

Inspiring interaction, encouraging education

Elon's Multicultural Center releases expansion plan, new programs expected

Laura Smith
News Editor

On Monday, Elon University released its expansion plan for the implementation of new programs within the Multicultural Center.

Elon's Multicultural Center creates educational programs based on diversity and culture, including programs for black students, Latino students, Asian-American students and more. Originally, it began in 1992 as a center for African-American students.

The focus of the new plan is on retention, multicultural education and academic success, according to Leon Williams, director of the program.

Williams came to Elon in October 2008 and has been working on the plan ever since.

"The question on the table as I entered into Elon was: How do we broaden multicultural services?" he said. "What do you do when you're good and you're nationally-recognized? My idea of it is we have to go wider and dig deeper."

Plans for the expansion began in 2008 with a charge from several African-American students to clarify the center's mission and develop more programs, according to Jeff Stein, associate Dean of Students.

A committee for the search for the new director, co-chaired by Associate Chaplain and Director of Religious Life Phil Smith and English professor Prudence Layne, was then developed to implement the plan.

Stein was a committee member and helped chair the search for Williams.

"This is about the future of the university in terms of preparing students for global citizenship," Stein said. "This is about the growth the

university will experience in turn." Williams said he hopes to incorporate more students of a multicultural background within the programs, as well as recognize the role of white students within the center.

"Every student should come in contact with one another, learn from one another, share their experiences with one another," Williams said.

To do this, Williams and his colleagues have implemented several programs for the next three to five years.

One of these is the Difficult Dialogues series in which students, faculty and staff, along with those from historically black colleges and predominately white schools, will meet to discuss multicultural issues that plague society today.

The first Difficult Dialogue will take place Oct. 8. It is called "Comparing Experiences" and will incorporate 18 to 20 schools within an hour of Elon, according to Kelsey Glover, president of Elon's multicultural student organization, Diversity Emerging Education Program.

Another program will be a multicultural conference.

"We want Elon ... to make that claim that we are the number one resource in the south for multicultural education," Williams said. "Students from all over the region can come here and learn in depth about multicultural education."

Within the university, Williams said he is hoping to strengthen diversity training in orientation so new students will feel comfortable knowing about different backgrounds as well as where their resources are located.

This is being encouraged through an interactive media tool called Deep Impact, which is a DVD created by



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the communications department and is comprised of student performers, which will be shown in Elon 101 classes. It includes six vignettes that cover class, race, disabilities, religion, gender and sexual orientation.

Externally, Williams is hoping to expand community service projects such as the Martin Luther King program, where students clean up a local church, and to partner with Centro La Comunidad to support Latino students in local high schools.

He said he also hopes to one day have an exhibit at Elon displaying artifacts and slave narratives, as well as bring in more multicultural performing arts shows, such as the Alvin Ailey dance company.

In addition, the plan will cater to the LGBT community, creating training for safe zones to help facilitate the discussion when a student is struggling to come out. Williams has also written a grant to host an LGBT advocacy conference soon.

Glover couldn't be more excited about the implementations.

"This year we really want people to face the issues they don't want to talk about ... not in an adversarial way but in the world we live in," she said. "You have to be comfortable in talking about these issues."

In addition to these new programs, DEEP will continue to hold DEEP Days, which will include diversity-

aimed education programs. It will also continue its annual events, such as Thanksgiving with a Twist, where students celebrate Thanksgiving from a different perspective, and the Tunnel of Oppression. The organization is also beginning a branding logo for students to recognize this year.

"We want to reach outside the bubble and really inform and educate people in the community that might not have had any outside experiences," Glover said. "I feel like Elon is really behind this drive, wanting to make this a more diverse campus. Elon has diversity, you just have to look for it."

Williams is looking forward to what the plan will bring to Elon as well.

