



Teaching Fellows

The South Carolina Teaching Fellows Program is a scholarship program for qualified South Carolina high school students who wish to pursue a degree in education and a career in South Carolina's public schools following graduation. Administered by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement, the program provides a \$24,000 scholarship/loan over 4 years for up to 200 outstanding high school seniors. Winthrop University is one of only eleven (11) institutions in the state identified as a Teaching Fellows Institution.

Overview

The Winthrop University Teaching Fellows program is an innovative program designed to offer students an intensive, coordinated service learning experience in working collaboratively with local community agencies, and schools to provide services to children and families whose first language is not English. Teaching Fellows are provided with instruction in teaching strategies for non-English speaking students in special sessions that are restricted to Teaching Fellows and in monthly seminars. For the past four years, sophomore Winthrop University Teaching Fellows have participated in a trip to the Dominican Republic where they have learned about the education system of that country by visiting a variety of public and private schools and universities as well as cultural and historical sites. Fellows have earned course credit for this powerful sophomore experience.

Diversity

The Richard W. Riley College of Education ensures that all teacher candidates develop understanding about the needs of students from diverse backgrounds through coursework and diverse public school experiences. The Teaching Fellows program offers guided experiences with diverse children and families through service learning, Teaching Fellows seminars, and the sophomore trip to the Dominican Republic.

Leadership

The Cohort of all Fellows on campus is presided over by a representative from each class who serves as a Cohort officer. These officers develop the agenda for the biannual Cohort meetings and conduct the meetings. Each class elects a cohort representative as well as class officers who are responsible for developing the agendas and conducting the monthly class meetings. In addition, sophomore and junior Fellows develop leadership and mentoring skills as they serve as "buddies" to incoming freshmen. This program assists freshmen in making smooth transitions to the university. Each Teaching Fellow serves on one committee each year which provides additional leadership opportunities. Within the Riley College of Education, leadership opportunities include student chapters of professional organizations such as the Council for Exceptional Children and the Palmetto State Teachers Association. Fellows sometimes work with faculty in the College of Education on research and give professional presentations at national, regional, and state conferences.

In addition to leadership opportunities within the Riley College of Education, Teaching Fellows at Winthrop University often assume leadership roles across the campus. They frequently serve as Resident Advisors, Orientation Leaders and University Ambassadors. Teaching Fellows may choose to serve as members of the boards of Dinkins Student Union, the Council of Student Leaders, Global, and Greek Life organizations.

Service Learning

As freshmen, Winthrop University Teaching Fellows complete 50 hours of service learning in community settings. During the sophomore and junior years, each Fellow completes 50 hours of public school service working with students who are ELL (English Language Learners). This requirement is reduced to 10 hours in the senior year due to the field experience and internship requirements. Fellows work with ELL teachers and regular classroom teachers as they provide one-on-one or small group instruction and support to students who are struggling to learn English. These experiences are in addition to the requirements of the Riley College of Education and offer the Fellows rich opportunities to develop professional relationships with teachers and principals in the local schools. Fellows receive supportive feedback on their performance each semester which enhances their professional development.

Field Experiences

All Winthrop University education majors complete a field experience in the fall semester of the senior year and a full-time Internship in the spring semester of the senior year. In these experiences, the majority of students are supervised by full-time education faculty in their content area. The Teaching Fellows Campus Director reviews all placements of Teaching Fellows and is available to conduct observations of Fellows. Each student has at least one placement (field experience or internship) in a setting that is considered diverse by ethnic and/or economic characteristics.

The Fellows program has an on-going relationship with several schools in the Dominican Republic. Each year, Fellows collect instructional materials and supplies for these schools. The Fellows deliver the materials to these schools when they visit. This year they will do a service project in one of the schools and teach small group activities to the children in the school.

Student Support

Freshman Teaching Fellows at Winthrop University attend the same university orientation session in June of each year. There are special activities planned for them which allow them to meet the other Fellows in their class as they begin to learn about the program at Winthrop University.

At Winthrop University, all Teaching Fellows are advised by the Campus Director at a minimum of twice each academic year. Fellows who are majoring in teacher certification programs in the Colleges of Arts and Sciences or Visual and Performing Arts have an advisor in their college as well as the Campus Director. During these advising sessions the Campus Director assists the Fellow in planning his or her academic program and provides guidance regarding issues as varied as study abroad opportunities, roommate concerns, and study skills. The Campus Director is available to Teaching Fellows for individual advising and/or problem solving at any time during the semester. During the fall semester the Campus Director meets with the freshman class weekly for the first half of the semester.

In addition to meeting on a regular basis, the Fellows take EDUC 110: Schools and Society together as well as attend monthly seminars. They have common service learning sites and frequently have meals together on campus. These experiences help to form a very supportive community.

In addition to support provided by the Campus Director, Winthrop University Teaching Fellows have developed a strong Fellows support network. Each freshman is assigned a sophomore or junior Teaching Fellow buddy who contacts the incoming freshman during the summer. The buddy system allows all new freshmen to have a special contact person on campus which has proven to be very helpful during the transition to university life.

For more information about the Winthrop University Teaching Fellows Program, contact Campus Director Susanne M. Okey at okeys@winthrop.edu. For more information on Winthrop University go to www.winthrop.edu.