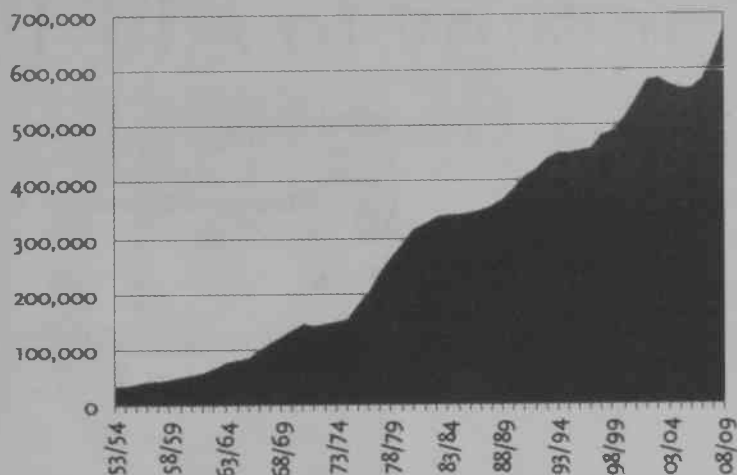


## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRENDS

In 2008-09, the number of international students in the United States increased 7.7 percent during the previous year to a high of 671,616 students.



SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

## U.S. sees influx of international students

Hannah Williams  
Senior Reporter

The number of international students enrolled at colleges and universities in the United States increased by 8 percent to an all-time high of 671,616, during the 2008-09 academic year, according to the Open Doors 2009 report published by the Institute for International Education and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The report shows the largest growth occurred in undergraduate enrollments, which increased 11 percent, compared to a 2 percent increase in graduate enrollments. The growth was largely driven by increases in undergraduate students from China, the report said.

"One of the goals of Elon University's new strategic plan (Envision 2020) is global education as a whole, not only sending 100 percent of Elon's students abroad but also tripling the number of international students and faculty on Elon's campus," said Cheryl Borden, director of international admissions and associate director of admissions at Elon.

Borden said international students comprise 3 percent of Elon's population, defining international students as those who are citizens of another country, dual citizens of the United States and another country and American citizens who have always lived abroad.

"Overall, we would like to have at least 150 international students coming in any one year," said Susan Klopman, vice president of admissions and financial planning.

The United States institutions enrolling the most international students, University of Southern California, New York University and Columbia University, host more than 6,600 students each.

"Our greatest challenges in international recruitment are our location, size and name recognition," Klopman said. "We're not a New York or California."

California ranked first in the nation in terms of states, enrolling 93,124 international students state-wide in 2008-09, followed by New York with 74,943 and Texas with 58,188.

While Elon ranks first nationally in the Open Doors 2009 report for master's-level universities sending students abroad, it is not among the top-five North Carolina schools hosting international students, which are in descending order: North Carolina State University, Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Charlotte and Greensboro, respectively.

Klopman said Elon plans to allocate more resources to internationalizing the university and is brainstorming the best way to use the additional funds to increase the number of international students and faculty by creating "value-added" programs.

Borden will become Elon's first full-time international admissions counselor in 2010, Klopman said.

One idea suggested establishing an Elon Fellows program themed "the American Experience" by recruiting cohorts of students from particular countries who wish to submerge themselves in and study U.S. culture and education.

"Recruiting students shows Elon's commitment to internationalizing the community," Borden said. "Whether it's diversity based on where a student holds a passport or based on international experience."

Borden said she examines the Open Doors reports to plan her international recruitment visits. This year, she traveled to China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore in Asia and London, Istanbul and Geneva in Europe.

She plans to travel to Central America in March.

Although India, China and South Korea are the top three exporters of students respectively, Borden said she does prioritize travel to India, as most students from there come to the states for graduate school and she is focusing on undergraduate admissions.

She said traveling also allows Borden to better familiarize herself with other countries' educational systems, form relationships with international college counselors and build Elon's reputation abroad.

International students who apply to Elon are held to the same acceptance criteria as domestic students. According to Borden, that does not mean a perfect SAT score or grade point average, but rather someone who fits in with the majority of Elon's population.

"We try to understand where students are coming from, in terms of their academic preparation, and make decisions on whether they will be academically successful at Elon," Borden said.

Borden communicates with international students interested in applying to Elon via Skype, a blog and the admissions Web site.

