

Other Opinion

Elon needs 'good study atmosphere'

Bob Moser



ity of classes and majors are in business or some professional field rather than liberal arts study; and student interest in learning does not generally exist to a high degree.

It is dangerous, however, to simply cite these problems and fall back on them as reasons for the lack of academic excellence at Elon. A good atmosphere of learning has not been established at Elon, and the reasons for this do not rest solely on the shoulders of "disinterested" students, but rather on the shoulders of equally disinterested faculty and administration.

The teaching staff at Elon has not set as a priority establishing a demanding, challenging curriculum for students, but has generally (as students well know) fallen back on the assumption that Elon students are not capable of succeeding in such a curriculum.

Classes, therefore, inspire that famous "get by with as little effort as possible" attitude of Elon students. Students can afford to try to get by with as little as possible, simply because too many professors seem to expect as little as possible from them.

But there are other elements which contribute, in their own way, to the lack of a good academic atmosphere at Elon. One of these problems is the brevity of library hours during

which students may pursue their studies. McEwen Library is open only until 11 p.m. on week-days, and for very short hours on weekends. These hours do not allow enough time for students to pursue their academic studies.

There are many students who simply cannot do ample studying in their residence halls, even late at night, because of noise and other distractions. The library, or some other type of study room, is the only place where these students can have enough quiet, and freedom from distractions to get the needed studying accomplished.

In addition to the pragmatic problem of students simply not having ample time and an appropriate place in which to do good, quality studying, another problem exists which is linked to the overall academic problem of the school. The short library hours exist, we are told, as a result the lack of students' demands on the facility. In other words, we are told that students do not use the library enough, or would not use the library enough to warrant longer hours.

This attitude channels back to students, and once again they are given the feeling that they are not expected to accomplish a great deal academically.

If the problem of inadequate library hours cannot be remedied by increasing library hours, for financial reasons, then an alternate studying site could be established to give students ample opportunity to do their work at any hour they choose.

Since no rooms at Elon are large enough to accommodate such a "study room," one of the halls in the Alamance or Powell Buildings could be kept open, with security guards (who must work during these hours anyway) maintaining order. Many students in the past have relied on these buildings to study in when the library closes, but recently they have not been allowed to stay in these rooms after midnight or 1 a.m.

Increasing library hours, or creating an alternate study site, should be as high a priority

for the school as adding majors or other academic programs. The root of the problem of low academic standards at Elon does not lie in a dearth of good academic programs: rather, it lies in the prevailing attitude which is caused by low expectations of both professors and students concerning academic performance, and by problems such as the short library hours.

The attitude which prevails is that students can, and will, do as little as possible to get by. This can only be improved by creating a good academic climate, and one way to do this is to give students a good, quiet place, and plenty of hours in which to study.

Longer study hours will not, alone, create a good atmosphere of learning, but it is a positive step that must be taken.

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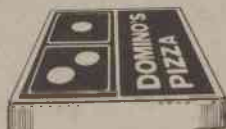
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