

Chemistry professor serves as president of national organization

Caitlin O'Donnell
News Editor

Eugene Grimley, professor of chemistry at Elon University, was recently selected as president of Phi Lambda Upsilon, a national chemistry honor society.

"The purpose of the organization is to promote scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students majoring in chemistry or the chemical sciences," Grimley said.

The organization is comprised of 73 chapters with student and faculty members at major universities across the nation.

When a chapter is formed at an individual university, it must create a constitution and bylaws in line with those of the national organization.

"This is their operating procedure, how they conduct elections and make decisions," Grimley said. "It must be consistent with the overall organization."

Elon's chapter was formed last spring with a charter class of 21 members, 16 of which were students and five faculty, including Grimley and Joel Karty, associate professor of chemistry and faculty adviser for the chapter.

With 11 current members, the group is in the process of planning its first meeting of the year.

"On campus, the (chapter) can help with admissions and tours of the science building for people who are interested in science," he said. "Communications is a whole lot better peer-to-peer than faculty-to-peer."

As president of the national organization, Grimley said he has input as an overseer, but can't vote in elections, which are reserved for student members.



Eugene Grimley, professor of chemistry, began a four-year term as president of Phi Lambda Upsilon July 1.

"Each of the 73 chapters can send one delegate to the national congress held in conjunction with the national American Chemical Society meetings," he said. "At the congress, most people haven't participated in the political process. We deal with real issues, such as the allocation of the budget, and it's all student-voted."

Grimley, who as president will lead the Congress, said it's a great opportunity for people interested in similar fields of study to meet, encourage one another and see what their peers are doing.

"You learn how the organization works, and it gives you a professional feeling," he said. "It's super great for Elon students or any student."

The organization also gives an annual Fresenius award of \$5,000 to a professor to put toward his or her research.

The winner is also recognized at national meetings of the American Chemical Society.

"As president, I'm now charged with making sure the committee meets and selects an outstanding young scientist for the award," Grimley said.

During the four-year term that Grimley will serve as president, he said he hopes to encourage groups of members around the country to become formally recognized chapters and for current chapters to become more active participants in the organization.

"The objective is to hook up the less than active chapters, make sure they're active and website is up to date," he said. "It advertises for them across their campus what their organization is about. Visibility is important, you don't want to disappear."

Grimley also recently completed a new website for the organization and said he hopes the websites of all chapters will eventually become connected, so students interested in chemistry and Phi Lambda Upsilon can find information.

Grimley also said he plans to institute a scholarship worth about \$2,000 for student members to use toward tuition.

"It would be a fairly significant scholarship for a person who's already a member, a junior or senior doing outstanding research or discovery work in addition to their GPA," he said.

Founded in 1889, more than 70,000 members have been inducted into Phi Lambda Upsilon, Grimley said. Currently, there are around 35,000 active members.

Student members are required to have a 3.25 GPA both overall and in chemistry, and have at least 20 hours in chemistry at an organization approved by the American Chemical Society.

Elon professor witnesses overthrow of Kyrgyzstan government, brings valuable experience back to States

Anna Johnson
Managing Editor

The remnants of bullet holes that nicked and dinged the inch-thick metal fence surrounding the Kyrgyzstan capital palace were still clearly visible after the political riots. One Elon University professor witnessed the government overthrow that ripped through the country in mid-spring last year.

Jeff Carpenter, assistant professor of education, spent two weeks in Kyrgyzstan through a program with the state department called Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program. His visit coincided with the overthrow of the unpopular president and massive riots resulting in the death of dozens.

Before joining Elon's staff this year, he taught at Carrboro High School in Carrboro, N.C., as an English teacher. It was Carrboro's high percentage of refugees from Burma that led him to look for paid trips abroad.

"I wanted to learn about the refugees," he said. "But given the economy, I couldn't find anyone to fund that brilliant idea. But I did find this program and I decided to throw my hat in."

He was allowed to choose three countries and his choices were all in central Asia. His wife, Shabnam Victoria Muradi, is from Afghanistan and he said he chose central Asia "because of the eternal quest to better understand his wife."

During his two weeks abroad, Carpenter lived with a host teacher, co-taught in Kyrgyzstan high schools, with education NGOs and met with political leaders. Because of the civil unrest, the political meetings were halted.

Midway through his trip, protestors gathered at the Kyrgyzstan capital, Bishkek, to protest and demand the resignation of the current president. Carpenter was staying in Karakol, five hours away from the capital, but his city was not entirely free of protestors.

"One to 2,000 people went to protest to show solidarity with the protestors in the capital," he said.

The governor in that region, he said, resigned quickly and there was never any violence. The protests took place less than two blocks from where he was staying.

"I felt fortunate in that I had a local looking after me," he said. "She said, stay in your hotel, and the state department said to stay in my hotel. So I did for 24 hours and just watched Al Jazeera."

It was difficult watching people die on television and watching the day's events unfold in his hotel room, he said.

While there was little danger in Karakol, in order for Carpenter to leave the country, he had to fly out of the capital. When he returned to Bishkek, men and women were gathered placing flowers on the ground and near the palace where massive shootings took place.

"I didn't miss it by much," he said. "It was sobering to see the flower memorials and the piles of flowers knowing each



Jeff Carpenter, assistant professor of education, works with ninth grade students in Kyrgyzstan through the Teaching Excellence and Achievement Program.

flower was where someone died."

Carpenter has traveled his entire life, and the danger was nothing new. When his wife found out about the protests, she called his parents.

"My wife was freaking out," he said. "You can't just pick up a phone; there is no Internet. And I think it was my mom who said, 'he is probably enjoying the adventure.'"

Despite the danger, Carpenter was able to put the experience into context with the Kyrgyzstan education system and the United States' system.

"(Trips abroad) help prepare future teachers about the importance of being a global citizen and increasingly, the student body in the United States is becoming more globally diverse," he said.

Elon admissions increase in both number and merit

Rachel Southmayd
Senior Reporter

The number and caliber of high school students applying to Elon University has been on the rise in the past 10 years, according to the Office of Admissions.

From the 2000-2001 school year to 2009-2010, the number of applicants increased by 4,082 students. Each year during the last decade, enrollment either increased or stayed the same. This year's freshmen class is the largest in Elon's history.

According to Melinda Wood, the

assistant dean of admissions and director of applicants, it is not a result of something Elon is doing.

"It isn't something we're creating," she said. "We are really just responding to the quality of the students that are identifying Elon as a choice of theirs."

Since 2000, the average SAT score for an incoming Elon student has increased by about 100 points, and the average GPA has changed from 3.4 in 2000-2001 to 3.94 in 2010-2011.

According to the office of admissions, when a student applies to Elon, their GPA is recalculated to a 4.0 scale, core academic courses

are considered and advanced level courses like AP and IB classes are given additional weight.

A student's academic record and standardized test scores are then evaluated along with other pieces of the application such as a counselor recommendation and a personal essay. Numbers are not the only things that matter to admissions representatives, Wood said.

She said Elon admits students from all academic ranges to increase diversity, and doesn't focus solely on grades and test scores because today's Elon applicants usually have a lot to

offer outside of the classroom.

"We have seen a more well-rounded student," she said. "They're much more committed to organizations, to leadership, to service projects."

She said students seem to be drawn to Elon's academic offerings, the Elon Experience opportunities and extra-curricular activities.

Wood also noted that the growth in applicant numbers and scores has begun to level off in recent years, and that each year is different from the year before.

"It's hard to predict," she said. "We wait and see what's coming to us."