

Other Opinions

Students should participate in town politics

By Dr. George Taylor

Students, why don't you get involved in the Political System? I am not talking about during the Presidential election. I am talking about the local political system—the Town of Elon College. Spend a few minutes with me discussing reasons why you should and then decide for yourself.

While we could discuss forever all the reasons why you should, I am going to discuss two areas for your edification. The first area is political and the other is economic.

Last year the then North Carolina Attorney General, Rufus Edmisten made ruling that has forced the Alamance County

voter registrar to follow the guidelines set up by the U.S. Supreme Court. This means that students can register and vote in the same community where they attend school. Thus if you spend from 10 to 12 months in Elon, you can vote in Elon.

This court ruling says that college students are not second-class citizens. It gives them the same protection as individuals who work for a company and are transferred every three to five years.

Because you are here 10 to 12 months a year, the decisions made by the Board of Aldermen of Elon College affect you much more than those made where your parents live. And only through your participation—in elections

and campaigns—can you see that your inputs are heard. You can have a definite affect upon the town if enough of you register and vote.

Your economic affect upon this town is also extremely large. This effect is both indirect and direct. As for the indirect, Elon students, as a whole, pay around \$8,450,000 a year for tuition. This money is then used for salaries, utilities, maintenance, and other purchases. If 35 percent of this money is spent within the town of Elon, it comes to around \$2,957,000. This is roughly 10 percent of the total assessed value of the entire town of Elon College.

Now let's examine some of the direct economic impact students

have upon the town. The national average of money spent by college students is \$19.75 per week above the cost of tuition, room and books. If we reduce that to \$15.00 and multiply it times the number of Elon students who live on campus in this town of Elon College, we come to around \$28,000 per week or \$122,550 per month.

The average rent for apartments and homes in Elon that students pay is about \$300 per month. Multiplying this figure with about 75 percent of the apartments and homes within one-half a mile of the College, we come to about \$37,800 per month in rents. Add these rents to the monthly spending and the total amount of money students pump

directly into the town of Elon is around \$160,000 per month.

This data implies that the town of Elon College relies upon your money for a large part of its economic well-being. Should you not also have a direct say so in the town's political and governmental decisions as well? In other college communities where students participate, both the town and the schools have benefited.

To sum up this essay, you have the political rights to register and vote, as well as the responsibility. Your economic impact is tremendous upon the town. Therefore, why don't you participate?

It does not matter which political party. It only matters if you participate.

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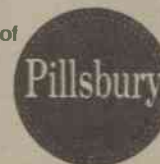
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