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Reading Professor Tapped as New Thompson Scholar

Winthrop University

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Reading Professor Tapped as New Thompson Scholar

Quick Facts

- Helf, an assistant professor of reading in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, has participated in the statewide literacy reform discussions for the past three years and followed the passage last summer of the Read to Succeed legislation.
- In her Thompson Scholar application, Helf focused on how the new legislation will impact Winthrop's pre-service teacher education program and how to reinforce with teacher candidates the important roles they will be playing as they teach P-12 students reading and writing.



Shawanna Helf

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA - Winthrop University's newly appointed **Thompson Scholar Shawanna Helf** of the **Richard W. Riley College of Education** will spend the next few months preparing the campus to enact the new **Read to Succeed Act** for literacy reform.

Her appointment was announced Feb. 25 by **Acting President Debra Boyd**.

Helf, an assistant professor of reading in the **Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy**, has participated in the statewide literacy reform discussions for the past three years and followed the passage last summer of the **Read to Succeed legislation**. In her Thompson Scholar application, Helf focused on how the new legislation will

impact Winthrop's pre-service teacher education program and how to reinforce with teacher candidates the important roles they will be playing as they teach P-12 students reading and writing.

Her project will cover:

- Enhancing the undergraduate literacy curriculum to meet Read to Succeed requirements.
- Engaging education majors in service learning projects as part of the new Read to Succeed literacy curriculum.
- Launching a student chapter of the International Literacy Association to help develop leaders in the literacy field.

The Read to Succeed legislation goes into effect for practicing P-12 teachers beginning in the fall of 2015. Pre-service preparation requirements will go into effect the next year.

"This is a very timely project," said **Dean Jennie Rakestraw** of the College of Education. "Her project will offer a huge service to Winthrop and will be of great academic, intellectual, and co-curricular benefit to a large number of students."

Helf came to Winthrop in 2009. She previously worked as a reading research associate at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She also has experience as a curriculum coach, grant project facilitator, and elementary education teacher.

Her areas of expertise include: early reading intervention, instructional design, professional development and school-wide reading models.

Helf earned B.A. and M.A. degrees in elementary education from West Virginia University and a Ph.D. in special education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

This is the **10th awarding** of the **Thompson Scholar Award**, created by former Winthrop Board of Trustees member **Bob Thompson** and **his wife, Norma**, of Rock Hill. The fund provides for reassigned time for two classes per year for a faculty member.

The **Robert and Norma Thompson Endowment** was established during the university's first capital campaign. Other Thompson Scholars are: **Phil Moody**, photography; **Pedro Muñoz**, Spanish; **Carol Marchel**, education; **John Bird**, English; **David Bradbard and Barbara Fuller**, business; **Padmini Patwardhan**, mass communication, **David Stokes**, design; **Trent Kull**, math; and **Tomoko Deguchi**, music.

For more information, contact **Judy Longshaw**, news and media services manager, at 803/323-2404 or e-mail her at longshawj@winthrop.edu.

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