

Activism is growing among college students

Elon students consider taking a politically active role in the picket lines

Bridget Holmstrom
Reporter

Are students today as active in political issues as they were in the 60s and 70s? Think about Vietnam, women's rights and African American rights. Would today's college students be willing to stand on a picket line and fight for a cause that they truly believe in? More importantly, would you?

A March 25 article in USA Today said, "The surge in college activism has been gaining momentum since the mid-1990s, and leaders of student groups are hopeful that the passions aroused both in favor and against Bush's policies will draw even more young activists." But is that all it takes to motivate college students to act? Even if a student feels strongly one way or another, will he or she do anything about it?

Think about the first sit-in in Greensboro. Four students at NC A&T decided to stand for what they believed in, and the sit-in movement began. When the draft was introduced during the Vietnam War, students across the nation united and organized protests against the war. To this day, it is generally agreed that the movement that took place had an impact on the length of the war. Would it take a draft to make students of today take a stand?

Activism may be growing among college students across the nation, but what about at Elon? Several Elon students gave their opinion about this issue.

"I think that students are pretty active in politics, but they are not quite as active as in the 60s. I do believe students would be willing to stand on a picket line and work for a cause that they believe in," Danielle Blakely said.

When asked if he considered college students to be as active in politics as students in past decades, Jonathan Shutt said, "There is a resounding 'no' to that question ... absolutely not. Students are more apathetic now about politics than they've ever been in the history of the United States."

Many other students shared Shutt's opinions.

He went on to say, "I think college students in general are not willing to stand on a picket line, Elon students even less likely. But I would."

Jessica Wiehl did not agree. "In my experience ... I feel that my peers are involved in politics and aware of the pressing issues that face our country. I feel that my peers are confident enough in their views to stand up for what they believe in, and I know I am," Wiehl said.

Though USA Today claims that activism is on the rise, we might not learn just how much students care about current issues until something comes up that people truly believe in and want to act on, or say that they want to act on, but then don't.

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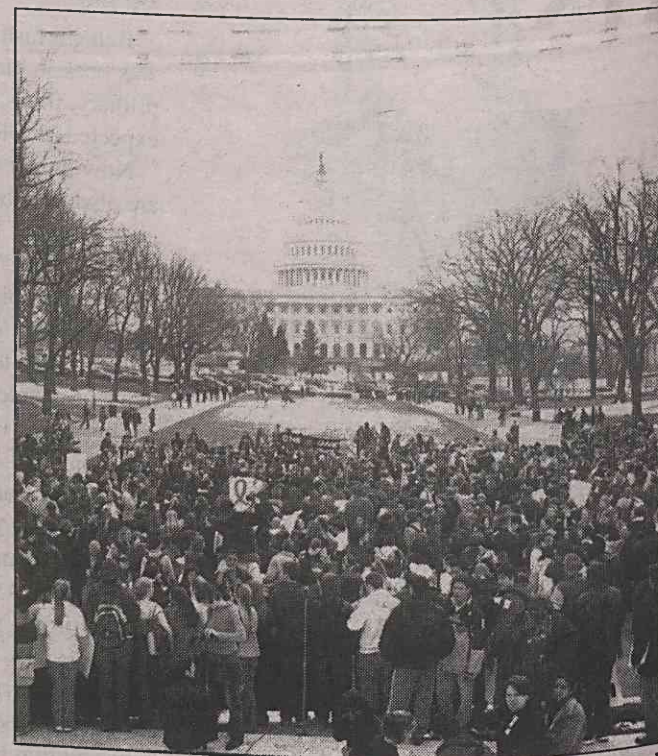


Photo submitted

Students gather in Washington for an AIDS march to encourage law makers to give more money to the AIDS fund.



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