

Tradition be damned: Mascot change is positive for Elon

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The Fightin' Christian, the ever ambiguous, ever politically incorrect and ever oxymoronic Elon College mascot, has been pink-slipped.

On Oct. 13, during their Fall meeting, Elon's Board of Trustees voted unanimously to change the athletic identity of the college to something that is, according to President Leo Lambert, "more inclusive and easily understood on a national basis."

The goal is to have the new mascot in place by Fall of 2000 to coincide with Elon's second full season as a NCAA- Division I school and the construction of the new, on-campus Rhodes Stadium.

It's about time this happened. Now, now there, loyal Fightin' C. I can see you glaring at me through your maroon-and-gold face paint as you sneak away from the football game at halftime.

"It's tradition!" you protest. "I've cheered for the Fightin' Christians for years and I've been a Fightin' Christian for years. Should I stop now just because it's a bad marketing image?"

Yes, you should. Because odds are good that you have honestly seen so little of this "bad marketing image" that you wouldn't know a Fightin' Christian if it keyed your Jeep Cherokee.

Think back to your first tour of Elon's campus. How many of you were actually told what the mascot was without asking the tour

guide yourself? Of that percentage of you that were told by the tour guide without specifically asking, how many noticed the sheepish grin when they said "Fightin' Christian" or had them suffix the revelation with "Yeah, I know, it's an oxymoron"?

I personally was not told what the mascot here was while on my first tour. My father inquired near the end of the tour and, upon being told by the guide, wondered aloud if the "Turn-The-Other-Cheek Christians" wasn't more appropriate.

Now, take a moment to browse through your vast store of Elon College merchandise. T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, novelty boxer shorts, whatever. How much of it has "Fightin' Christians" on it?

In my Elon Pride closet, I have four t-shirts, five long-sleeve t-shirts, a sweatshirt and a hat, none of which make any mention of the Fightin' Christian.

By contrast, my old Duke sweatshirt has a huge Blue Devil on it, while my old Maryland sweatshirt has a scowling Terrapin.

Ever notice Elon's athletes walking around campus in their warm-ups or in their jerseys before game day? From soccer to tennis, from football to golf, from softball to cross-country, how many of their uniforms have the Fightin' Christian on it?

Many of our club teams are missing the "Christian" too. You're likely to find Elon Men's and Women's Rugby and Elon Lacrosse playing on the weekend, but how often do you hear about "Fightin' Christians Roller Hockey" or

"Fightin' Christians Swimming?" We simply are not proud of our Fightin' Christian.

School spirit is in as much of a slump as the Aggies' defense in the Elon versus N.C. A&T football game. Sporting events are poorly attended, athletes go unrecognized for their accomplishments and apathy runs high among students when it comes to taking pride in their school.

The gentlemen from Hook called the Elon SuperFans are so limited in number that they couldn't spell out all of "Go Fightin' Christians" on their chests if they tried.

The Fightin' Christians are simply not who we are, so maybe getting a new identity will raise awareness in our athletics and in our school and give spirit a much needed boost.

Despite the college's apparent lack of pride in the Fightin' Christian, the argument still stands that dropping the tried-and-true college mascot goes against tradition. Alumni in particular are vocal about this aspect. There are, however, a number of interesting holes in this argument.

First, the Fightin' Christian as a mascot has only been around since the 1970s. The "Christians" nickname is a bit older, dating back to a football game in the 1920s;

however, it was just one of many that Elon picked up from sports reporters over the years.

I suppose "the Maroon and Gold Machine" just wasn't as catchy to our predecessors as "Fightin' Christians."

Regardless, the Fightin' Christian was never adopted by the Board of Trustees to be the official mascot; it was just picked up by the athletic department to make team nomenclature a little easier.

Speaking of the Board of Trustees, therein lies the second argument against tradition. The unanimous decision to change the mascot was made by them, yet among their number are many Elon College alumni.

One would hope that the Trustees would take as much, if not more pride in the school and its identity than any of us would. And yet they are the ones who chose to change the mascot.

The Fightin' Christian is a shaky, uninspiring tradition to say the least, and it's one that no longer represents the school.

