

# Emphasis

## Ward pushes proposal through the system

By Paul Harris  
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When Scott Ward said that he would work to extend visitation as part of his campaign for SGA President last year, he was making a bid that has been common to student government elections since visitation was first allowed at Elon College in the late 1960s.

"It's always an issue during the election, but nothing is ever done about it," says Ward, who will be graduating this month. He adds that his greatest accomplishment during his year as SGA President has been presenting the administration with detailed research on the current visitation policy and a proposal to extend the hours that he says President Fred Young "can't turn down."

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**-Scott Ward**

However, as the SGA proposal to liberalize visitation has made its way through the various faculty and student reviewing committees, a major change has begun to seem likely. That would be the replacement of Ward's proposed student "monitor system" with campus security personnel to oversee visitation.

### Doing groundwork

Ward started work on his proposal last summer, just after being elected president. He immediately consulted with David Atkins, director of student activities, and determined how to pursue the project. They determined that by conducting a survey among resident students, SGA could obtain data on how the average student feels about the current visitation policy.

With additional help from Dean of Student Affairs Ron Klepcyk,

Ward narrowed down a lengthy list of questions about visitation and drafted a survey which was distributed by resident assistants in the fall of 1986. Eight hundred and thirty-four students responded to questions such as whether they thought hours should be extended or restricted, and how various changes would affect life in the residence halls.

Ward studied the results of the query and discovered that he had only touched the tip of the iceberg with his survey. In order to present the administration with a legitimate proposal, he's spent more than ten hours a week on the project which he describes as a huge research paper that never gets done.

Should his proposal be approved by Young, visitation will be extended to 1 p.m. - 11 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday and on weekends from 12 p.m. - 1 a.m., a drastic change from the current policy which permits four visiting hours during early evening on Monday through Thursday. Hours on Friday and Saturday would be changed to 12 p.m. - 1 a.m.

In drafting the proposal, Ward decided that a major step was to consider the visitation policies of other colleges and universities. With the help of Atkins and Klepcyk, he petitioned 16 area colleges, 13 of which responded. "We found that many schools in the area have changed visitation to be more lenient," he says. "Ours has been stagnant."

After studying the responses and visiting some of the nearby colleges, Ward researched the history of visitation at Elon College and began writing. In the course of the past year, he created a proposal that has gained approval from several organizations and committees including Student Life.

Last month, Ward presented his proposal to Klepcyk in the Student Affairs Office. After spending much time considering the technicalities involved in such a change, the proposal has gained Klepcyk's support. He says that the next step is to send the proposal to Dr. Warren Board, Vice President of Academics. Board will be the final reviewer of the proposal before it is forwarded to Young.



Scott Ward looks over the 13 page visitation survey and proposal he prepared during his term as SGA President. After devoting much of the past year to it, he anxiously awaits a response from the administration.

Photo by Paul Harris

"Our intention is to provide Dr. Board with a recommendation," Klepcyk says. He explains that by working closely with the Residence Life staff, Student Affairs has highlighted areas of concern in Ward's proposal. Klepcyk says he will point out a few items in the form of a memo that he'll send to Board this week.

"I've shared what I think the major concerns are," says Klepcyk. But he says that the final decision is in the hands of the president and is not likely to come until after commencement.

Young, who has not seen the proposal yet, has no comment on the current visitation policy. But he says that all proposals to his office receive serious consideration and he'll have to read the document before determining if a policy change is needed.

### Proposal support

Rev. Richard McBride, College Chaplain, says that when a survey like Ward's is circulated, the majority will naturally favor an extension of hours. For that reason, the administration must be concerned with the minority who are not in favor of expanding visitation hours.

In order to accommodate the few students who indicate a need for restriction, Ward incorporated the addition of more quiet floors in

the proposal. Currently, third floor West is a quiet floor and Ward is suggesting that more restricted areas be available if the demand increases.

McBride supports the proposal, saying it's a "positive move to extend the hours." He says that appropriate structuring of time is healthy, but points out that there are boundaries like privacy and security that must be considered.

Atkins also endorses a change in visitation and agrees with McBride's view, saying "extended visitation is needed at least as an option to students." After presenting students and faculty with the proposed changes, he's found that an expansion in the hours would be well received.

Laura Shepherd, a freshman who lives in Moffitt, says everyone she lives around favors extending the visitation hours. "I think it's a problem of academics," she says. Shepherd believes that when the rules of the college interfere with getting assignments done, there's a major social problem. She says that the current restrictions on visitation are one reason that she's planning to live off campus next year.

Carrie Town, a resident of Maynard dormitory, agrees that an extension to visitation is overdue, arguing that students need access to other students for academic reasons. "They throw

you out of the library and LRC at 11 p.m. and not all studying is done at that time."

But former Dean of Student Affairs William Long disagrees. "As an administrator, the president must be concerned with technicalities and security is the big one," he says. Long recalls coming to Elon in 1974 when visitation was permitted from 2 p.m. - 5 p.m. on Sunday afternoon only and there was an eleven o'clock curfew for women every night. Reflecting on his experiences as dean, he says that such changes don't come overnight.

Eventually, the weekends were opened to limited visitation, and six years ago a proposal to permit a few hours of visitation during the week was submitted. Long remembers when SGA President Dan Daily impressed the Board of Trustees with outstanding research, and a compromise was made to mark the beginning of seven day visitation at Elon.

At that time, the Board of Trustees made the decision concerning visitation, but now the responsibility of social change is in the hands of the president. In the response that Ward's proposal has generated in reviewing committees is any indication of how it will be received by Young another milestone in the history of visitation at Elon College may be around the corner.