

Ever Elon nears end, enters final stage

Becca Tynes
Senior Reporter

The final phase of Ever Elon, Elon University's five-year campaign to build the school's endowment, has begun. As of mid-August, donors have contributed more than \$79 million in gifts and pledges. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$100 million by the end of 2011.

"We still have roughly 21 percent of the campaign to go and a number of donors who are considering making donations," said Jim Piatt, vice president for University Advancement.

Piatt said the university is not making any predictions as to when the goal will be reached.

"Once we get there, however, it will be a tremendous sense of accomplishment," he said.

The campaign is broken up into three primary categories. Endowment is the largest of the three with a goal of \$70 million. The operations goal for the campaign is \$20 million, while the capital goal is \$10 million. The capital goal funds are earmarked for preserving and building the Elon campus.

Piatt said the primary purpose of growing Elon's endowment is to allow the university to increase scholarship opportunities for students in need. In the coming years, Elon is working to double the amount of money spent on need-based scholarships.

Additionally, the lingering recession continues to put more pressure on the demand for financial aid.

"Financial aid and scholarships may be more important today than they ever have been due to the current economy," Piatt said. "Students are demonstrating need."

Chuck Davis, assistant vice president and director of the Ever Elon campaign,

agreed that the top priority of Ever Elon is endowing scholarships.

While the vast majority of money raised from the campaign is used to support scholarship endowment, many donors continue to provide annual unrestricted gifts that go straight to the university's operations budget. These funds are used for daily operations of the university and wherever students need it most.

"Many of our alumni will make an annual gift to support our ongoing operational needs," Piatt said. "Those dollars go right to work."

There are four building projects on Elon's campus that either have been built or will be built using the money raised under the capital goal. These projects include Lindner Hall, a multi-faith center, the Alumni Field house and renovations of the Alumni Gym.

"The campaign helps enhance the world class facilities at Elon that our community has come to enjoy," Davis said.

According to Davis, the Ever Elon campaign has had a tremendous effect on the university.

"It has helped our constituents both internally and externally understand the importance of endowment," Davis said. "Overall, it has helped people understand the joy of investing in people."

According to Davis, another campaign will be under way once the Ever Elon campaign concludes.

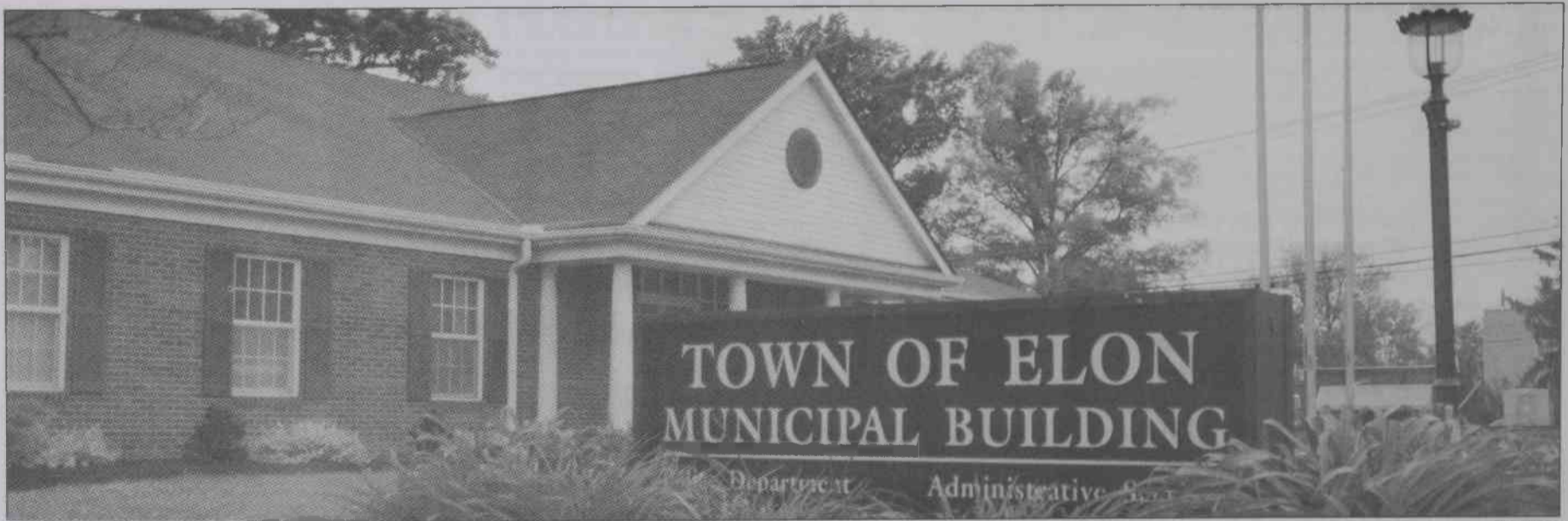
"There will always be a university campaign," Davis said.

What Davis wants Elon students to understand most about the campaign is that every single gift counts toward Ever Elon and is critically important.

"The campaign really isn't so much about all these numbers," Piatt said. "It's about people coming together to support our university."



GRAPHIC BY SARAH BETH COSTELLO



FILE PHOTO

Town Manager Mike Dula said any development by the university or private business owners would be a joint venture between the school and the town. The town is responsible for roads, sewers and other utilities.

Development of downtown Elon underway as university hires consultant

Rachel Southmayd
Senior Reporter

In an effort to build up the downtown area of Elon, the university recently hired Ken Kauffman, a development consultant, to begin making this goal a reality.

According to Gerald Whittington, senior vice president for Business, Finance and Technology, Kauffman has worked on building retail areas for institutions including the University of North Carolina, Duke University and Wake Forest University, among others.

Whittington said this part of the Elon Commitment, a 10-year strategic plan, could progress within the next few years.

"I would expect in the next year or two or three that you'd probably see some new building or some highly renovated buildings that would include new retail opportunities," he said.

Whittington said Kauffman has experience developing retail in college towns.

He will work to identify properties that could be developed, renovated or revitalized for new businesses, Whittington added.

"You want retailers of high quality," he said. "You want retailers who will be successful in drawing people year round."

Whittington said this includes businesses like clothing and jewelry stores, restaurants, services like dry cleaners and drug stores and professional

offices for doctors and lawyers.

He also said expanding Elon's downtown area is not just the responsibility of the university, but also local entrepreneurs. The university wants independent business owners to invest in the area, not just the university itself.

"What we're trying to do is make a difference initially that will tip the balance and make others come in and say 'wow that's a great place to be,'" Whittington said.

Town Manager Mike Dula said the Town of Elon created their own plan for retail expansion about five years ago.

"In our case, the retail part of downtown is relatively small compared to the size of the whole town," he said.

Dula said since the town is responsible for roads, sewers and other related utilities, any development by the university or private business owners would have to be a joint venture.

David Dillion, owner of 116 Oak restaurant on West Lebanon Avenue, said he would love to see the area rid of non-retail.

"I would love for the downtown to have more stores, more restaurants," he said.

Dillion said it would be beneficial if businesses were also targeted to residents other than students.

"We want the Town of Elon to be a destination for not only our students, faculty and staff, but our community itself," Whittington said.



JACK DODSON | Photographer
The University recently hired Ken Kauffman as a development consultant to build up downtown Elon. He has experience with other university towns.

Dula added that the availability of private money would be a factor in downtown expansion.

"I hope that things develop in a positive and economical way," he said.

According to Whittington, there are no formal plans for development at this time.