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Kurdish Banner Proudly Displayed at Winthrop For Grad

Winthrop University

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Kurdish Banner Proudly Displayed at Winthrop For Grad

Quick Facts

- With a renewed push for the displaced Kurds to become an independent state, Ghareeb appealed to Winthrop President Jamie Comstock Williamson to put up the Kurdish banner, not the Iraqi flag, to acknowledge his home region.
- After hearing his impassioned plea, Williamson agreed. The banner – with its red, green and white stripes with a centered yellow sun disk representing the Kurdistan Regional Government - was erected on Alumni Drive a week before Ghareeb's May 8 graduation.



Dana Ghareeb

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Dozens of international flags line **Winthrop University's Alumni Drive** to represent the home countries of its graduates.

The most recent addition is a dream come true for **one of the university's first two Iraqi students**, both of whom received their master's degrees in sport and fitness administration on May 8.

Dana Ghareeb hails from the Kurdistan Region and requested his region's banner to hang on Alumni Drive. With a renewed push for the displaced Kurds to become an independent state, Ghareeb appealed to **Winthrop President Jamie Comstock Williamson** to put up the Kurdish

banner, not the Iraqi flag, to acknowledge his home region.

After hearing his impassioned plea, Williamson agreed. The banner – with its red, green and white stripes with a centered yellow sun disk representing the **Kurdistan Regional Government** - was erected on Alumni Drive a week before Ghareeb's **May 8 graduation**.

Ghareeb came to the United States in early 2011 and spent a year learning English in immersion courses. He started classes at Winthrop in fall 2012 and threw himself into American culture – attending such sports events as Carolina Panthers games, experiencing the Clemson/Carolina college football rivalry and traveling to half of the U.S.'s 50 states.

Ghareeb will return in June to the mountainous Kurdistan region in the northern part of Iraq where he works as an assistant professor at **Salahaddin University** in Erbil. He hopes to publish **his master's thesis** which recommends an exercise regimen for soccer players that relies on balance and strength conditioning exercises to prevent injuries.

"I often wake up in the morning and get down on my knees and thank God for everything," Ghareeb said. "Since the flag is up, I thank God for being a part of this. It is one of the highlights of my life."

Having students like Ghareeb on campus is **one of the highlights of Winthrop's educational experience**. This semester Winthrop has 203 international students among its 6,000+ population. The university works to prepare students for global citizenship and the 21st century workplace.

- Winthrop is recruiting more international students to campus and encourages the university's mostly South Carolina-born students to travel abroad as part of its **Global Learning Initiative** which promotes global knowledge, attitudes and engagement throughout the university's general education program.

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• Winthrop has joined the **Generation Study Abroad Commitment effort** by the **Institute of International Education** which will help the university triple the number of students who currently study abroad.

- Winthrop has launched a new Global Ambassadors Scholarship program to recruit out-of-state students and support them in study abroad experiences. The scholarship program and other high-impact experiences are supported by a newly created **Dare to Rise fund**.

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

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