cross-cultural alliances that would help the liberation of minority groups across the world to create a new culture of altruism and selfless love. The salvation of Black people could not be left to the few; under his new theory, it was the responsibility of all.

Although the ideas of the Talented Tenth would be more influential on DuBois’ legacy than the Guiding Hundredth, the value placed on self-sacrifice and collective action is present in both works and present in the people today.

The Black political ethos is one

shaped by a history of slavery, white supremacy, and segregation. The social and political unity that kind of group oppression creates results in tight-knit communities, and those tight-knit communities put a great deal of pressure on those within to behave a certain way publicly and privately. As Dr. Ismail K. White and Dr. Chryl N. Laird explain in their book *Steadfast Democrats*, even as Black people grow increasingly conservative and displeased with the Democratic party, 80% of eligible Black voters have reliably voted for them across local and national elections since the 1960s. The origins of these solidarity politics stretch back to the Civil Rights Movement and Black leaders during the movement like Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton who believed “The concept of Black power rests on a fundamental premise: before a group can enter open society, it must first close ranks.”

There are sound reasons Black people have employed tactics like mass protest and bloc voting across the decades. It remains an effective tool in combating white supremacy and commanding responsiveness from local and state governments, but in doing this, the Black community has also provided cover for some of its worst abusers and predators. R. Kelly, Bill Cosby, Louis Farrakhan, and so many other prominent Black figures across entertainment and politics have abused the importance of their fame and the trust of their Black fans and followers, yet their legacies were defended in the name of Black political unity and the preservation of the social achievements and advancements these men helped make.

Black politics can also be collectivist to the point of constraining for any who feel like they are not “black enough”. This racialized social constraint central to so much Black thought affects not just the politics but the culture. The “black card” as a system of acceptance within Black spaces and the idea that it can be taken away unless one performs blackness well is proof of this. Black children and young adults still discuss in anecdotes, art, and literature the bullying they faced and the exclusion they felt when their interests and

dreams lead them away from the norm in black spaces. And despite the prominence of black figures, especially black trans\* figures, in queer history their stories often aren’t included in popular examinations of black history because of the social and religious conservatism in mainstream black politics that has excluded them. There are group expectations to participation in black politics, not just individual ones, and very real social consequences for those not seen as “black enough”.

When ideas of black excellence fuse with the exceptionalism and isolation that black politics can inspire, it can cause celebrations of black achievement in the face of adversity to become demonstrations of the ways health, mental wellbeing and welfare are sacrificed for the sake of greatness. The idea of the “strong Black woman” has been a celebration of their resilience throughout history, but it can also leave so many of them to struggle alone with the expectation that they will carry other’s weight without complaint. Black children are hardly allowed to be children for long as they are quickly taught to “act right” in order to deserve fair treatment and respect instead of being entitled to the same humanity and understanding as their white peers. Striving for excellence and political unity have real, material benefits for

Black America, but it so often comes at the cost of diversity and equity within the Black spaces even as its argued for in broader society. Black excellence was always an alloyed good, a way to celebrate Black achievement that leaves many exhausted and isolated when the party ends. A conversation about Black excellence without acknowledging Black failure is an incomplete one. But as bell hooks reminds us, “Commitment to truth telling lays the groundwork for the openness and honesty that is the heartbeat of love. When we can see ourselves as we truly are and accept ourselves, we build necessary foundation for self-love”. Reflection is a labor of love, and loving Blackness and Black people means being willing to confront that excellence and education will not lead to liberation without having some long conversations that are long overdue.



AKHTAR SOOMRO/REUTERS

PEOPLE GATHER IN SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIANS IN GAZA, DURING A RALLY IN KARACHI, PAKISTAN

## A Measured Response on Israel's Right to Self-Defense and Palestinian Liberation

JEREMIAH WILLIAMS | STAFF WRITER

*This staff editorial solely represents the majority view of The Roddey McMillan Record staff. It is the product of extensive discussion, reflection, and research conducted by its staff. In order to ensure the fairness and responsibility of our journalism, the writer(s) on this topic are not involved in Student Publications articles on similar topics.*

If we as a community of students, faculty, and staff are at all committed to diversity, equity, critical thought, and freedom of speech, we all must recognize that Israel has a right to self-defense from terrorist violence and that Palestinians have a right to live safe and free in their homes. We unambiguously oppose and condemn the bigotry and hate of antisemitism in every and all forms, have studied its dangers well in history, and believe in the legitimacy of the state of Israel. But as people, students, journalists, and members of the Winthrop community, we can not stand by as those who would harm civilians and other innocent people in violation of international law and human rights spread misinformation and half-truth in defense of the indefensible.