"We tend to recruit students one at a time, so our students are from many countries, but very few from each country," Klopman said.

Borden said she plans to work with Elon alumni, parents, students, faculty and staff who live or travel overseas to help spread Elon's name to prospective students.

"Overall, I'd like to increase everything: inquiry, application, enrollment and matriculation," Borden said of her goals as the director of International Admissions. "I think we will be a richer community for having international students attending Elon. Our education will be a lot better in terms of what they can contribute in terms of different experiences and different perspectives."

## National student survey backs values of engaged learning

Anna Johnson  
Senior Reporter

The words "Elon is engaged learning," flash across the homepage of the university's Web site. And according to a national survey meant to measure student engagement, the words seem to ring true.

Elon received top marks in the National Student Survey of Engagement, an annual survey sent to more than 600 colleges by the Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research. The survey is given to seniors and freshmen.

"We are known for being an engaged institution," said Robb Springer, director of institutional research. "This is a good survey to find out our level of engagement, one that makes sure we are following through."

Out of the 44 different education benchmarks, there were three where Elon students tied with the NSSE average and four where Elon students ranked lower than the NSSE average.

In two of those benchmarks, though, Elon students were 1 percent lower than the NSSE average and one benchmark was 2 percent lower than the NSSE average. The biggest gap between Elon students and the NSSE average was in the benchmark concerning independent majors.

The survey showed 14 percent of Elon freshmen planned to do an independent study or self-designed major. The NSSE average is 21 percent for freshmen. The NSSE average for seniors was 27 percent and the Elon senior average is 21 percent.

There were 776 Elon students who participated in the survey. Springer said since Elon is a smaller school, all seniors and freshmen are asked to complete the survey. The results are based on the students who complete the survey.

Elon freshmen received their highest scores in making a class presentation, completing foreign language coursework and spending more than five hours a week participating in co-curricular activities.

Elon seniors received highest scores in doing an internship or field work, studying abroad, completing a capstone and writing more than four papers or reports between five and 19 pages.

Springer said it would be hard to pinpoint one area that could be called a weakness but said there is always room for improvement.

The NSSE survey reports overall positive trends. All

### RESULTS: WHAT ELON IS KNOWN FOR

- Completing foreign language coursework
- High participation in co-curricular activities
- Completing internships, field work and capstones
- Studying abroad
- Writing more than four reports between five and 19 pages.

colleges indicated "over half the students surveyed frequently had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity" and "one in three seniors participated in a culminating experience such as a capstone course, senior project or comprehensive examination."

Trends deemed disappointing included "one in five students frequently came to class without completing readings or assignments" and transfer students are less engaged with campus activities and rated campus relationships lower.

Catherine Williams, director of transfer and special admissions, said there is no course like Elon 101, a class offered to freshmen, for transfer students, but transfer students are encouraged to get involved with organizations on campus.

"We have a couple of meetings with parents and students when they move in," Williams said. "They break up into groups and meet in the next week or so, but that is really it. We urge them to go to the organizational fair and get involved that way."

She said students transferring in the spring, when an organizational fair is not being offered, meet with her and are given a letter welcoming them to campus and urging them to get involved.

Junior Ashley Taylor, who transferred last spring, said there was no formal orientation and she had to be "very proactive" during the process.

"The most difficult parts were the little things," Taylor said. "Like how to get on the Internet or log on to the computers."

She was placed with a freshman roommate and while they got along it was difficult transferring in the middle of the semester when "social circles had already been established."

"I am a very outgoing and friendly person," Taylor said. "I can't imagine that process with someone who was less proactive. It was a difficult process."

## Lindner Hall Elon's first LEED-certified building

LINDNER from PAGE 1

new buildings more than 8,000 square feet will be held to the standard used in constructing Lindner. Other smaller buildings will still follow a sustainable design standard.

The university's next building project, the 30,000 square foot Alumni Field House, will be constructed under this green building policy, which aims for LEED certification. Bomilow said the university's policy strives for Silver certification in new buildings.

Durr said that she was excited for the success of the application and said there was some value in the recognition of a third party. "I think it's a great accomplishment for the university... that it got gold when it was the first building that we've pursued LEED certification on," she said.

Water conservation was one reason for Lindner's LEED certification. These fountains are automatic, low flow and contain filtered water.



MERISSA BLITZ | Photographer