

Viewpoint

Elon College or Elon University?
 This question sparked debate a couple of years ago and it looks like it could be cropping up again.
 Except this time it's not about whether or not to change the name of Elon, but whether or not to change the content of the school.
 The college wants to hire more professors with Ph.D.s. It believes that by doing this, the school will continue increasing the level of education students are supposed to gain here.
 This is not true. Just because someone has a Ph.D. doesn't mean they are any more qualified than someone else. Elon should base its hiring process on qualifications instead of a piece of paper.
 A Ph.D. is nothing more than a dead tree with the name of a university on it. Professors should have some experience in what they are trying to teach Elon students.
 If a professor has spent eight years studying and researching and zero years working in the field they were trained in, what would they really know about "real world experience?"
 This is especially true for the communications department. How can someone with a Ph.D. realistically teach what it is like in a news room or television studio, if they have never worked in one.
 However, it doesn't just apply to the communications department. All aspects of Elon's curriculum should have professors with real world experience.
 It would be stupid to have someone teach creative writing, if they've never worked as a writer. Just like it would be stupid to have someone teach business if they've never been involved with running a business.
 The best way to learn about something is to do it. And an even better way to teach someone about something is to have a knowledge of real world experience to share with them.

Off The Record

"I should be allowed to shoot my mouth off, I should have a call-in show . . . I should be allowed to think."
 - They Might Be Giants
 "I should be allowed to think"

THE PENDULUM

Informing the Elon College Community

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Faculty not living up to promise

The days of our youth were filled with the carefree adventures of the "Dukes of Hazard." Sheriff's deputy Roscoe P. Colettrain chased the Duke brothers all around Hazard County with little success week in and week out. Each episode, the boys in the General Lee (The Duke's car) prevailed. Justice was done. Were the Dukes ingenious criminals who were able to avoid capture by the law using incredible intelligence and ability? Nope. They were dumb old rednecks who had a dumber sheriff chasing them.

What incredible allegorical tale of wonder am I now going to bestow upon you? I'm going to let you all in on a little secret. These professors who teach us, nurture us, and provide us comfort and care are not that much smarter than the average person. They have their strengths and weaknesses, quirks and qualms. Granted, there are a few certifiable geniuses amongst the faculty. For the most part, however, their candles burn no brighter than ours.

"Oh, that can't be true," you say, "I know professors who can do calculus in their heads, name all forty-whatever presidents and their wives, sing every single Dead song frontwards, backwards and from the middle out, and have not made a grammatical error in 14 years."

Again, a little secret that I will share with you. Time, my friends, is an incredibly important factor in their abilities. I would be quite willing to make this little wager with any takers. Take any five

Scott Miller



students and match them up with any five faculty members. Give the students the length of time that the faculty member has had to accumulate the knowledge that they now have. (For example, if a faculty member has had 16 years, researching, teaching and writing, then allow the student to research, teach and write for 16 years.) Next, you compare the aggregate knowledge of today's professor to the future knowledge of today's student. I suspect that four out of the five test subjects would be able to make the faculty member they were pared



off with look like the intellectual equivalent of Forrest Gump.

Admirably, some of the faculty have taken on the challenge of higher academic standards. A more difficult grading system, more class involvement, and constant pressure on the student has produced a somewhat higher intensity level in the classroom. Unfortunately, many faculty have chosen not to rise to the challenge. To them, students are just a meal ticket. There have been several actions taken by individual professors that have shown incredible disdain for the process of making Elon a better institution.
 Oh yeah, back to the allegory of the General Lee. Time is of the essence. The Duke boys spent a lot of time in the backwoods of their Georgian county. The urban bourgeoisie sheriff's deputy, Roscoe, just couldn't cope with their accumulated knowledge of the back trails and cool places to jump over the road. Same thing here.

Next time a professor loads you down with work, don't just say "fuck it" and go to Drink and Drive at the Lighthouse. Surprise them, blow them away with your knowledge. All it takes is time. To be Platonic for a minute, the faculty are no further out of the cave than we are.

Last fall, President Young asked the faculty to push the student body beyond "their comfort zone." It is high time that we rise to that challenge, meet it head on, and push back. Unfortunately, we might encounter that much resistance.

On the nature of human existence

Dane Frederiksen
 Columnist

Somehow we exist. A billion years ago humans weren't here. That means we became what we are. It is generally accepted in our academic environment that we evolved. If you don't think so, then accept the premise as axiomatic for this article. If we did evolve and we are now different than other animals, then there is a step that needs explanation. The human spark of consciousness is problematic. What makes us different?

We have the ability to understand ourselves. Our mind comprehends itself! I don't know if you ever stopped to think of this but it is something that I feel is worth exploring. I can't understand how some people don't want to know

who and what they are. This is the thirst for knowledge that leads one to philosophy.

Our reality is dictated by our experiences. Forget about the physical realm, the only way we know anything is through our experiences. The flux of reality is measured by our senses. If reality was unchanging we would not experience our reality. Reality is different for everyone because our experiences differ. The philosopher Sarte said we are all alone, marooned in our minds. Everything you know, the entirety of reality is in your mind. Your mind is your experience. Your choices dictate your reality, you create your destiny and you are responsible for it. I used to think it sounded depressing to be marooned in my own reality. I now feel that

there is an interpersonal recognition of our individual states. We seem to recognize a bond between other conscious beings. We are not alone. There is a collective reality. Our intuitions tell us that we are this together. The best example I can think of is eye contact. When you look into someone's eyes you simply know that there is consciousness there.

It would seem that intuition seems to be a separate sense, common to all. It's the sum of our sensory information, our consciousness and our experiences. We have an understanding of reality based on our perceived reality. What else could reality be other than what we experience it as? Somehow we experience existence before essence. We are unique. Think on it.