



Letters & Submissions

Letters to the editor are always welcome. Submissions must include your name, contact information and class standing. Letters from faculty and staff are also accepted. The Pendulum reserves the right to edit obscene or potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters or columns may have to be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of The Pendulum and will not be returned. Send submissions to opinions@elon.edu.

SGA president urges good sportsmanship from students

Fellow students,

I want to commend you on your participation with athletic events. The turnout at these events (especially basketball) has been great and has made a major impact on our campus and most importantly on our athletics. We are beginning to see the importance of home-court advantage and supporting our team. Thank you for your support!

We need to make sure that at these events we follow proper etiquette and decorum. We cannot allow the voices of a few to represent all of us to our faculty, staff, administration and especially our community. At any campus event, we represent the university and need to do so respectfully and with integrity.

Also, remember that people of all ages attend Elon athletic games.

In our student handbook it states that:

"Students are asked to refrain from cursing, harassing team members, visitors or officials and making obscene gestures. Fans who are unable to display proper behavior will be removed and may be referred for judicial action."

Please keep this in mind as our winter sports are wrapping up and spring sports begin. We have a lot to look forward to from our athletic teams, so let's support them. Go Phoenix!

-Mark W. Gustafson
SGA Executive President

Speak up and let your voice be heard!

Write for our opinion section.

E-mail submissions to:
opinions@elon.edu

THE PENDULUM

Elon Volunteers! asks...

This week's reality check:

This week's reality check: **WHY!?** Illiteracy **cy**

Columnist

Many of us are just back from Winter Term trips abroad. Others just survived rush week hell, and now these teachers expect us to jump back into learning, and buy books that are over-priced at the book store?

Whether daddy will foot the bill, or it will take a month of waiting tables to cover the cost, thousands of Elon students have recently wandered around the Campus Shop in a rage over book prices.

While the price of books is an absolute outrage, and students have every right to wander around the store swearing as if afflicted with Turret's Syndrome, I think we are all forgetting exactly how invaluable an education can be.

This column is meant to serve as a reality check, a means to look beyond the brick pathways, forget about Greek letters and step outside of the "bubble" for a few seconds. While staggering from one party to the next, it is too easy to forget that there is a community just beyond the walls of campus, and that there is a whole world beyond that.

When we were all bitching about the price of books - although we easily spend more than that at Cantina buying beer with the money our parents put on our Phoenix Cards each semester - 43 percent of the adults over 25 in Burlington (that town we invade for Wal-Mart goods and Wendy's late night) are illiterate.

In case you didn't get that, according to the director of literacy at Alamance Community College, 43 percent of adults over 25 in Burlington cannot read a newspaper, never mind the books we just broke the bank for. To give that statistic some context, according to the United Nations, in 1998 the worldwide illiteracy rate was 16 percent.

According to the CIA World Fact Book, some countries are well below that, such as Guinea (in West Africa), which has an illiteracy rate of 64.1 percent. In Afghanistan, 64 percent of people cannot read, and 79 percent of women cannot even write their own name.

Illiteracy is an issue that affects every aspect of life, and while it may be easier to imagine the oppressed women in Afghanistan not being able to read, how do you explain the facts about Burlington? (This is where you should be thinking...)

If a man or a woman cannot read or write, how is he or she supposed to get a job? How is he or she supposed to educate his or her own children? How do you write out a check to pay

bill statement? More than 11 percent of Burlington residents live below the "poverty line," which is \$17,463 for a family with two children. While pondering that statistic, why don't you call your parents and ask how much they are paying for you to be at Elon?

I will save you the mobile-to-mobile minutes. This academic year, tuition, fees and room and board for one Elon student is \$22,240. Now maybe you should actually use those minutes to call and say thank you.

So, how will these families send their children to college, or put food on the table for that matter? Well, remember those kids in high school who got free lunch? Most of us probably didn't associate with them, but you remember who they were. Just under 40 percent of all children in Alamance-Burlington Schools qualify for free or reduced lunches. And if you think that this rate does not correlate with the illiteracy rate, you are mistaken.

So, what can you do about it? You can turn the page, and read about Phoenix sports, and get back to life as usual in the bubble, or you can do something about it. You can think of those adults who are stuck in minimum wage jobs because they cannot read. You can think about the kids who have to be humiliated at lunch time, most likely hate school and will not go on to college like you and me. Or, you can take action.

Elon Volunteers! has many programs that allow for Elon students to connect with kids in the community, help them to enjoy school-work, learn to read and increase their chances for success. If you qualify for Federal Work Study, you can even get paid to tutor kids through the America Reads Program.

If you are feeling inspired by this article, you and a few friends can volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club and spend time with kids whose parents are still at work when they get home from school. You can tutor children with the Positive Attitude Youth Center, One-to-One Tutoring or help English as a Second Language children do their class work through the Mis Amigos program.

If you are interested in any of these programs, or want more information, stop by the EV! Office in Moseley 226, or call x7250. Just think, with a little of your time, you can help kids learn how to read, be a role model and increase their chances of going to college in the future (so they can bitch about book prices too!).

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