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Winthrop University

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# Winthrop Graduation Rates Bring National Attention from Gates Foundation

## Quick Facts

- Winthrop President Anthony DiGiorgio has been invited to attend a Gates Foundation-sponsored "convening" of higher education leaders noted for their institutions' graduation success among students of all races.
- Winthrop's minority enrollment mirrors South Carolina's college-eligible population – but it wasn't always that way.



*President Anthony DiGiorgio*

ROCK HILL, S.C. - At a time when the United States has slipped to 12th place among developed nations in higher education degree attainment, the **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** has issued invitations to a number of higher education leaders who have successes in boosting attainment to discuss. One of them is **Winthrop University President Anthony DiGiorgio**.

According to the **Gates Foundation**, the Sept. 16 Washington, D.C., event will bring together 40 "key institutional leaders committed to helping students succeed in their journeys to and through postsecondary education," with particular emphasis on success rates among African-American and first-generation college students that matches or exceeds that of the general student population.

The **Gates Foundation** wants to "identify essential policies, practices, and leadership philosophies that outfit institutions to help students earn degrees and 'beat the odds' against such success."

The invitation is the second recognition Winthrop has received in as many weeks for its accomplishments in guiding students of all backgrounds to similar levels of successful degree attainment.

Winthrop also was singled out in an Education Trust report, "Big Gaps, Small Gaps: Some Colleges and Universities Do Better Than Others in Graduating African-American Students" as a national leader in consistently showing high rates of graduation success among minority populations.

When DiGiorgio became Winthrop president in 1989, one of his first activities was to tour South Carolina's high schools to let minority students know they would find a supportive and achievement-oriented campus environment at Winthrop. The minority students who took him up on the offer found exactly that, and over the years, through continued success and word of mouth, minority enrollment grew to reflect the college-eligible minority population of the state.

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