

University to expand programs offered for international students

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Senior Reporter

As part of the Elon Commitment, Elon University is working to triple the number of international students enrolled and expand the programs available for them.

"Over 70 percent (of all students) are sent abroad," said Cheryl Borden, associate director of Admissions and Director of International Admissions. "If we're sending all those students outside the country, why not bring international students to Elon?"

Elon's international students exhibit a variety of geographic diversity, Burden said.

"We have students from every continent, with the exception of Antarctica," she said.

International students make up about 3 percent of the student population, according to Borden.

"This 3 percent includes non-U.S. citizens and anyone considered to be a dual citizen," she said. "What characterizes (it) is not that we have a huge number from one country. We have a small handful from many different countries with good geographic diversity."

Borden said technology is a major advantage when trying to get international students interested in attending Elon. She uses Skype, blogging networks and Twitter to keep potential students connected to Elon's campus.

Traveling across the globe to attend various college fairs worldwide, Borden visited 25 countries in the last academic year.

"This year, I spent two weeks in Asia and visited nine countries," she said.

On Monday, Oct. 11 she left for a three week trip to Latin America and will visit seven countries.

Expanding the number of international students at Elon is one of the themes in the Elon Commitment.

"Attracting more international students is consistent with the goals of diversity and global engagement," said Woody Pelton, dean of International Programs and director of the Isabella Cannon Center.

As part of this plan to increase global diversity and attract international enrollment, the International Fellows program will be introduced. Borden explained that, like the other fellows programs at Elon, the International Fellows would be a select group of students with similar interests and specialized classes.

"The first two years of study include a multiple disciplinary course to explore the nation's capital," she said. "The program is to have students learn more about U.S. culture and history with a focus on the Southeast."

The first International Fellows class will enroll in the fall of 2011. The program will involve internships on campus, scholarships and specialized study. The fellows will be not be restricted to any major and can be undeclared when enrolling in the program.

Pelton said Elon is an attractive choice of college for international students because of the safe environment.

"It (has) excellent academic programs and extracurricular opportunities," he said.

But with international competition, attracting international students is challenging, Borden said.

"Elon competes with over



Left to right: International students Loise Ndegwa, Michelle Lim, Ala Eddine Maaref, Ola Martensson, Jacek Weglarz and Jakub Zakrzewski. Currently, international students make up 3 percent of Elon's student population.

4,000 colleges and universities in the U.S.," she said.

Other countries that actively recruit students to attend their universities include Australia and Canada.

Typically, students look at their options and cost.

"To get a student to the U.S. from Europe, there has to be a draw, there has to be strong programs," Borden said. "We're looking for the smart student with the good heart."

To Borden, increasing international student enrollment on Elon's campus would increase global diversity and promote awareness between cultures.

"It goes hand in hand with becoming a global citizen," she said.



Top row, right to left: Ala Eddine Maaref, Ola Martensson, Jakub Zakrzewski, Michelle Lim and Loise Ndegwa. Bottom row: Jacek Weglarz and Tanja Kretl. International students at Elon come from a variety of foreign countries.

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