That is precisely why we condemn the brutal violence carried out by Hamas terrorists on October 7th, and

proudly stand with the Palestinian people who have suffered for decades under military occupation, racial discrimination, and armed colonial violence.

Fundamentally, we are all deserving of respect, justice, freedom, and life and will be steadfast in our support of the liberation of the Palestinian people from an oppressive apartheid regime and encourage our readers to be.

We believe the case for our response to the ongoing violence is clear and irrefutable; it is informed by history, expert witness and international law, the investigations led by world-renowned human rights organizations in and outside of Israel, the testimony and direct quote of senior Israeli and United Nations officials, and basic human empathy and decency.

While the violence on October 7th should not be forgotten and the lives lost forever remembered, the history of this conflict did not begin on October 7th, 2023. It begins with the very founding of the modern state of Israel.

This conflict, as many have throughout our modern history, begins with a British occupation and poorly drawn borders. After the first World War, our modern conception of Palestine was first popularized by the British to refer

to "Mandatory Palestine," a territory from the former Ottoman Empire which had been divided in the Sykes-Picot Agreement and secured by Britain via the Mandate for Palestine obtained from the League of Nations. At the end of the second World War, after many European Jews were left stateless and scarred following the horrors of the Holocaust, the United Nations put together a plan to divide the Palestinian lands into Palestine and Israel. In a sense, it was the original two-state solution. However, with few exceptions, it was rejected by a coalition of Arab leaders from Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon who refused to agree to any part of it. Without full consent of the peoples in the territory and without diplomatic agreement from Arab nations in the region, violence was likely but not inevitable.

But when Israel internationally declared their independence in 1948 using the same borders that had never been agreed upon, a coalition of Arab nations supported by Palestinian militants invaded, and a war quickly followed that ended in less than a year. Shortly after, the Israeli army would destroy 500 villages and neighborhoods in Palestine, forcing 700,000 men, women, and children to abandon their homes with no right to return to the only land they had ever known.



In Arabic, it's known as the "Nakba" meaning "catastrophe" or "disaster". This constitutes forced displacement which is illegal under international law.

In 1967, less than two decades later, Israel would become embroiled in another war. In an act its government argues to be a preemptive strike in self-defense, Israeli armed forces moved to capture territories throughout the Middle East. At the end of the Six Day War, Israel had gained control of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights among other regions. The results of the war directly lead us to the violence happening today. Much like the Jews after the Holocaust, over four hundred thousand Palestinians were forced to flee the Golan Heights and their old homes in the West Bank. Known as the "Naksa" or "setback", it is the greatest displacement of Palestinians since the Nakba and forced many refugees to end up in an already crowded Gaza. In recently unsealed classified documents detailing meetings by senior cabinet officials in the Israeli government following the Six Days War, then Justice Minister Yaacov Shimshon Shapira noted the precarious diplomatic situation their successful invasion had put Israel in.

He is quoted as saying "What does it mean that the West Bank will have self-rule with security and foreign affairs are controlled by Israel, yet the population won't be Israeli citizens? The world is going through decolonization, and we're accused unfairly of being colonial, and we're considering ruling territories inhabited mainly by Arabs while keeping security and foreign affairs in our hands, like the sheikhs of the Persian Gulf. Who'll accept that? Whom will we convince? Everyone will say we're constructing a colony on the West Bank."

After being challenged on the position by then Prime Minister Levi Ekshol, questioning why they can not displace the refugees or trade them for the Jewish population of a nearby Iraq, Justice Minister Shapira replied "They're in your country now. You're responsible for them...they are the indigenous population here, and you control them. There's no reason that Arabs who were born here should move to Iraq."

The continued military occupation of Gaza persists and its people are

still not considered equal citizens to Israelis under the law. 200 Israeli settlements exist within the West Bank with some 400,000 settlers between them. According to Human Rights Watch and B'Tselem, two well-respected international and Israeli human rights organizations respectively, Israeli authorities apply a deliberate double-standard in the law when it comes to settlers, applying Israeli civil law to them and governing West Bank Palestinians under harsh military law. In so doing, they deny them basic due process and try them in military courts with a near-100 percent conviction rate.

Both the ongoing military occupation and the Israeli-controlled settlements within the West Bank and Golan Heights are illegal under international law.

After an unpopular partition that sparked a nine-month war, and shifting borders following the end of the Six Day War, what we'd now consider Palestine was separated into two parts: The West Bank and eastern Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip or, simply, Gaza. Both are currently under military occupation by the Israeli government, and the Palestinian territories in the West Bank are only under partial Palestinian authority. The Gaza Strip, however, is a 25-mile long strip of land surrounded by tank patrols, armed guards, and barbed wire fencing by land, surveillance drones and spy planes by air, and gunboats by sea.