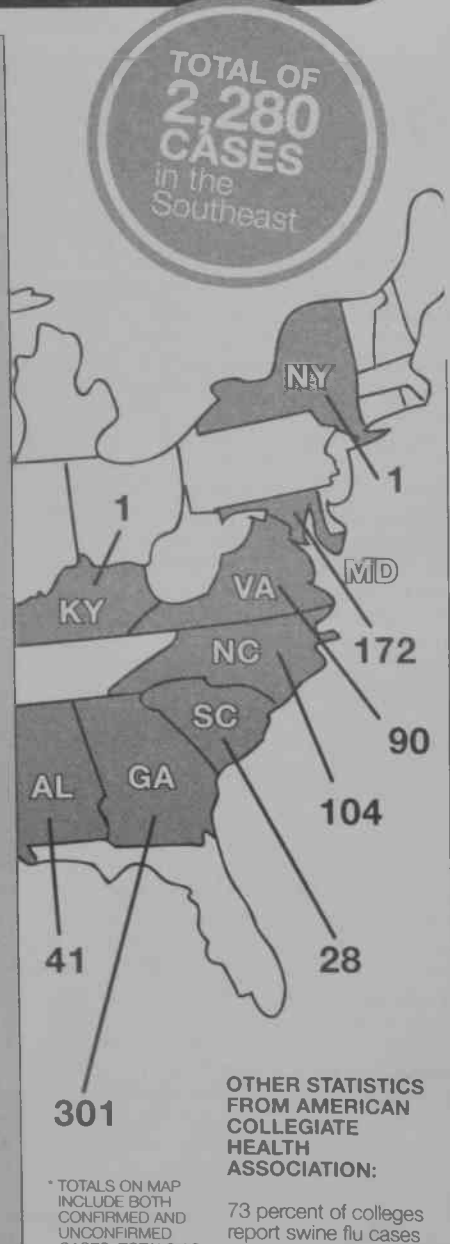
"I think this will put us in a different place in the market for recruiting and attracting students," he said. "I think they'll be very attracted to Elon as being not only a place with physical ethnicity (and) race diversity, but a multicultural experience as well."

He also said he believes these programs will help students in the future.

"Students will be prepared and equipped with the knowledge to go out in the market and compete very well with an advanced cultural competence level of understanding," Williams said. "We shift from becoming members of the discussion to leading the discussion, and that's a great opportunity for Elon students."

COLLEGES WITH CASES*

- VIRGINIA**
Radford University
1 confirmed case
University of Richmond
68 reported signs, not confirmed cases
University of Virginia
21 confirmed cases
- GEORGIA**
Emory University
cases confirmed, number unavailable
University of Georgia
300 suspected cases
Macon State College
1 confirmed case
- ALABAMA**
Stillman College
15 or 16 flu cases, not confirmed swine flu
University of North Alabama
24 confirmed cases
Troy University
1 swine flu-related death
- KENTUCKY**
Western Kentucky University
1 unconfirmed case
- NEW YORK**
Cornell University
1 swine flu-related death
- MARYLAND**
UM College Park
172 flu cases, not confirmed swine flu
- NORTH CAROLINA**
Wake Forest University
80 confirmed swine flu cases
Davidson College
23 flu cases likely to be swine flu
Elon University
1 confirmed case
- SOUTH CAROLINA**
Coker College
1 confirmed case
Clemson University
20 confirmed cases
USC
7 confirmed cases



H1N1 flu cases prevalent in many Southeast colleges

Rachel Cieri
Features Editor

According to the American Collegiate Health Association's national survey, Elon is not the only college in the Southeast on alert with cases of the H1N1 flu virus. The weekly survey, which collects data on student cases from 236 institutions, reported that cases of flu-like illness in college students in the Southeast are more than four times more prevalent than in other areas of the country.

The Southeast reported a total of 3,339 cases since the project's inception in January, while neighboring regions are reporting numbers that haven't yet reached 1,000. The southeastern region surveyed includes institutions from North Carolina to Florida and reaches as far west as Tennessee and Alabama.

Similarly, the U.S. Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network reports a more than 5 percent increase in outpatient flu cases in the Southeast.

North Carolina is one of 11 states currently reporting widespread influenza activity, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The ACHA also reported 73 percent of institutions surveyed have had instances of the H1N1 virus.

Several colleges in South Carolina have reported varying numbers of H1N1 flu cases, including 120 cases at Clemson University, seven at the University of South Carolina and two at The College of Charleston.

The University of Georgia is experiencing one of the largest outbreaks in the region, with more than 300 confirmed or suspected flu outbreaks. Nearby, Georgia Tech reported more than 200 students with flu-like symptoms.

Health officials noted that campuses with higher numbers of flu cases tend

to be those that held fraternity and sorority recruitment before classes began.

So far, only two college students are known to have died from H1N1 complications. Both David Skorton of Cornell University and Andrew Salter of Cornell University had underlying medical complications that contributed to their deaths.

Some colleges, like Emory University, have confined large numbers of flu victims to a single dorm as a containment measure. Similar to Elon's containment plans, these students are confined to their rooms, do not attend class and receive free meals inside the dorm.

Davidson College has employed a similar strategy, designating two "break rooms" — one for males and one for females — for flu victims.

ELON'S FLU PLAN UPDATE

- Infected students will be asked to leave campus by private car or stay confined to their rooms.
- Roommates of infected students may voluntarily relocate and stay with a friend until the infected student is well.
- Temporary housing may be arranged for roommates of infected students with immune-compromising conditions in the event they cannot find a friend to stay with.
- The university is developing phone triage strategies to help ill students determine whether they should self-isolate.
- Ill students who cannot identify a friend to assist with their care will be assigned a volunteer "flu buddy."
- Ill students will receive daily phone contact from Health Services during their isolation period.