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Elon considering Greensboro for law school location

Jay Dorne
News Editor

Elon is considering placing a law school in Greensboro. Location of a possible law school is a major issue being examined by a feasibility task force before its final report to the Board of Trustees in March.

The task force, headed by Provost Gerry Francis, is currently in the second phase of its law school feasibility study. This stage has focused on possible locations, missions and resources for a law program. During its investigation, the task force has visited six law schools, three with facilities on campus and three with facilities off campus.

Most recently, the task force has been communicating with interested parties in both Greensboro and Alamance County, after determining that a Charlotte-based school would not be as successful.

Greensboro officials and civic organizations are seeking to revitalize the downtown area and have expressed interest in accommodating a law school. Locating the law school in downtown Greensboro would be a way to boost the city's economy, said Susan Schwartz, executive director of Action Greensboro.

The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation has been exploring possible locations and financial resources for the law school.

"The law school would be a positive social and economic project for the Greensboro area, which is the goal of our organization," said Jim Melvin, president of the Bryan Foundation and a founding member of Action Greensboro. Melvin also stressed that a law school would attract and retain young people in the area, a goal shared by city officials.

"We thought it was a great idea when we heard Elon indicated they were looking at the downtown area," Schwartz said. "We would work to accommodate the needs of a program and encourage others to do so."

"We are particularly interested in



attracting young professionals," said Ed Kitchen, Greensboro city manager. "These are the people that will go after better and higher paying jobs, the kind of jobs that law students look for."

Recent and future development between Alamance and Guilford counties would support a decision to locate the law school in Greensboro.

"With development naturally occurring toward the East, the project would help growth along the corridor connecting the two counties," Kitchen said.

Kitchen and Francis have both praised the recent development in western Alamance County and have acknowledged that a Greensboro-based law school would strengthen Alamance's link to Guilford and be advantageous to both counties.

A major advantage of a Greensboro location is the proximity to federal courts and some of the largest law firms in North Carolina, said Francis, who indicated that there has been a mixed response from the legal community.

Jon Wall, an attorney at the

ences essential for law students."

Those at other law firms say the area does not need any more lawyers and oppose an Elon law school in Greensboro, Francis said.

If Elon were to build a law school on campus, the main advantage would be integration.

"There's nothing better than proximity," Francis said. "If a person in political science wants to speak with the law school, it would be great. I've seen our physical therapy faculty do that wonderfully with the science department."

"No matter where it is located, a law school would pull off the

strengths of the undergraduate program, such as the engaged learning component," Francis said. "You have to ask, which location would really be best for the program? What really matters are opportunities of additional resources."

Francis indicated that costs of initial resources are a major factor in determining a location. A minimum of 60,000 square feet would be required for adequate facilities.

The cost of constructing an on-campus law school has been estimated at \$20 million and an off-campus school could involve costs of buying land or leasing and renovating preexisting facilities. Resources for a law library are estimated at \$2.75 million, not including faculty.

The Board of Trustees could reach a decision as soon as March 9, when the feasibility task force submits its final report. However, the board could request additional research and the decision could take longer, Francis said.

"The important thing that Elon is doing right now is asking the question, 'Should we have a law school?' I think it would be a huge mistake if in the year 2020 someone asked, 'Why didn't we do that?'" Francis said, adding, "That's where planning comes into looking at the future of an institution. Regardless of how the question is answered, the key thing is that we asked it."

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Fire starts in Koury dryer before game

Jay Dorne
News Editor

A fire broke out in a dryer in the Koury Center at about 4 p.m. Saturday.

The fire, which broke out just prior to a women's basketball game, was the result of some towels igniting that had not been properly cleaned, said Allen Poe, chief of

security at Elon. Firefighters from the Elon Fire Department promptly arrived to extinguish the fire.

Nobody in the building was hurt and the damage was minimal, Poe said.

If the items had been cleaned properly, the fire probably could have been avoided," Poe said.

A similar situation occurred at the Koury Fieldhouse near Rhodes

Stadium two years ago, but it is not a common problem, Poe said.

"Although this is not a common problem, Koury employees indicated they will be paying more attention to these kinds of things," Poe said.

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