



Spring 3-28-2014

Winthrop Selected as One of Nine Nationally to Participate in ACE Change and Innovation Lab

Winthrop University

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Recommended Citation

Winthrop University, "Winthrop Selected as One of Nine Nationally to Participate in ACE Change and Innovation Lab" (2014). *Winthrop News 2014*. 57.
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Winthrop Selected as One of Nine Nationally to Participate in ACE Change and Innovation Lab

Quick Facts

- Winthrop is one of nine universities nationwide selected for the American Council on Education's Change and Innovation Lab.
- Winthrop's program is entitled RISE: Realizing Investments in Student Engagement.
- The RISE Program will focus on all first-generation undergraduate freshmen and transfer students, regardless of their age, to provide intensive academic counseling and career mentoring, as well as alternative programming.



President Jamie Comstock

ROCK HILL, S.C. – In remarks at her **March 28 Investiture Ceremony**, Winthrop University **President Jamie Comstock** announced that the **American Council on Education (ACE)** has recognized Winthrop's commitment to ensure the equality of educational outcomes for all students by accepting the university's recent application to the **ACE Change and Innovation Lab**, funded by a grant from the **Lumina Foundation**, to envision and define new methods and practices for increasing postsecondary attainment.

As **one of nine universities nationwide selected for this initiative**, Winthrop will begin participation, starting the week of March 31, in an 18-month project to implement its new change and innovation program, appropriately called **RISE: Realizing Investments in Student Engagement**.

According to Comstock, "The RISE Program will focus on all **first-generation undergraduate freshmen and transfer students**, regardless of their age, to **provide intensive academic counseling and career mentoring**, as well as alternative programming that will allow these students to engage in high-impact practices that enhance their prospects for degree attainment and post-degree work or education."

The university's proposal stated that high-impact practices such as clinical assignments, internships, study abroad and collaborative research can have a positive impact on student retention and degree attainment, as well as first post-baccalaureate experience.

"By improving access to opportunities that have a high impact on learning and can accommodate the needs of students who are employed, have economic constraints, or are responsible for dependent care, Winthrop can positively impact degree attainment of first-generation, Pell-eligible and post-traditional students," said **Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Debra Boyd**.

In order to emphasize high-impact practices the university will follow these initiatives as part of the RISE Program:

•Use Winthrop’s **NetSCOPE School Partnership Network** to target first-generation students in high-need middle and high schools for college and career counseling by trained Winthrop faculty and staff. These individuals will support guidance counselors and provide tangible, real-time help when students need it.

•Entering first-generation Winthrop students will **become members of small groups that will participate in academic and career counseling** from the first term at Winthrop through the achievement of their first post-baccalaureate role.

•**Professional career mentors will be assigned to students in the target populations** (first-generation, Pell-eligible and post-traditional students). These mentors will be community volunteers, alumni and/or local leaders and professionals who understand the return on their investment in students.

•The **development of alternative programming** will allow these students to engage in high-impact practices – student-faculty collaborative research, study abroad, service learning and internships – that enhance their prospects for degree attainment and post-degree work or education.

•The **Dare to Rise fund**, established as part of Comstock’s inaugural vision to promote inclusiveness as a critical component of quality higher education, will **support scholarships and programs in the RISE initiative**.

Ongoing assessment of programs and services will ensure that all achieve established goals, challenge students at their highest level of ability and are consonant with best practices.

“We are truly committed to increasing the higher education attainment rate for our state and the nation, transforming the lives of others, and changing the trajectory of families forever,” Comstock added.

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

About Winthrop and the Inauguration of 10th President Jayne Marie Comstock:

The March 24-29 Inauguration of Jayne Marie (Jamie) Comstock as Winthrop’s 10th president signals a new era in the history of this top-ranked regional public comprehensive university. Comstock has charted a bold course for Winthrop’s future, redefining public higher education by prioritizing both quality and access in a single institution. Serving more than 6,000 students, Winthrop blends liberal arts, professional programs, global understanding, and civic engagement in a diverse community of learners. Students leave Winthrop prepared for successful careers, engaged in a democratic society, responsive to local and global concerns, and grounded in values that give meaning to their lives. Comstock’s vision for Winthrop will ensure that all students – regardless of demographic category or life experience – have access to an exceptional public higher education.

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