

Bumbry begins second term

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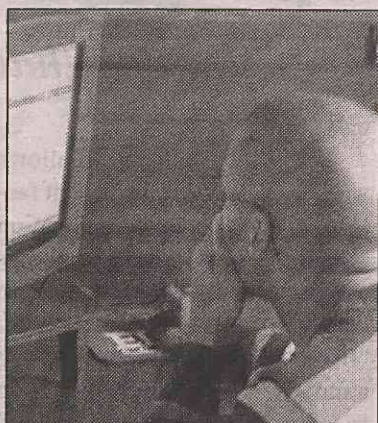
"I think we grow because we have to so students can experience the services that Elon offers us that most schools don't have, so we're going to have to increase the tuition or let more people in. I think a gradual increase of students is what we're looking at."

Bumbry holds several leadership positions outside of SGA and Residence Life. He has been the vice president of Pi Kappa Phi fraternity for the last two years. He was also freshman class vice president and sophomore class president. Bumbry has also worked with ESTV and the Office of Admissions.

A self-described "double minority," Bumbry, who is both black and gay, believes that diversity is crucial to improve Elon's campus life.

"We've got diversity issues," he said. He encourages all students; "Embrace your identity; welcome in other cultures, this is a school that really needs an increase in diversity and minority students."

"Try and appreciate each other. I think we have a lot of cliques at Elon and I think we need to live more on a broad scale and maybe I'm being ide-



Jessica Frizen/ Photographer
Bumbry works at his computer in his SGA office.

alistic, but I think we need to just continue to have an open mind about each other."

Although noting that "the buck doesn't stop here," Bumbry urges students who have concerns to bring them to SGA.

"You can't get anything done by complaining behind the scenes," he said. "You can only get things done by going to the source."

Contact Timothy Rink at pendulum@elon.edu or 278-7247.

Local church supports gay rights

Pastor, members build an 'accepting, diverse' church affiliation

Bethany Swanson
Reporter

Grace United Church of Christ has an altar, a pulpit, collection bins and hymnals. There is a pastor, a choir and cooing babies interrupting the sermon. Yet there are no organs or stained glass windows. There is not even a real physical church building, but there is acceptance of gay rights and diversity.

Every Sunday at 11 a.m., this newly formed congregation of about 40 individuals affirm their beliefs in God, diversity and acceptance in their make-shift church in a dining hall at the Barringer Center in Elon Homes for Children.

When Grace United Church of Christ opened its doors Jan. 8, 2006, it did so amid controversy. In July 2005, the United Church of Christ General Senate passed a resolution regarding same-sex unions. The resolution, titled General Synod 25, confirmed the Church's open and affirming belief that welcomes and includes gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals into what their Web site calls "the full life of the church." The resolution

gave equal marriage rights to homosexual couples within the faith of the United Church of Christ.

For many churches following the doctrines of the United Church of Christ was unacceptable and they chose to disaffiliate themselves.

According to one Web site, some 88 churches across the United States withdrew their association with the United Church of Christ. Of those 88, 18 are in North Carolina, and four are in the Burlington area. By many, they are considered "lost churches" for their disaffiliation.

Rev. Phil Hardy was a pastor at one such church. Union Ridge United Church of Christ in Burlington voted to withdraw their affiliation. Hardy and many of his congregation disagreed with this decision, and chose instead to remain associated with the Church and its doctrines. They created Grace United Church of Christ.

"I have the deep conviction that the church should break down barriers rather than segmenting us and breaking us apart," Hardy said. "We want to create a place where diversity can happen, where people who are different can live

together."

About a fourth of the current congregation is new members. The rest followed him from Union Ridge.

Hardy and many members of the congregation said that their church has been met mostly by positive reactions, though locally there have been some mixed feelings.

Choir member Helen Brown is a former member of the congregation at Union Ridge. "We believed very strongly in the doctrines of the UCC; we wanted to carry out their vision," she said.

Rev. Hardy's mother, Mary Anne Hardy, also firmly believes in the United Church of Christ's mission of acceptance and diversity in the community. "In the sense of openness, there's not anything that God would not like about this," she said.

Former kindergarten teacher Janet Lee agreed, saying that she feels it is important that children understand that "we are all God's children, no matter what."

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