

Editorials

Search to fill position should be extensive

Dr. M. Christopher White, vice president for academic and student affairs, will be leaving Elon at the end of the spring semester to become the next president of Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Springs, N.C. According to President Fred Young, it is yet uncertain how extensive the search for someone to fill the No. 2 position will have to be.

In 1982 when Dr. James Moncure left the vice presidency, White was promoted from dean of academic affairs to fill Moncure's position without a full-blown national search for candidates. Similarly, in 1983 Marydell Bright was replaced by Joanne Soliday as dean of admissions and financial aid, and Bill Long was replaced by Ron Klep-cyk as dean of students. In 1985, Robert Poindexter from Burlington City Schools was chosen to replace John Mitchell as vice president for business. In none of these cases did the college advertise for replacements in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and other professional journals.

Will the replacement of White break the trend of promoting people already in the Elon administration and hiring from the immediate area? If not, perhaps it should. It's not that there are no qualified candidates here; but as Dr. John G. Sullivan, professor of philosophy, said in an interview, conducting a national search could be an opportunity for Elon to move forward.

Sullivan also said, "It's an opportunity for Elon to really reconsider what the possibilities of that role are—to rethink its importance as we move into a new decade." He said it is a chance to seek out new talent and vision.

As Sullivan and White have both said, the search for a new vice president is an opportunity. A national search could bring Elon someone who could vastly broaden the college's own ideas and even further enhance its academic credibility.

In recent years Elon has been improving its standards. Admitting better prepared students and hiring more distinguished faculty here is a chance to move forward even more.

It is true that there are advantages to hiring local people. For one, they are more familiar with the programs and facilities at Elon, and a smooth transition would most likely occur.

But familiarity with Elon could also be considered a disadvantage. Someone who is used to the programs at Elon may not make any real changes. When few changes are made, progress slows or ceases.

Elon is a successful school and would certainly be able to hire someone from another successful school. Elon could benefit not only in academics, but also in reputation for hiring a top-notch administrator. A reputation for being able to recruit excellent administrators would also improve Elon's ability to recruit more faculty and students of high merit.

To some people, Elon still seems a provincial college. An opportunity to stand up against that accusation is now available. The college should seize that opportunity and advertise the vice presidential vacancy nationally.

-By Jane Kidwell



Professor commends editorial

To the editor:

College students of the 1980's have often been described as being more concerned about material wealth than social issues. In light of this, I want to commend *The Pendulum* and Jane Kidwell for the Dec. 12 editorial regarding the problem of poverty in North Carolina. As the editorial implied, it is becoming increasingly difficult to blame the victims of poverty for their own plight.

The increase in the poverty rates among women, children, and the working poor are particularly disturbing. In order to resolve the problem, we must recognize that poverty is the result of a less-than-perfect system rather than an aberration created by some few who refuse to live by the work ethic. Such a recognition on the part of the American people would be a first step toward rebuilding many of the social programs which have

been dismantled or weakened over the past several years.

It is tragic irony that as more women, children and working people drop below the poverty line, there are fewer services available to assist them. Private sector efforts, such as the Salvation Army, are far from adequate in meeting the needs of these people.

The editorial raises the question as to what can be done about the problem of poverty by those of us here at Elon. The problem is complex and the solutions are not obvious. Of course, our private acts of charity play a part. May I suggest, however, that a more important role for us could be communicating to our legislators, representatives and political leaders that we are concerned about poverty, that we are supportive of services to the poor, and that we want to see the problem of poverty addressed as a top priority item on the social policy agenda.

The problem must be studied, alternatives must be explored, creative interventions must be conceived. But first, there must be the collective will to do so. We must do far more than drop our change in the Salvation Army basket and think about the poor. Let us not make our concern for the poor a passing thought for the Christmas season but a commitment to work seriously and intelligently toward a solution.

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