

City of Winston-Salem College Advisory Board



WSSU



Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2025-2026



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College Advisory Board

Purpose

The purpose of the College Advisory Board (CAB) is to serve as an advisory council to the City Council regarding areas such as economic development projects, transit advocacy, and student housing issues (and other issues the group may suggest) that will encourage students to remain in Winston-Salem post-graduation.

Mission

The CAB serves as a body that represents the needs, interests, and concerns of college students and recent college graduates by engaging them in relevant community projects, programs, and issues.

History

In June 2010, the Winston-Salem City Council unanimously approved a resolution to establish the CAB. Spearheaded by Council Member Derwin L. Montgomery, the group was created to communicate the needs of college students to the City of Winston-Salem.

Duties

- Participate in department led/attended events
- Coordinate with your peers to conduct community service events within the city
- Potential internship opportunities within the city that align with your goals and interests

The Board's Relationship to City Government

The government of the City of Winston-Salem and the general management and control of all its affairs are vested in the City Council and the Mayor. The City Council appoints the City Manager who is the administrative head of City government and is responsible for the administration of all departments of City government. The City Council is also the appointing authority for members of the CAB.

The Board keeps the City Manager, and the City Council informed of its activities. To further that communication, the chairperson or a designated member of the Board shall appear annually before the City Council to provide them with information on the pulse of the college/university student community and a yearly progress report on Board programs and projects. The Board makes suggestions and contributes ideas to the City Council concerning projects and programs relevant to the college/university student population of Winston-Salem.

The Board's Relationship to the Staff

The Board's relationship with the Human Relations staff involves advising staff regarding programs, concerns, and issues relating to college/university students. During the process of initiating programs and investigating complaints and problems, the Board calls on the staff for technical assistance and research into matters that are brought to the Board.

The Board's Relationship to the Community

The CAB is the body through which college/university students' concerns can be relayed to City officials. The CAB brings information to its peers on the programs and activities of city government that pertain to college/university students.

College Advisory Board 2025 – 2026 Membership Roster



Jordan Moore
Winston-Salem State University



Luke Simon
Wake Forest University



Nadya Pope
Winston-Salem State University



Jacob Burnette
University of North Carolina School of the



Yoselyn Noyola-Marin



Kenna Burden
Salem College



Presley O'Malley
Wake Forest University



DeAndre Mays
Winston-Salem State



Orrin Jones
Wake Forest University



Sky Sykes
Salem College

Management's Comments

Jelani Biggs – Human Relations Director

The Human Relations Department is proud to support the College Advisory Board (CAB) as a key advisory body connecting the City of Winston-Salem with its college and university student population. CAB plays an important role in ensuring that the perspectives of students and recent graduates are considered in areas such as housing, economic development, transportation, and workforce retention.

Over the past year, CAB members have demonstrated a strong commitment to engagement through their research. Their work reflects a thoughtful approach to understanding complex issues impacting students, while also identifying practical opportunities for the City to strengthen its connection to local institutions and emerging talent. The Board's focus on housing and related community challenges is a strong example of how student-led insight can inform broader policy conversations.

CAB continues to serve as a valuable pipeline for civic engagement, providing members with direct exposure to local government while helping the City better understand the needs and priorities of a critical population. This reciprocal model strengthens both student development and the City's ability to plan for long-term growth and sustainability.

Looking ahead, the Department is excited to build on this foundation by expanding CAB's role in addressing evolving city issues. This includes increasing opportunities for applied research, strengthening collaboration with City departments and community partners, and enhancing CAB's visibility as a resource for informed student perspectives. These efforts will position CAB to play a more active and strategic role in shaping initiatives that impact the future of Winston-Salem.

2025-2026 Housing and Harm Reduction Annual Research

Executive Summary

The CAB conducted a multi-campus research initiative examining housing infrastructure challenges and the role of harm reduction strategies in supporting college students across Winston-Salem.

While institutions provide varying levels of housing support, gaps in affordability, access, and emergency housing resources persist. This is more common for students experiencing financial hardship, housing instability, or transitional living situations. Simultaneously, harm reduction strategies continue to be critical tools to stabilize students facing housing insecurity. When integrated into student life in universities, harm reduction approaches can prevent crises, reduce long-term costs, and improve student well-being and retention.

A key takeaway is the importance of harm reduction services, expanded affordable housing strategies, and collaboration efforts between local campuses, community organizations, and appropriate key city and county departments.

Approach

The data presented in this executive summary provides key findings from institutional research across multiple campuses through reviewing campus policies and student services. Students analyzed local harm reduction infrastructure and community resources to gain a better understanding of the resources that are present and available. They also compiled feedback, through surveys, from students representing multiple campuses on their experiences with housing and harm reduction tools

This research included a review of policies across five institutions:

1. University of North Carolina School of the Arts
2. Forsyth Technical Community College
3. Winston-Salem State University
4. Wake Forest University
5. Salem College

CAB members reviewed campus policies and engaged with campus leaders and community service providers.

Research Findings

Housing Infrastructure Across Campuses

Students evaluated local colleges/universities' housing infrastructure and examined how they supported student life for traditional and non-traditional experiences. Below are their findings from each school:

1. University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA)

UNCSA has two primary housing options: Artist Village and Center Stage Apartments. Both options give new and returning students an opportunity to receive on campus housing as the university sometimes has extra rooms available during the semester. Off-Campus students may have a harder time finding housing support near campus which affects how they get around as some students have limited access to transportation.

