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## Winthrop Poll to Make Its Debut Over Days Ahead

Winthrop University

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## Winthrop Poll to Make Its Debut Over Days Ahead

### Quick Facts

- This weekend, Winthrop University will release the first bi-annual Winthrop Poll, a long-term survey.
- The poll is designed to get beyond traditional candidate-specific polls.



*Scott Huffmon*

ROCK HILL , S.C. - This weekend, Winthrop University is releasing the first bi-annual edition of the **Winthrop Poll**, a long-term survey initiative designed to keep public policy makers across the country in touch with the attitudes of South Carolina residents and South Carolina residents in touch with the viewpoints that are dominant in their state at any given time.

"Winthrop views the Winthrop Poll as a new element in its long-time tradition of service to South Carolina," said **President Anthony DiGiorgio**. "This initiative will provide South Carolina public policy makers with a long-term archive of changing viewpoints within the state's citizenry, and in that way, will be a significant on-going contribution to research about the state and its people."

**Dr. Scott Huffmon**, director of both Winthrop's **Social and Behavioral Research Lab** and the **Winthrop Poll** initiative, said the undertaking is specifically designed to get beyond traditional candidate-specific "horserace" political polls that often dominate political discourse, particularly around election cycles. For that reason, the telephone survey was taken among randomly selected citizens at large, without asking if they are registered to vote or intend to vote.

"We want the Winthrop Poll to establish a benchmark to track long-term trends and shifts in underlying attitudes in South Carolina over the years in a way that will complement traditional political polling about specific candidates in specific races in any given year," said **Huffmon**, an associate professor of political science. "Given the rise of South Carolina to a place of prominence in presidential primary terms, data on evolving attitudes of citizens of the state will take on increasing importance in national terms," he added.

The **Winthrop Poll** for fall 2006, which is being distributed to media for release in three parts over the next few days, was conducted from Winthrop's computer-assisted telephone interviewing research lab during the first half of October, with 559 randomly selected South Carolinians age 18 and up being queried on a range of social and political issues. The results have a margin of error of plus/minus 4.14 percent, at the 95 percent confidence level.

**Huffmon**, who is frequently sought out by national and regional media to interpret political developments in the state, brings over a decade of expertise in survey research experience to the **Winthrop Poll** initiative. A native of Virginia, **Huffmon** grew up in the Carolinas, and has been a member of the Winthrop University political science faculty since 2001.

**Huffmon** said future surveys for the **Winthrop Poll** will occur each spring and fall, concurrent with Winthrop's academic calendar. The **Winthrop Social and Behavioral Research Lab** conducts five or more polls annually, some under contract to various public and private sector organizations and some for academic research purposes.

The **Winthrop Poll** also integrates students into the process, offering them the opportunity to gain guided, hands-on experience in a real-world social and behavioral research environment, integrating sampling theory and methodology, professional calling techniques, computer-aided telephone interviewing technology and post-survey results analysis.

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