

Expanding horizons, a look at international students who choose Elon

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Contributing Reporter

Many people wonder what it's like to study in another country, but few have the opportunity to get out there and do it.

Hiromi Sumiyoshi, an international student and scholar adviser at Elon College, deals with this issue on a daily basis.

Sumiyoshi works directly with the international students once they are admitted. Her job focuses on helping students obtain immigration records and organizing programs and activities for the international students.

Elon received approval from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in November, 1980 to admit international students into the school. Elon has since created exchange agreements with countries such as Spain and Japan. For example, students are sent from Elon to the University of Valladolid in Spain in exchange for a Spanish professor who will then teach at Elon. The agreement with Japan is with the Baika Women's College.

A group of Japanese students is

sent to Elon every fall. They are hosted in America for one semester. These students come to Elon to study American culture and English.

Besides setting up programs with other countries, Elon allows any student from around the globe who is interested in studying in America to come to Elon.

"International students value American higher education," Sumiyoshi said. "In countries such as China, Korea and Japan, it is extremely competitive to go to a university due to the difficulty of the entrance exams. Being able to come to America to study is not only a privilege, but an honor as well."

There are a few requirements that the student must meet before he or she can even be considered for admission. The student's family must be financially stable and provide proof with a bank statement. They must have or be able to attain a green card and must meet requirements enforced by Elon's admission's office.

International students cannot receive or apply for financial loans or scholarships, cannot work off cam-

pus and do not usually have the accessibility to travel home during breaks, leaving them nowhere to stay while the dorms are closed.

"I think that the school needs to make a special effort to accept the international students and make better accommodations for them," Sumiyoshi said. Over the next few years, Sumiyoshi says she hopes to establish grounds with organizations who will fund scholarships and grants for foreign students such as Queen Noor of Jordan did.

Currently, Elon has 32 international students from around the globe studying during the spring semester as well as 10 to 15 students who have green cards or dual citizenship. "It is more beneficial for Elon to have international students on campus," Sumiyoshi said. "We would like to increase the number of international students in the future." To ensure that the number of international students at Elon does increase in the future, the admissions department sends representatives to Asia every fall to travel around and recruit prospective students.

One student who is currently at-

“Not only does having the student exchange program on campus benefit those from other countries, but it leaves us with an everlasting impression which will change our lives forever.”

tending Elon with a green card is from County Donegal, Ireland. Brian Richard Parke, Jr. is a sophomore international student who plans to spend all four years studying and receiving his bachelor's degree from Elon.

Parke's education began with the first eight years of life in "Primary School." When he was 12, he was shipped off to boarding school, where he received his letter of completion. Throughout boarding school, he was involved in Gaelige football as well as hurling and rugby. Currently, Parke is a member of the men's rugby team as well as the Kappa Sigma Fraternity. Parke said he likes Elon, but he's only here due to family circumstances.

"I would have liked to have stayed in Ireland and finish my portfolio," he said. "Then I would have gone on to accept a place at NCAD (National College of Art and De-

sign) where I would have studied fashion design and graphic design in Dublin."

Parke's story is unique and began when his parents decided to move to Greensboro, N.C. to make traveling for work easier on his father, a chief executive at the UNIFI in Greensboro.

His mother insisted on him coming with them upon completion of high school. Parke and his father made an agreement that he would come to college in the United States. He visited UNCG, Guilford College, Chapel Hill and Duke before his final visit to Elon.

Once he stepped onto Elon's campus, he was hooked. "I liked the small community, pretty school and nice atmosphere for studying," he said. Although Parke's ideal education would have been art, he has begun to explore the opportunities Elon has to offer before settling on a major.

Exchange programs are something from which students, professors, faculty and the community all learn.

Sophomore Stuart Bachman explains. "Not only does having the student exchange program on Elon's campus benefit those coming here from other countries, but it leaves us (students) with everlasting impression which will change our lives forever," he said.

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