

Fewer males applying to school

Gender gap remains steady at Elon, nationally

Rebecca Smith
Features Editor

Elon University's female-to-male ratio is just slightly more skewed than the national average, with Elon at 60 percent female and 40 percent male.

In 1990, 55 percent of college students were female. By 2003, 57 percent of college students were female, according to the American Council on Education.

Elon is looking to increase the percentage of males to 42 percent in the incoming class of 2014, according to Greg Zaiser, dean of admissions. This 2 percent increase will be a challenge because only 35 percent of all applications Elon receives are from males.

"Yes, we would like it if we could have a higher percentage of males," Zaiser said. "But I think we are doing really good when you consider how few applications we get from males. From the research that I have done, males typically want to go to schools in a more urban environment and want to go to larger schools."

Elon is able to achieve an enrollment of 40 percent males because the males who apply to Elon typically enroll at a higher rate than females.

One thing Elon has done to expand its appeal is going through the Elon Web site and publications to ensure everyone is equally represented.

"It seems like a small thing, but it really makes a big impact," Zaiser said. "We wouldn't want to be anymore imbalanced, but our ratios are not abnormal."

Elon is making an effort to try and attract more students by broadening the number of schools that know about the university. Currently, 50 percent of males who attend Elon are from North Carolina. Therefore, sending people to schools outside of North Carolina could potentially increase the number of males who apply.

"We are sending more representatives to all-boy schools in order to hopefully gain new interest," Zaiser said. "We also have this program where we host 12 guidance counselors from different schools at Elon. We are bringing in some new guidance counselors from diverse schools this year."

Trying to reach a more diverse population is one solution that has been given to decrease the gender gap. The report by the American Council of Education suggests the way educators and policy makers can make the biggest difference with the gender gap is by focusing their efforts on Hispanics. According to the American Council of Education, young Hispanic men have had the lowest bachelor's degree attainment level of any group studied, at only 10 percent.

While there are more females enrolled in college, males still get paid more in the United States. Some people believe as more women receive higher education, the pay gap could decrease.

"I think this will change society," Lynn Huber, assistant professor of religious studies, said. "I do think the more that women have a presence in the professional world, the better it will be for women in general. Change in the system requires women working together and being willing to take risks to change things."

More than 5,500 applications were submitted this year during early action for the class of 2014. Around 67 percent of the early action applications were submitted by females. Of all the early applicants, 67 percent were accepted.

"Women present themselves earlier and women apply earlier," Zaiser said. "A huge number of our students apply during early action. Currently, we have more females than males, but we are holding our own. At the end of the day we do not want to become less appealing to females either."



BRIAN ALLENBY | Staff Photographer
Freshman Kelly Cavanaugh, left, and junior Jenna Thash, right, talk over lunch. Elon is 60 percent women, and the school hopes to increase the amount of men enrolled for the class of 2014.

BY THE NUMBERS

2008-2009 ACADEMIC YEAR ELON ENROLLMENT:

2,006 undergraduate men
2,880 undergraduate women

2000 ACADEMIC YEAR ELON ENROLLMENT:

1,475 undergraduate men
2,312 undergraduate women

-Statistics courtesy of Elon Common Data Sets

NATIONALLY IN 2008-2009

43 percent men in higher education institutions
57 percent women in higher education institutions

-Statistics courtesy of American Council of Education

Department of Religious Studies to hire faculty with Southeast Asian focus

Marlena Chertock
Design Intern

The Department of Religious Studies plans to broaden its perspective by adding a faculty member with a focus on Hinduism and Southeast Asian studies. The spot for a new professor opened up when religious studies professor Jim Pace announced his retirement. Pace taught courses on archeology and the Hebrew Bible. The religious studies department hopes to fill the position with a professor whose expertise is in Southeast Asian religions.

During a faculty hire, the department assesses strengths, weaknesses, and what could be improved, Rebecca Peters, chair of the department of religious studies said.

The search for a faculty member to replace Pace has yielded three candidates for the position.

Amy Allocco is currently in a one-year position in the department. Allocco received her doctorate from Emory University last spring. Allocco focuses on snake goddesses in India. She has studied and lived in South India in Tamil Nadu for eight or nine years, Peters said.

She studies "ways in which these snake goddesses had a resurgent as a result of globalization and rising rates of infertility," Peters said.

Amanda Huffer is completing her studies at the University of Chicago. She focuses on the Amma, the Hindu

hugging guru. Huffer has researched Amma's followers and devotees in the United States. She has also done field work in the United States and conducted participant observations.

Andrea Jain is completing her studies at Rice University in Texas. Jain's work is centered more around Jainism, "a different Southeast Asian religion, close to Hinduism," Peters said. The Diaspora and communities of Indians who are living outside of India fall under Jain's research.

"She's doing research into yogi traditions that are related to Jainism, comparing modern and traditional Hindu practices within Jainism," Peters said.

A final candidate will be announced by the end of February.

According to Peters, the religious program previously focused more on preparing students for seminary since Elon is a religiously affiliated university. This focus has lessened.

"The field has changed so much in the last 40 years; that's not what people do in religious studies. That's not all of our students. Back then there would have been all Christian scholars: New Testament, Old Testament, ethics, a church historian," Peters said. "As the field has changed and as the world has changed, the field has responded to that. (Alternative religion) is the next phase."

The department has researched other schools' religious departments. The trend is moving toward having

faculty with knowledge of Buddhism and Southeast Asian religions.

A major curriculum revision for the department is underway, according to Peters.

A focus on Hinduism and South Asian religion would give the department a broader perspective. These religions include half of the

world's population, Peters said, so the topic is important.

"Especially with the focus on international studies of the campus, having a stronger faculty whose primary specialty are in the different major world traditions is something we feel that makes us a stronger department," Peters said.

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