

# Cook addresses upcoming elections, political climate

Ellis Harman

Copy Editor

One of the nation's leading authorities on United States elections and politics was on hand Monday to discuss the upcoming presidential election and the state of

American politics. Political analyst Charles Cook spent the day visiting several political sciences classes and wrapped up his visit with a speech at 8 p.m. in Whitley Auditorium.

Cook, the editor and publisher of *The Cook Political Report*, has served as an election night commen-

tator for both CBS and NBC since 1990, writes a political column and analysis for *The National Journal* and has spent the past 31 years in Washington, D.C. examining voting trends and elections. Cook is also an analyst for CNN's "Inside Politics" and has made appearances on several major network shows, including NBC's "Meet the Press," "The CBS Evening News" and ABC's "Nightline."

Cook used his political experience to illustrate American politics and elections for his audience. He said he believes that though the Republican party controls most government offices, the country is still evenly split along the party lines and that the country is entering an interesting and exciting era politically.

Cook said he believes next year's presidential election could go either way, depending on a number of factors. He stated that the state of the country, both economically and in foreign affairs, could determine the outcome of the election.

"The fact is, if the economy is really strong, the Democrats could nominate the reincarnation of Franklin Deleanor Roosevelt and they'd still lose," he said. "If the economy and Iraq are going well, and people want to re-elect President Bush, it doesn't really matter who the Democratic candidate is. And of course, the reverse is true. If the economy is going badly, if Iraq is going badly, it won't mat-

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—Charles Cook, columnist and political analyst

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ter who the Democratic candidate is. Seventy to 80 percent of whether or not Bush gets re-elected depends on circumstances, not who the Democratic candidate is."

Though he said he thinks the election hinges upon the country's frame of mind come next winter, Cook said both parties are strong across the nation. Though the Republicans control most of the power or government seats, Cook said he believes party support is evenly divided, which will lead to a close presidential election.

Cook also spent time discussing the possible Democratic candidates who might have a chance against Bush. Right now, he said the candidate with the most running power is Howard Dean, who has raised the most money for his campaign. However, Cook said the culture of American politics is constantly changing, making it an unpredictable science.

"I would argue that social and cultural issues, such as major issues like abortion and gun control, are starting to redefine political values," Cook said. "Environmental, gun control and abortion issues all cost the Republicans support among

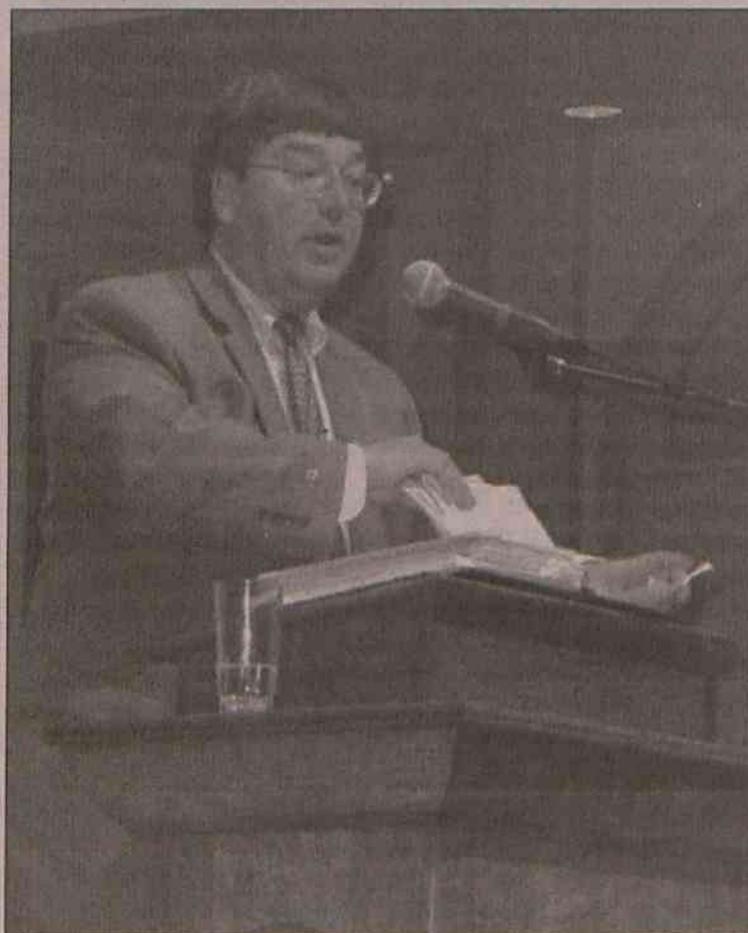
'soccer moms.' These social and cultural issues are becoming increasingly important, and that's why we are where we are today."

Cook also addressed the idea of political polling and its effect on voter turnout. He said he did not believe in the "bandwagon effect," and that the only people these polls really affected were those whose candidate was losing by a landslide. It was only then, he said, that people decide not to run to the polls to cast their vote.

George Taylor, the director of the Elon Institute for Politics and Public Affairs, which shared sponsorship of Cook's visit with the political science department, praised Cook's abilities as a political analyst and said he was glad Cook could make an appearance at Elon.

"Charles Cook is probably one of the political gurus, and knows all about political races," he said. "If you tell him what state you are living in, he can tell you who is running for every representative seat for your state. He's that good."

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Katie Walkiewicz / Photographer

Charles Cook discussed the state of American politics and upcoming elections in a presentation held in Whitley Auditorium Monday night.

## Love School of Business readies for AACSB accreditation review

Erin Mahn

Reporter

Graduates of the Love School of Business could soon be considered some of the top business students in the nation. This spring, the Love School of Business will know if they met the qualifications to receive Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business accreditation. This honor is only granted to schools with high standards in curriculum and faculty and is an important achievement to both faculty and students.

"It is important to graduate from an accredited business school because as a graduate of one of the few accredited institutions, I will have a cutting-edge advantage in competitive field of business," said Courtney Grill, a freshman business fellow.

Currently, more than 400 schools worldwide have obtained the AACSB accreditation. The accreditation committee is visiting Elon Feb. 8 through 11 to assess the business school's progress toward achieving accreditation status.

The committee consists of three members: Gregory Bruce of LaSalle University, Nicholas J. Beutell of Iona College and Ronald Shiffler of Georgia Southern University. The committee will be checking for specific standards in the school's mission and objective, faculty comprehension and development, curriculum content and evaluation, instructional resources and responsibilities, quality of students and the intellectual content of the faculty.

John Burbridge, dean of the Love School of Business, says that the accreditation is important to attract the best and brightest students to Elon.

He said the accreditation will also increase Elon's students' probability of getting accepted to graduate school.

The Love School of Business started preparing for this process in 1996 by conducting an internal review to determine the feasibility of reaching accreditation status. After determining it was a possibility in 1997, the school developed a five-year plan to meet the requirements of its precandidacy status.

Over the years, the business school has made numerous organizational changes to work toward AACSB. Curriculum and course requirements have been adjusted to meet the accreditation standards.

The school has also increased its number of full-time faculty. Burbridge said the accreditation will help transform the Love School of

Business from a good business school to a business school that has achieved excellence in its mission.

"The Martha and Spencer Love School desires to be an excellent provider of undergraduate and MBA business education. By doing what is needed to be an excellent school, the Love School of Business will also be meeting all the AACSB International standards. Accreditation and the desire for excellence complement each other," said Burbridge. After the accreditation committee visits in February, the group will prepare a written report. Notification of the school's acceptance into AACSB would be announced by April 2004.

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