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Inclusion Conference Will Challenge Belief Systems on Disabilities

Winthrop University

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Inclusion Conference Will Challenge Belief Systems on Disabilities

Quick Facts

- Registration to attend the conference is \$50, with all proceeds going toward Winthrop Think College scholarships.
- The conference theme is "Change Your Behaviors, And You Just Might Change Your Beliefs."



Deb Leach

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Winthrop University [Associate Professor Deb Leach](#) is preparing for a “win-win-win” this fall when the [Richard W. Riley College of Education](#) will host a Nov. 21 conference geared toward promoting inclusion in the classroom.

The three wins for Leach are:

- *promoting inclusion in schools;
- *raising scholarship money for **Winthrop Think College** participants; and
- *changing opinions on what it means to teach a student with a disability.

The focus on change inspired the conference’s theme, **“Change Your Behavior, And You Just Might Change Your Beliefs.”**

Inclusion means providing opportunities for people with disabilities so that they can have the same learning experiences as their peers. Oftentimes, students with disabilities are segregated and given limited opportunities because of that segregation, Leach explained.

“The biggest problems are belief systems,” Leach said. “We try to work on the belief systems of people, but that’s really hard to change. Our new vision is just going to be encouraging people to change your behavior, and you might just realize that your belief system changes along the way.”

Leach is currently reviewing presentation proposals for the conference. She said the conference will feature break-out sessions and keynote speakers across all levels of education, including post-secondary. The sessions will have relevance for teachers, administrators, related service providers, and parents.

She’s particularly excited for one keynote speaker: **Donald Bailey**, who she said has had the “greatest impact on post-secondary education” for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in South Carolina. Bailey is the director of the [College Transition Connection](#), an organization dedicated to developing post-secondary educational opportunities for young adults with disabilities. This organization provided grant funds to five universities in South Carolina to assist with the development of inclusive programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities ages eighteen and over. Winthrop Think College is one of those programs.

The conference will take place on Saturday, Nov. 21, from 8 a.m.-noon in the Richard W. Riley College of Education at Winthrop University. All proceeds from the conference go toward scholarships for Winthrop Think College students. Registration is \$50.

To register, and for more information, contact Deb Leach through e-mail at leachd@winthrop.edu or by phone at 803/323-4760.

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