2. Forsyth Technical Community College

As a community college, Forsyth Tech doesn't offer any dormitory options. Instead, they create and work with programs such as Forsyth Tech CARES and Single Stop, to aid in basic necessities. This includes food, rent, and even reduced or free childcare services.

3. Winston-Salem State University (WSSU)

WSSU offers a variety of on-campus housing options, including nine residence halls along with three designated off-campus properties. In the 2025-2026 school year, they expanded their off-campus housing inventory by including over 300 beds with the assistance of student accounts and financial aid to offer flexibility and affordability. In collaboration with their student resource center and case management services (RamCARES), they offer additional support to fight housing instability.

4. Wake Forest University (WFU)

WFU offers a range of on-campus housing options throughout the campus. Through residential life and university-managed housing, WFU has built a housing infrastructure that provides options and accommodations for all students. The broader challenge related to housing accessibility and instability lies with students who seek off-campus housing within the City.

5. Salem College

Salem College address housing insecurity on a case-by-case basis, primarily through its student emergency funds, to assist with matters related to rent in urgent situations. Residence Life has been a gateway for students to receive temporary, free on-campus accommodations as well. With limited resources, Salem college focuses their efforts on providing support through on-campus housing while allowing students to prioritize off-campus housing if they choose to.

In these findings, the key housing challenges we found were:

1. Housing affordability
 - a. A key trend for students is having access to available and affordable off-campus housing options.
2. Awareness and utilization of local resources
 - a. A key trend for students is the ability to identify and make use of local resources that support both their education and daily life.

Harm Reduction as a Strategic Housing Solution

College students within the City of Winston-Salem face unique risks related to substance use, mental health, and emergency response. The Twin City Harm Reduction Collective (TCHRC) is a local and active harm reduction network along with the City with Dwellings. We define harm reduction as a proactive, preventative approach to reducing risk across housing instability, mental health, and substance use. Through our research, we see that harm reduction efforts:

- Reduces preventable injuries and overdoses
- Provides nonjudgmental support and resources
- Normalizes safety behaviors

Investing in harm reduction efforts through mental health measures early and proactively leads to less cost and better wellbeing for all students. While the initial investment in these resources is seemingly low, the issues that arise and the cost of untreated students increase costs exponentially. There is a noticeable inaccessibility to mental health care for any student; even those that are classified as steady income, stable, or low risk (i.e., poverty, debt). That inaccessibility and other barriers only grow when students are already facing other difficulties, such as lack of housing or an inability to afford living costs. By placing various costs on the different aspects of care, from any angle, in the hopes of increasing profit; the safety and care of students can be minimized.

Affordability is a key harm reduction tool because it reduces the number of people who ignore warning signs, concerning behavior, or other indicators of a mental health crisis. When mental health resources are financially accessible, more individuals can seek help early, lowering long-term costs per person and improving overall community wellbeing. A city that places genuine concern for the wellbeing of all its students will benefit from a healthier, more supported population.

- “Greater investment in preventing such behaviors in youth would yield savings across public safety and the criminal justice system, behavioral health, education, and so on.” - “Investing in Prevention Makes Good Financial Sense,” NIH
- “Communities That Care (CTC) is a prevention system—based on the SDS—that helps interested communities implement a coordinated set of effective prevention approaches customized to the community’s specific goals and needs in behavioral/mental health.” - “Communities that Care (CTC) Prevention System,” NIH

Harm reduction in Winston-Salem is supported by a strong local infrastructure, particularly through TCHRC, which provides essential services such as naloxone distribution, syringe exchange, mobile outreach, and health testing. These efforts aim to reduce overdose deaths, limit the spread of disease, and connect individuals to care without stigma. This is vital for college students across all campuses where substance use, mental health challenges, and barriers to emergency response create heightened risk. These services are particularly relevant to college students, though awareness and utilization among student populations remains an area for growth.

Affordability and accessibility are central to harm reduction as a strategic housing solution. Barriers such as cost, insurance limitations, and lack of resources prevent many students from receiving adequate mental health and medical care. Investing in preventative mental health services and accessible care reduce long-term societal costs while improving overall community well-being. Ultimately, harm reduction is framed as a proactive, strategy not only saving lives but fostering a healthier, supportive campus and city environment.

Conclusion

Housing stability and harm reduction are not separate challenges but are deeply intertwined systems shaping the safety conditions of students, their ability to learn effectively, and their experiences within the City of Winston-Salem. Across campuses, students have identified numerous gaps in affordability, and awareness of resources. The harsh reality is that these gaps do not exist in isolation but are compounded by risk, particularly for students navigating financial hardship, mental health challenges, or housing affordability issues.

This research also highlights a powerful and actionable truth: harm reduction measures work. When accessible and implemented early and often, harm reduction strategies prevent crises, reduce long-term public costs, and create pathways for stability in local efforts. Particularly those led by Twin City Harm Reduction Collective, who demonstrate how community-based, nonjudgmental care saves lives and connects individuals to critical resources.

This report serves as a reflection of student’s research, and conversations. By using existing tools and collaborating with educational institutions and community partners, City Council can continue to build a healthier and stronger city.

Key Observations

The College Advisory Board highlights the following observations to the City Council:

1. The city should continue partnering with local colleges, community organizations, and service providers
2. The city should continue supporting initiatives that increase student awareness and access to local resources.

3. The city should continue developing affordable housing options.

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