

Elon's top five majors growing in popularity with students

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Contributing Reporter

According to a recent report from the Registrar's office, Elon's top five fastest growing majors have grown by 33 percent since Fall 1996.

These top five majors, which include social science education, health education, special education, journalism and business administration, had 1,320 students enrolled in Fall 1995 and currently have 1,758 students.

"These numbers are not entirely accurate," Assistant Registrar Susan Sigmon said.

"Until this fall, we only re-

corded the primary major of students with double majors, so some numbers are not as accurate as they should be."

Sigmon also said that some students with double majors had to choose which degree they wanted on their diplomas which skewed the numbers slightly.

Dean of Education and Health Physical Education and Leisure Gerald Dillashaw said he is pleased with the growth in the education division.

The three majors grew from 37 students to 104 students, a 108 percent increase.

"We have a steadily growing,

quality program," said Dillashaw. He notes that the number of applications for the teacher education program, which is not open to freshmen, increases about ten percent a year.

Dillashaw said that the increase in health education may be misleading.

"Most health education students are also majoring in physical education, and the numbers don't reflect that. So the increase may not be as large as the numbers show," Dillashaw said.

Students think that Elon's education program has its perks, too.

"I like the education program here because you can double major with special education and still graduate in four years," LeeAnn Sarkisian, sophomore, said. "I didn't find that anywhere else."

Sarkisian is double majoring in elementary education and special education.

The number of journalism majors has more than doubled since 1995, going from 32 to 86.

George Padgett, the chairman of the journalism and communications department, attributes this to a better reputation.

"Our graduates get good jobs and do well, so our reputation has just gotten better. Elon alumni and high school guidance counselors recommend us more," Padgett said.

He also feels that most of the journalism and communication students that Elon has initially come in knowing what they want to do.

"Journalism encompasses the new media, such as online newspapers and magazines, which are highly visible to most people via new technology. More people get interested," Padgett said.

Like education, the number of journalism students is rising nationally, so Elon's numbers are keeping up with national trends.

John Burbridge, head of the Love School of Business, has some more tangible reasons that his programs increased from 467 students to 709 students, a 51 percent increase.

"One factor that gave the business program a greater identity was taking over Long Building in September of 1995. We centralized and more students identified us as a building and as a program," said Burbridge.

Another factor Burbridge mentioned was the move to strengthen each of the five concentrations under business administration.

"We added four credits, one class, to each concentration so students would have more exposure to their area," he said.

He felt more students were concerned about their post-graduation futures and perhaps saw business as a major that would give them skills they could use.

"Elon is not a feeder school, so all the preprofessional programs have to prepare their students for jobs after graduation," said Burbridge.

Lauren Thompson, a senior business administration major, wants to own a minor league baseball team someday.

She likes the program because the faculty is always available and willing to help, although she thinks the class sizes can be too big.

The economics program, which increased 58 percent from 19 students to 33 students, encourages undergraduate research and high faculty-student interaction.

Burbridge said that most economic students are preparing for graduate school.

National trends show that the number of business students is rising and Elon is keeping with that trend.

More jobs in the business field are available across the country now than in the mid-1990s.

Elon has earned a reputation as more than just a liberal arts school.

In recent years, it has become well-known for its preprofessional programs and continues to give students what they want.



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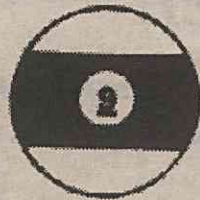
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