

ELON AND THE ECONOMY

Increase in accepted applicants curbs possible negative effect on private school education; nation's economic status hurting Elon

Margeaux Corby
News Editor

Letters of acceptance are currently traveling from Elon's admissions center to the mailboxes and inboxes of eager high school seniors. This year, the number of acceptances will increase as administrators prepare for decreased attendance by students whose parents will struggle to finance a private school education.

"Elon is well-positioned to face what is definitely coming," said Susan Klopman, vice president of admissions and financial planning. "At this stage in the game, we feel very fortunate our applicant pool is very strong and we are on course."

Elon will be accepting 60 additional applicants this year, leading to a total 4,050 offers of admissions compared to the usual 3,990.

As a result of these fiscally tenuous times, more attention is being paid to enrollment of the class of 2013.

"We are watching admissions extra carefully and will admit a few more students," President Leo Lambert said. "We have to have more offers out there to get the same class size."

Such financial hardships have many questioning what university programs or services will be sacrificed to meet the challenges of a tight budget and failing economy.

"Our budget is made up almost exclusively of tuition revenue," Lambert said. "Fewer students mean fewer classes being taught and therefore less

faculty needed."

Both Klopman and Lambert emphasized that cutting programs and staff will only occur in the most dire of situations.

"If you are talking about drastic change you're talking about cutting people, which is not something we are thinking about," Lambert said.

A freshmen class that has 50 students less than expected can lead to a revenue loss of about \$1 million, Lambert said.

Klopman and Lambert both said the university's cinching of the financial belt will not be burdened on student shoulders, but will occur imperceptibly within university operation costs.

"There will be a more internal allocation of resources," Lambert said. "It is easy to pass the difference onto students, but parents will feel a pinch. I'm going to tell students that we are going to have a tuition increase that is lower than last year."

Klopman ensured that Elon's academic standards for enrollment will not suffer because of these increased acceptances.

"Our academic profile has stabilized," Klopman said. "They might have a one-tenth point lower GPA or 10 point lower SAT score, but that is not a different student."

Klopman said Elon exceeded all previous records for students visiting campus this year, and that relatively the same amount of applications were received this year as in past years.

"We are perceived as an incredible



ANGIE LOVELACE | PHOTOGRAPHY

More students may need extra assistance from Elon's Financial Planning office, but the university is taking measures to help students.

value in private education and we are very careful in choices we make," she said.

Klopman said in the case of a decreased income into the university, there will be less money available for operation funds which "run everything from salary and financial aid."

"We'd have to make adjustments to the things we enjoy but can work without," Klopman said.

Klopman talked about the possibility of making the academic catalog strictly

online, saving thousands of dollars on printing.

Lambert discussed changing the computer replacement schedule for faculty members so laptops set to be replaced every three years could be extended to every four.

"These times cause you to be as efficient as possible," Lambert said. "These are things that you think about to save money."

Elon avoids economic crisis, some potential students may not

Chris King
Reporter

As an economic crisis envelopes most of America and the world, the same does not seem to be the case for many Elon students. For others, it could be a deciding factor in whether they are able to attend a private university or a public one.

According to Pat Murphy, the director of financial planning, Elon is currently not seeing that much of an effect from the bad economy.

"We are a tuition-driven school, so we can't really afford to be losing student body," Murphy said. "We've been watching what has been happening between now and spring semester, and the bursar's office reports that everything is going just like normal. We don't anticipate seeing any drop in student body or enrollment."

Dean of Admissions Greg Zaiser supports Murphy's statements, saying Elon has had more students applying early action and early decision than ever before. However, the number of total applicants might have dipped by "a tiny margin," but nothing remotely significant.

And what will happen for students in need of financial aid as the budget at home gets tighter and things like a \$32,000-a-year private institution starts to look more like a luxury they can't afford?

"In terms of financial aid, we always get students or parents coming to us with special cases," Murphy said. "We'll have parents who get laid off or lose their jobs and we have always been able to help in situations like that. We're seeing some of that right now, but nothing out of the normal from

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- Greg Zaiser
DEAN OF ADMISSIONS

what we have seen in other years.”

Murphy also said there has not been a significant increase in the number of students who have had to apply for financial aid or drop out due to their budget concerns.

Murphy said Elon is on "a tight budget" and makes sure "we don't overspend so I can help the students that really need it."

But that doesn't mean Elon isn't preparing for the continuing demise of the economy.

"It does worry me some," Zaiser said. "But Elon does a great job making sure that we are prepared for the future. We are always looking at not just this year, but a couple of years ahead."

Murphy said Elon applicants that are concerned about their financial status should turn in their financial aid forms immediately.

"The other thing is, be realistic about your financial situation," Murphey said. "We will do what we can, but it is ultimately the students' and parents' responsibility."

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