

Corrections

-In our April 26 issue, the first paragraph should read:

Last Saturday students gathered in the North Area courtyard for a celebration of the earth. Earthfest was sponsored by the Students for Peace and Justice, Blueprint and the Sierra Club. A variety of events, such as canoeing on Lake Mary Nell were provided by the sponsoring organizations. The event raised awareness, raised money for several charities and provided a day of celebration for the community.

-Also in our April 26 issue, an article about Greek Week on page 17 said Leigh Rothgeb was chairman, it was actually Jamie Goebel of Sigma Kappa. Also in the same article, the candlelight vigil in front of Koury had nothing to do with Greek Week Awards.

The Pendulum is committed to improving the quality of our reporting and relaying facts to our readers. We apologize for errors.

Faculty viewpoint: tenureship and professionalization

Dan Schrot
Reporter

How system became what it is-

President Leo Lambert commented on the system in place when he said, "the Board of Trustees did a major study on the tenure system. The board determined that every academic department have a cap of tenuring 75 percent of the full time faculty.

"The professional track was created for the faculty so they could benefit from professional development funds, travel funds, and sabbaticals, all of which are afforded to faculty members on the professional track," Lambert said.

What do professors have to do to achieve tenure or professional status-

"The portfolio consists of a letter stating why they want tenure and why they think they deserve it. Their Curriculum Vitae, which consists of their resume, courses taught, publications authored, academic services, any scholarly presentations and service to the department. In addition to the CV, a professor must submit annual reports, a self-evaluation, letters from the students, letters from colleagues, annual evaluation from the chair of the department, summary of student evalua-

tions and an evaluation from the dean of the division. People on the professional track do exactly the same thing, which has the same standards for a two-year contract," Laura Roselle, associate professor of political science.

How tenured professors could be let go-

"If the board of trustees feels we would fall under financial exigency crisis, individuals with tenure are not guaranteed employment," Tom Green, chair of academic council said. "Depending on how tenure is perceived, professors are tenured to the institution."

Elon has had reason for contraction before. Elon used to teach administrative and clerical duties. Until a time comes when there was no need for that major, and something had to be done with the professors in that department. Louisiana State University has only a tenure track, and for awhile they had professors even though there was no real need for them.

What do faculty members think of system-

Jeff Pugh, professor of religion, said he does not like how the present system works. "I think the intention of the two-track system was a good one," he said. "It would keep faculty that might have been let go in the other system. The results of this system have not been good. In the minds of faculty, this system creates a two-class system. If a person meets the standards in the professional track, it opens the same standards on the tenure track. If they went to a full tenure system, we would have been better off. It would have brought us more in line with the rest of higher education."

The two-track system "causes problems with recruiting," Roselle said. "We want to be a good school. Good schools have tenure—they don't have a professional track. I don't know of any school that has a professional track," Roselle said. When recruiting, "do you give tenure to new person coming in or to people that have already been here." The two track system causes issues with "equity and fairness."

The Office of Institutional research published statistics of tenured faculty among the Association of New American Colleges, which Elon is a member for 1999-2000. Of the 21 colleges and universities in the ANAC, Elon had the highest percentage of faculty on a non-tenure track at 41.7 percent. The aver-

age percentage of faculty apart of ANAC institutions on non tenure tracks was 15.8 percent. Schools that are apart of the ANAC fall between the research institutions similar to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the institutions that have a stronger focus on liberal arts and teaching.

"Yes I am in favor of two track system," Jim Barbour, associate professor of economics said. Traditionally in academia there are two classes. There are those that are tenured or are on the tenure track, and there are the adjuncts, the part-time faculty that teach a class or two at a time. At most institutions, there is a limit to the percentage of faculty that can be tenured. It varies from school to school, tenured faculty generally run from 70-85 percent. Elon has approximately 75 percent of its faculty tenured," Barbour said.

Perception of professors that have professional status

"On the professional track, the school is telling the professor, 'you are not important,' you are a second-class citizen. While the school asks them to make a long-term commitment to the students, the school will not make a long term commitment to them," Roselle said.

"I don't think of professors on professionalization track as second class citizens in the least. I hope people don't think I think of people on professional track as second class citizens or less desirable," Lambert said.

Period of time it takes for faculty to reach tenure or professional status-

"Individuals come to Elon as an assistant professor can earn as much as two years credit from previous professional experience. It is common for most to come in with some level of credit. Some will be on the professional track for four or five years.. In cooperation with the dean and the chair of the department, professors are placed on a four, five, or six year track for either professionalization or tenure," Green said.

"The new Dean here has received full professor, and tenure at his other institution. The Promotions, Tenure and Professional Status Committee believed he met the standards of Elon. It is common practice at other colleges and universities for schools to grant tenure to academic administrators," Lambert said.

Consequences and benefits-

Tenure allows faculty to be free and explore ideas. Getting ideas is associated with the tenure system. If you try stuff and the administration does not like it, you are gone, faculty members are afraid to bring up this issue. This is a complaint a lot of people make. A random professor can, if a strong institution a professor will remain in contact with faculty and will be dedicated to the students. The benefits of tenure far out weigh the negatives.

"If there is an 85 percent cap instead of a 75 percent cap of full-time faculty and if a department has 10 full-time and five part-time eight can be tenured, leaving; seven that can be let go. The trustees want room for eight to be laid off, they will reduce the full-time people to nine, 80 percent of nine is seven, it will be hard for departments to tenure more faculty," Barbour said.

"While a professor is tenured to the department, it is possible to eliminate tenured positions. All we have to save a basic level of programs, we cannot eliminate a department, I cannot imagine Elon would be in that position," Lambert said.

Perceptions that professors have who have reached professional status have-

"The perception that if people criticize the system, they are being disloyal is absolutely false. Personally, I want Elon to be the best it can possibly be, and I want students to receive the best education they can get. This two track system stands in the way of that," Roselle said.

Tenure does not protect professors from professional malfeasance, professional error of judgment or falsifying student reports. There are certain things in a tenure system faculty have to be accountable for. Tenure will guarantee the college will not fire you because you have run afoul of someone. "If a tenured faculty is let go, they did something really, really wrong," Pugh said.

"Faculty scared of being fired or in fear of being punished for practicing various methods and for criticizing the system are wrong. They are in no danger of losing their jobs. If they were to speak up and get in the face of administration, they would still be able to keep their job and be promoted," Barbour said.

"People can be constructively critical and not face repercussions," Lambert said.



The purpose of *The Pendulum* is to inform and entertain the Elon College community and provide a forum for ideas and opinions.

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