The internet is also closely monitored in Gaza. Israeli authorities watch social media posts from the region, spy on phone and text conversations, and use predictive algorithms to determine whom to target. They've even detained Palestinians based solely on social media posts and other expressive activity.

In this country and in most countries, this would constitute a violation of freedom of speech, a fundamental human right. The people living in Gaza do not control their borders, there are only two exits in or out on either end of the territory. The northern Erez border crossing is controlled by Israel, the southern Rafah border crossing by Egypt, and the border crossing closest to the city of Gaza is controlled by Israel. The people of

Gaza can not leave Gaza freely.

B'Tselem described freedom of movement between the border crossings as "an arbitrary, entirely non-transparent bureaucratic system" where "many applications are denied without explanation, with no real avenue for appeal." The people living in Gaza do not control their own resources. From food and medicine to internet, power, and cell service, Israel controls the flow of goods and most humanitarian aid into Gaza. This blockade is illegal under international human rights law.

In a bid to secure power and stability after the Six Day War, right-wing Israeli politicians empowered members of the Muslim Brotherhood and its local leader, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, while working to undermine the secular, Arab League-backed Palestinian Liberation Organization, led by Yasser Arafat. This was an attempt to divide the Palestinian people between the well-established secular nationalists and the increasingly-popular Islamist groups. It was believed that Yassin's islamic fundamentalists would act as a political counterweight to the growing power of communists and the PLO.

Israeli Brigadier General Yitzhak Segev and military governor of the Gaza Strip at the time is once quoted as saying, "The Israeli Government gave me a budget and the military government gives to the mosques." Avner Cohen, Israel's head of religious affairs in Gaza at the time of Hamas's emergence for more than two decades, put it even more succinctly. "Hamas, to my great regret, is Israel's creation," he said in a 2009 Wall Street Journal interview. Sheik Ahmed Yassin is the founder of political party and terrorist organization known as Hamas, the very same organization that launched October 7th's horrific attacks on Israeli civilians. The financial and logistical support given to his organization by Israel's government was foundational to Yassin's power in the region. Just like the United States gave training and weapons to the mujahideen in Afghanistan that would eventually become Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda, so too did Israel's government help sow the seeds of the very conflict with Hamas they have been in for the past 20 years. **NEXT PAGE**



Since 2008, there have been three wars in Gaza between Israel and the militant wing of Hamas. Not counting the recent fatalities, the United Nations estimates that 6,400 Palestinians have been killed and 309 Israelis have been killed. In just a few weeks, the loss of human life has already dwarfed the amount lost in 15 years and the rhetoric from Israeli officials gives no sign that the loss of human life shows any signs of slowing. Israel's ambassador to the United Kingdom, Tzipi Hotovely, denied a humanitarian crisis is even happening all in Gaza. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and current commander of the IDF forces in the conflict called for denying Palestinian people electricity, food, water and fuel as he compared them to "human animals".

The Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, calls for his people to "realize the prophecy of Isaiah" and destroy "Amalek", a nation described in the Bible and Torah as the archetypal enemy of the Israelites. In the Jewish faith, the Amalekites are considered to be the very symbol of evil. They are an enemy that can not be reasoned with who wants to murder all Jews and against whom any form of violence is excusable. Even if the direct comparison was towards Hamas, the dangers of comparing Palestinians to the Amalekites when anti-semitism and islamophobia is on the rise across the world should go without saying. Demonizing a group this way can make even the worst act of cruelty against them seem justified. They are not.

Amidst persecution and subjugation, crimes against humanity and decency, it can be easy to see resolving this situation as hopeless. The traumas are deep and understandable, and the cycle of violence seems impossible to stop as updated death tolls climb higher

and higher. Right alongside innocent Palestinians, innocent Israelis have also suffered in this conflict. Peace advocates, anti-apartheid activists, and regular people simply caught in the middle of the violence have come from Israel and Palestine.

In this hopelessness, violence can seem a tragic but inevitable solution. The countless images and stories of frightened families, dead children, and missing or captured loved ones are either dismissed as propaganda or quickly forgotten as the regrettable collateral of war. History rejects this hopelessness. From the non-violent civil rights campaigns of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. to the non-violent overthrow of military dictatorships in Ukraine and South Korea, history is full of examples where people respond to decades to centuries of violence and oppression with peaceful and bloodless means.

