

# The Pendulum

Serving the Elon College community

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Elon College, NC

lowest in 12 years

## Minority enrollment down

by John Hoyle  
Editor

Black student enrollment at Elon has decreased by almost half of what it was five years ago.

Statistics published by the Office of the Registrar show that in 1983 there were 257 black students enrolled. In 1987, there were only 118.

"There is just not enough financial assistance at Elon," said black senior Crystal Morrison. "When I came here, the cost was around \$4,000 to attend Elon, but now it's almost \$8,000. It's hard to get that kind of money."

According to registrar's statistics, black enrollment was 9.5 per cent of the total student enrollment in 1983. By 1987, the black enrollment had dropped to 5.2 per cent of the total 3,100 student enrollment. That was the lowest per cent of black students since 1976 when blacks made up only 4.9 per cent of the student body.

The total minority population at Elon makes up 5.7 per cent of the student population.

Dean of Admissions and Financial Planning Joanne Soliday said the main reason for the drop in black enrollment is because Elon

has become more popular. "Three years ago, we received 2,700 applications for 800 freshmen positions, and this past year we got 4,000 applications for 800 positions", Soliday said.

"When that popular trend started, the faculty said to take only the best students. That hit us by surprise, so we raised the SAT acceptance by 100 points. Minorities do go lower on the SAT scores, and they got caught in the middle", she added.

Soliday also stated there is no denying that there are more upper middle-class students than ever before at Elon.

Finance is not the only problem though. Some blacks cite that Elon does not have much to offer black students. "There is not one thing here that would attract black students", said black senior George Dixon. "The atmosphere of the

See Enrollment pg. 5

## S.G.A. offers alternative book buy-back plan

by Scott Wood  
Staff Writer

The textbook you paid \$35.00 for in February might only be worth \$10.00 in May.

A professor changing text books, a class not being offered next semester, or an edition change can result in a student losing out in a book buy-back. But some students feel that even if the campus shop will buy back their books, they are not offered a fair price.

The Student Government Association will offer an option to this system. This Monday, students will receive a form from the S.G.A.

in their mail offering the opportunity for students to sell their used books directly to other students.

"The Quick and Dirty Book Exchange," as it is called in other colleges, will be given a trial run at Elon this spring. Students will list their name, telephone number, and the books they have to sell along with their asking price. The S.G.A. will compile the list along with the list of books being used in the fall.

"There is an immediate advantage to the seller and the buyer", said S.G.A. President Heydt Philbeck.

see Books pg.2

## Campus media staff chosen for 1988 - 89

by Betsy Dantell  
Staff Writer

The votes are in and the new editors and managers for Elon publications and productions have been announced for 1988-89.

Editor-in-chief for *The Pendulum* is Kathy Meadows. Meadows is a senior from Danville, VA, majoring in journalism and mass communications.

She began working on the paper last spring as a staff writer and moved up to managing editor last fall. Meadows said she's excited about her new position. "This is something I've wanted to do since I was editor of my high school paper."

See Positions, pg. 2



Catch those rays! Von Shepard found a spot on "Harper Beach" to enjoy the warm weather of the past week. Photo by Matt Howell

## 23 million lack 'functional' skills

by Kathy Meadows  
Managing Editor

*This is the last in a series of illiteracy articles.*

Functional illiteracy has become a familiar concept to many people. This is defined as the inability of a person to read simple instructions, write a legible letter, and engage knowledgeably in contractual relationships.

Although reports show that almost 23 million Americans lack skills necessary to function in society, it is virtually impossible to determine exactly how many Americans are functionally illiterate.

The term "functional illiteracy" was originally created to designate a higher level of competency required than just reading and writing one's name. As a result, the term has lent itself to continuous redefinition which has made objective measurement very complex.

How should functional illiteracy be measured? Do you judge one's

ability to use written materials like credit card application forms, train schedules, and aspirin instructions, or do you judge how well one might be able to fake literacy?

Questions such as these have existed for decades, and in 1970, the Conference on Strategies for Generating a Nationwide Adult Right-to-Read Effort created a new outlook.

It said the challenge was "to foster through every means the ability to read, write, and compute with functional competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult living." However, who should determine the exact level of that ability?

In one attempt, 30 states have determined that 12th grade graduates must be able to show reading abilities of at least 8th grade level to receive a diploma. But this means that in situations requiring reading skills at the 9th

grade level or above, those graduates reading only at the 8th grade level are functionally illiterate.

This brings up the question as to just how many high school graduates are functionally illiterate. Although the exact figure doesn't exist, researcher John Roueche found that over half of the community college students (all having high school diplomas) are lacking in adequate basic skills. In fact, it seems that the most offered course in American community colleges were remedial reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Just as there is no exact figure on the number of functionally illiterates, there is no correct assumption as to who they are. The problem occurs in all classes, races, and religions. However, it is correct to say that illiteracy is more commonly found among the less fortunate members of society.