

The Pendulum seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty as well as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

Editorial

THE PENDULUM
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The Pendulum is published each Wednesday of the academic year. The advertising and editorial copy deadline is 5 p.m. the Friday before publication. Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome and should be typed and e-mailed with a telephone number for verification. Submissions are accepted as Word documents. The Pendulum reserves the right to edit obscene and potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters or columns may be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of The Pendulum and will not be returned. You can reach The Pendulum by e-mail at pendulum@elon.edu. If you have questions or concerns about an article contact a section editor. Please do not respond to reporters directly.

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Seven percent of presidency complete

There's a reason "to have a monkey on your back" is such a common euphemism. Just think about it. Monkeys are persistent, clingy little devils, whose grasps are disproportionately strong and coupled with equally surprising endurance. That being said, if the likes of the New York Post can equate President Barack Obama to the mad primate who recently mauled a woman, then former president George W. Bush can be likened to a monkey on Obama's back.

The celebration or bemoaning of a president's first 100 days is an entirely artificial construct. David Axlerod, Obama's senior adviser, called them "...an odd custom, the journalistic equivalent of the Hallmark holiday."

The media hoopla building up to the anniversary will reach a climax when CNN busts out all of its overindulgent technology and commentary to pre-empt its regular primetime programming in lieu of coverage that will reportedly put the first 100 days on the same level as the election itself.

It seems as though the presidency is being cut into ever-smaller, more digestible bites. The four-year term is now roughly three years, as most of the last year is spent trying to obtain another quarter.

Now, it appears the first few months of the presidency are also being quarantined. They serve less as a barometer for the entire presidency and more as the presidency as a whole.

Now this is where our monkey acquaintance comes in. What must be remembered is that Obama came into office with a gargantuan legacy of debatable competence as his predecessor, and many of his actions during these first 100 days have been a direct response to the shadow he stepped into upon swearing in.

The Bush administration's stance on the economy was built upon the idea that capitalism is a golden cherub. It may get into some mischief every now and then, but must be forgiven and given free reign. The Bush era saw the return of voodoo economics and a continuation of the loosening of financial oversight, which admittedly began during Bill Clinton's administration. Changing this course back toward big-government, Keynesian policies has arguably been Obama's biggest goal, but the American government is a massive beast. Turning it around completely takes far more than 100 days.

Though Obama's use of the governmental beast has so far met positive and progressive ends, with his expansion of children's

health care, support for equal pay between the sexes and the much-maligned stimulus package, there is mounting concern over the emerging transformation of the federal government's role.

The tightrope Obama must now walk across is the fine line between a liberal government and efficient capitalism. It's a trick few presidents have been able to turn, and it's a task that he must do alone. If it's to signify anything, the 100-days marker can serve as the point at which Obama begins the transition from cleaning up Bush's messes and starts to deal with his own.

His administration will soon face the risk of addiction to governmental spending. In Britain, a top-tier tax rate of 50 percent of a person's earnings is the direct result of an overly ambitious public spending program.

Obama's admiration of governmental programs such as those in Spain, implemented for the government to support green industries, seems noble and effective on its face. But Spain's subsidies have created jobs at the cost of €570,000 per position, while a study from Gabriel Calzada Álvarez of the King Juan Carlos University in Madrid estimated that private industry would have created the jobs at only €260,000 apiece.

That's not to say the surge in government spending is doomed to fail. The bank bailout so far has proven to be effective, though recent announcements, such as Wells Fargo's \$3 billion profit, stem in part from incredibly lowered expectations from the mortgage market.

But a country's economy is like a child. It's fine for a parental figure to carry it around while it's at its weakest, but eventually that kid will become too big to carry and needs to stand on its own feet.

If the effect of the stimulus at this point next year has been negated by further drops in consumer spending or, in the worst-case scenario, deflation, then a conflict will arise as to whether or not the economy can take care of itself without the increasingly limited reserves of cash America borrows and prints. It's upon that point, not an arbitrary date, that Obama's success depends.

The allure of judging Obama so early into his presidency is strong. Critics and supporters alike are impatient and restless, but making the declaration that Obama has succeeded or failed this soon is ultimately akin to calling a race at the same time the starting gun fires.

AS THE EKE SAGA CONTINUES:

A tenuous search for answers results in summer appeal

Make a decision that people don't agree with, and, if given cause, they will contend the choice. But when a decision is made for vague reasons, with minimal interaction between those in power and their constituents, that's when true discontent is birthed.

The recent denial of tenure to communications professor Ocek Eke is, as all tenure matters are at Elon, a personnel matter. Because of this, all parties involved from administration are remaining relatively silent.

Gerry Francis, provost and vice president for academic affairs, did say that although there is a precedent of negative student reactions to decisions made regarding tenure, and although Eke is currently appealing the denial, chances are the decision will be final.

Nearly all of the dialogue on the issue has come from a band of students dedicated to increasing awareness of Eke's plight, and against all odds, the professor's "well deserved tenure and nothing less."

Freshmen Trevor Jordan and Amir Khan are at the forefront of this movement, which boasts a Facebook group with almost 350 members and a constant presence on campus, whether it be at Anderson Cooper's

speech or the Board of Trustees meeting.

The two students first met Eke during a mock class prior to their enrollment at Elon.

"We were both so impressed that we agreed that we would take his class no matter what," Jordan said.

Ever since, they have been continually impressed with Eke's performance both in and out of the classroom. Eke's insistence on individual thought, a persistent curiosity and greater awareness of the world as a whole has made a significant impact on not only them, but countless others.

"If he wasn't being a good teacher, doing his job and fitting with Elon, then this wouldn't be happening," Khan said, highlighting the ongoing support.

While interviewing Khan and Jordan, three fellow students stopped by to inquire about Eke, to see if any developments had arisen. These spontaneous occurrences of sympathy and interest in the tenure matter were also coupled with indignation at the university.

"I would be ashamed to call Elon my school for such an atrocity to take place," senior Ashanti Ballard said.

Despite their best efforts, Jordan and Khan are up against a decision that

they ultimately can do little to change, no matter what their aspirations may be. According to Francis, Eke's appeal should be complete early in the summer, and the decision ultimately rests at the feet of President Leo Lambert if the new committee overturns the initial ruling.

Whatever the outcome, it seems disappointing, if not troubling, that while preaching engaged learning and community involvement, Elon ultimately turns a cold shoulder to students looking for answers regarding the dismissal of a well-liked professor.

TO COMMENT...

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Letters to the Editor and columns can be e-mailed to pendulum@elon.edu or sent to 7012 Campus Box, Elon, N.C. 27244

Content will be edited for clarity, length and accuracy. All submissions must include a name and phone number.

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