Time and time again, people prove lasting, just peace is rarely won with weapons. War crimes can not be answered with war crimes and the genocidal calls of a violent minority should never be answered with the collective punishment of hundreds of thousands of civilians. A right to self-defense has never meant the right to break the law during war and does not mean that now.

The Israeli civilians, police officers, and soldiers who died in the horrific October 7th attacks should have had their memories honored with peace. In another time, their deaths could've been a collective shock to the conscience and soul, waking us all up to the fact that the violence and injustice has already gone too far and will only lead to more mutual mass atrocities.

Amongst the Holocaust memorials at the Treblinka and Dachau concentration camps, you will find a memorial with a simple phrase written in many languages: "never

again". The exact meaning of the phrase is debated but its source is an epic poem written in 1927 known as Masada. It was at the mountain fortress of Masada, the poet writes, that Jewish rebels killed themselves rather than be captured by the Roman occupiers. In our time, it is Israel that maintains the military occupation and the people trapped within the walls of the Gaza Strip are not Jewish militants and their families but Hamas fighters, vulnerable Palestinian men, women, and children, and Israeli hostages.

To many modern Israelis, especially many Zionists, Masada is a story of Jewish heroism and courage against the occupier. To us, we see a story of two peoples who feel forced to turn to armed resistance and then suicide just to be free, an avoidable tragedy that should never be repeated.

So we say "never again" to stand in solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people against the violence of fascism and anti-semitism. We say "never again" to condemn the crimes against humanity perpetrated against Jews during the Holocaust. And we say "never again" to standing silent or standing by as Israel routinely and flagrantly ignores international law, denies the whole Palestinian people autonomy and equality under their law, and uses our tax payer dollars to fund it all. To end this violence at its root, Israel should address the oppressive conditions Hamas exploits for power, provide a realistic and diplomatic alternative to violent struggle to their oppression by working with the PLO and Palestinian Authority in good-faith diplomacy, and dismantle the apartheid system of ethnic discrimination that keeps Palestinian people from freely exercising autonomy in their lands. Peace without justice for Israel *and* Palestine is no lasting peace.

# Winthrop's Shifting Values



WINTHROP.EDU

**RETURN TO LEARN: STUDENTS BEGIN TO RETURN TO CAMPUS FOLLOWING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

## Raquel Simon | Managing Editor

With a new university president and other faces of senior leadership, Winthrop has been openly trying to find its post-pandemic identity.

The university rolled out their quality enhancement plan, flight ready, the campus master plan, and the strategic plan over the course of the last academic year.

The new direction Winthrop intends to follow is being touted to students through town halls and online surveys, but each component of the planning may be something that students do not follow.

During the strategic plan town hall held in September, the organizers, the Berkeley research group, presented the data collected from a survey sent to students, faculty, and administrators.

One notable aspect of the presentation that might have been unrecognized was the chart made for the survey of the board of trustees.

The trustees were asked a series of questions on important elements for Winthrop to focus on, and gave their opinions from least important to very important.

The trustees were asked their opinions on the importance of campus diversity (equity and inclusion), and two of the trustees

said they were neutral on that particular stance.

As the most racially diverse university in the state, with over 46% of students identifying as racial minorities, it is concerning to know that senior campus leaders view an aspect that makes Winthrop unique as less important than it needs to be.

Winthrop has also noticeably shifted their rhetoric on the branding of the school. Winthrop was known as a liberal arts college, but is now being described as a regional comprehensive university. What does this shift mean?

Regional comprehensive universities are defined as “stewards of place” for their commitment to service and focus on the communities around their institutions and thus serve as academic, economic, and cultural centers according to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

They are institutions that serve with the primary goal of economic mobility, and while this may sound good. Regional comprehensive universities have raised concerns around institutional commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This means that the focus of university education may shift away from emphasis on expansive thought,

broad general knowledge, and multidisciplinary intellect.

Certain departments and programs at Winthrop, especially those with interest around diverse topics, may potentially see a decrease in funding. Additionally, on a broader level, recent precedents set within the US Supreme Court’s decision to overturn affirmative action may support such changes.

It is unclear the exact ways that these changes will affect the university and students. Perhaps, leadership fears that the enrollment statistics will have state officials perceiving Winthrop as a minority-serving institution that the university will not gain the same respect or funding as fellow state universities that are viewed as flagship institutions.

It is important that students stay engaged in the conversations regarding the direction of their school, so that they can be observant and aware of the transitions that are to come.

The university proudly advertises its abundant diversity on brochures and online promotions, but behind the scenes, senior leadership may be making efforts to discard the diversity, equity, and inclusion as an important value of Winthrop.

