

Professional Female Voices
Winthrop's Association of Women in Communication
By: Bridgette Smith

The Association for Women in Communications (AWC) has had 106 years of notable female leaders who have come together to recognize female voices in the communications professions.

Winthrop University is a proud chapter of the national organization and, according to its page on Winthrop's website, "The AWC is a professional organization that champions the advancement of women across all communications disciplines by recognizing excellence, promoting leadership and positioning its members at the forefront of the evolving communications era."

Winthrop's AWC is the only student chapter in South Carolina, and one of only two in the southeast. "Being a part of the AWC definitely puts Winthrop on the map for strong female leadership in the mass communication department," says Crystal Thomison, senior broadcasting major and current president of the Winthrop chapter.

The Winthrop chapter continues the national organizations' visions and promotes female leadership and professional relationships on campus by bringing in guest speakers from local businesses.

In reference to the organization's most recent activities, Thomison says, "We've been holding really useful workshops to build our professional skills."

In September 2015, the AWC invited a representative from Winthrop's Center for Career and Civic Engagement to deliver tips and advice on improving one's LinkedIn site.

The AWC also had a photography student take professional headshots of the members.

"Guest speakers are great, but we're trying to make our meetings and events more interactive for our members," says Thomison. The group encourages topical discussion. "We have brief conversations after every meeting to promote feedback among those who attend," says Thomison.

Many AWC members have studied abroad in European countries, and some of these same students are also board members. This high level of activity has resulted in a new emphasis on campus growth so that it can operate normally while its students are engaged in other opportunities.

"A smaller organization is nice, but I would really like to see Winthrop's AWC grow," says Thomison. The organization is in its recruitment season and encourages all mass communication/ integrated marketing communication students to come to its meetings every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. in Johnson 201.

Membership is not required to attend, and further information can be found by emailing Crystal Thomison at thomisonc2@winthrop.edu or Dr. Aimee Meader, faculty advisor, at meadera@winthrop.edu.

For additional information on upcoming special events, you can contact Crystal Thomison or Dr. Meader or attend a meeting.

AWC Essentials to Know

- Founded in 1909 as an honorary organization at the University of Washington
- Originally known as Theta Sigma Pi
- Past/current notable members:
 - First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt
 - Barbara Walters
 - Margaret Larson
 - Rita Cosby
- Opened up the organization to allow male membership in 1972
- Renamed the Association for Women in Communications in 1972
- National headquarters is currently located in Washington, D.C.