Elon College is changing rapidly. We are diversifying and growing in ways unimaginable just a few years ago.

Athletics achievements aside, we are a much different college than we were fifty years, thirty years or even a decade ago.

The campus, the academics

and athletics, and most of all the people are constantly changing the personality and image of this school.

We need a mascot that reflects this change while still honoring our heritage, our achievements and our identity, past, present and future.

The Fightin' Christian, despite its honorable roots as a representative of our ties to the United Church of Christ and to the Christian ideals of community, fellowship and helping one's neighbors, is really just a witty quip on ESPN Sportscenter waiting to happen.

There are other ways to respect our Christian heritage without alienating those who find the Fightin' Christian to be dated, contradictory or even offensive. We do it every day in our commitment to volunteerism, good citizenship and friendship.

I am excited to be taking part in the mascot change. We could be called the Oaks or the Acorns to give respect to the "Elon" name, the Crusaders or Cardinals to further recognize our Christian roots, the Flames or the Phoenix to pay homage to the fire that destroyed the campus in the 1920s and the college's subsequent and ongoing rebirth, or even the Elon College Fighting Squirrels. The choice is ours.

Whatever our new name, we should just take pride in the fact that we have a school with such strong Christian ideals to be tolerant and accepting of those different from us while still giving respect to our heritage.

Go Elon.



Getting away from it all with tobacco and naps

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You are a college student. You are a person who is constantly overworked and underappreciated. You are all alone in the world. No one understands you. You are cold and wet and tired. Come inside little Timmy, come inside. I can take the pain away.

Many of you out there are juggling such heavy class loads and extracurricular activities that you have almost no time to relax. I'm so swamped that I'm forced to consider the few seconds I get watching a new episode of Dragon Ball Z the highlight of my day.

You know how overworked you are. You even have to schedule

time for your social life. Friends shouldn't have to make appointments to hang out with you.

Now, there are some of you out there who have no idea what I'm talking about. "Work," you say, "At Elon... how odd."

Well, to all you lazy smeg muffins I say unto you, just keep on drinking that beer. You only get out of college what you put into it, so if all you put in is beer, all you're going to get is pee-pee. You can't make a living out of pee-pee. Have you ever tried to sell urine? Not a hot commodity... despite it being sort of warm.

What is one to do? How can we, who do know the meaning of an all-nighter, get away from it all? I'm not talking about the all-nighters that involve togas, bingeing and

hangovers. I'm talking about ones where the only chicks you'll be snuggled up with are Emily Dickinson, Ameila Earhart and Mary Queen of Scots.

What is the answer? God bless the power nap.

Raise your hand if you've ever power napped. Uh-huh. Yes. Good. That's most of you. For you two in the back with the beer stein full of espresso, let me tell you about the power nap.

The power nap is your way of saying to your body, "Sorry about our little fight. Would you like some candy?"

Power naps last for twenty to thirty minutes and can make up for a full night of missed sleep.

Did you know that the human body and mind can operate at peak

efficiency on just four hours of sleep every night for two weeks?

If you don't even have that much time then you can always skip sleeping altogether. It usually takes 96 hours without R.E.M. sleep for hallucinations to set in.

Now it is very important that when you are engaging in power napping you don't ever cross the streams... Sorry, had to throw in another pee-pee reference.

Seriously though, you can't power nap for more than an hour. If you do you'll just ruin your day. It will screw up your sleep cycle and you'll think it's the wrong day.

What are other ways that people like you and me, who are too busy to have a healthy social life, can get away from it all?

Well... I'm against smoking

but consider cigarettes. Just think about it. Each one is like a special little five-minute vacation. They sell these vacations in packs of twenty and there are hundreds of different kinds. Marlboro Reds is like an African safari. Mental Winstons is like a trip to the zoo.

If you need a longer vacation, there are always cigars. Forty-five minutes of pure tobacco-y hedonism, and you look cool. It doesn't get any better.

Whatever your method of killing stress, just remember that you need to get rid of it somehow. That stuff will kill you. Well I'd write more but it's almost five o'clock and I need to go home and watch Dragon Ball Z. Not because I want too, but because I owe it to myself. Go Goku, kick Freiza's butt.