

# Opinions

## Opinion should be based on more than blind allegiance

### In the U.S. party system, true understanding of the health care bill gets lost



Caitlin O'Donnell  
Columnist

Obamacare. Death panels. Socialized health care.

No matter which side of the ideological aisle you align yourself with, these are just a few easily identifiable examples of the accusatory phrases that are freely tossed around and have come to define the health care debate in America.

Health care is an emotionally charged subject and both political parties have been quick to poke gaping holes in the arguments of the other. Add to that the power of the media in framing an argument, and the nation has witnessed one of the most controversial and vocal debates over policy issues in recent history.

With contradictory reports about the consequences of the bill and exaggerated allegations against those who support it, citizens are often left unaware of their benefits or completely misinformed.

As a result, the political line has been drawn. Whether they know anything about the bill at all is irrelevant - Republicans don't support it and Democrats do. It's as simple as that.

Long-standing political grudges have gotten in the way of good sense.

A few weeks ago, Betty Morgan, associate professor of political science, drew attention to the new benefits available to college students as a result of the bill, specifically the ability to stay on their parents' insurance until the age of 26, which she said allows students to make sound employment decisions. We, as college students, are the ones who stand to gain the most if this bill goes into effect.

If, as Morgan pointed out, the lives of young adults have been positively transformed, why are

more students not adamantly fighting for the health care bill's continuance?

In many cases, it is a matter of people failing to educate themselves and instead relying on politically-charged rhetoric that has twisted the truth into an almost unrecognizable state.

People are not going to argue for something they don't understand themselves.

Rather than naively picking a side in the argument and defining a personal stance based on biased political ideals, Americans should take the road less traveled and think beyond the influences of the media and talking heads.

Fight for the continuation of the bill or don't. But at the least develop a knowledgeable argument founded on personal research and independent thought. Choose to be a member of the Democrat, Republican, Independent, Libertarian or any other party for that matter. Just don't let the espoused beliefs of those political parties become the only way to define right and wrong.

## Varying sides to the story: Greek Life at Elon

### Greek Life offers so much more than just a group of similarly-pinned friends



Lindsay Kimble  
Columnist

"Why would you want to pay for friends?" Every Greek Life member has probably been asked this question numerous times.

And while it is awkward to answer, it just exemplifies the ignorance that fuels dislike for Greek Life.

While, obviously, Greek societies are not for everyone, those who criticize Interfraternity Council, Panhellenic Council and National Pan-Hellenic Council organizations should be educated about the countless benefits that come from membership before making a judgment, even if membership does come at a small cost.

It's easy to get lost at Elon. From that first organization fair in September to the countless e-mails from student groups and clubs, many new Elon students sign up for one too many things. I felt lost as a freshman, trying to navigate the tough academic rigor of college while simultaneously balancing my newfound friends and the 15 organizations that were e-mailing me. Many students find this transition easier upon joining a Greek program, as I did.

Greek organizations give students a new avenue to become involved in the university, offering a large support network and a family away from home. There are 25 Greek organizations on campus, two of which are new this academic year. Every student is given the opportunity to rush any of these organizations and hopefully find a home that fits their goals and personality.

Each organization operates differently, but students involved get to participate in activities such as individual philanthropy events

and Greek life-specific activities like Greek Week in April. Greek organizations often interact as a full community, dispelling rumors of competition and rivalry. In the fall, Greek Life operated a trick-or-treat event in the Greek courts for Elon faculty and staff's children. Each Greek organization had representatives working together to help kids decorate cookies and paint pumpkins.

According to the Elon Greek Life webpage, a study conducted by the Center for Advanced Social Research at the University of Missouri found that Greek-affiliated alumni have higher incomes than non-Greek alumni. Students who join sororities and fraternities are also 28 percent more likely to return to school after joining a Greek organization.

At Elon alone, Greek organizations budget, collect and expend more than \$600,000 a year, operating as a self-governing organization.

Greek Life provides nearly 200 leadership positions for students, including president, chapter life director, Panhellenic delegate and more. In the past 10 years, Elon's Greek community has raised and donated nearly \$26,000 and 7,000 service hours to charitable organizations.

For many people, their only impression of Greek Life draws from popular college movies and television programs like ABC Family's "Greek." Greek organizations are portrayed as out-of-control groups who like to party and have little concern for academics. Yet the information given here should be a strong indicator that Greek Life is more than just petty social organizations.

It's an opportunity for students to find a home away from home, to network with their peers and alumni, to actively participate and contribute to a philanthropy, to operate as a leader on campus and to join a fully-functioning community.

### When everybody else is doing it, being Greek at Elon loses its distinction



Robert Woehner  
Columnist

If Elon failed the senior class in any aspect, it was this: a fraternity was never established for Coldplay fans. Its message would have been simple and

powerful: Viva la Vida. Instead of pink shorts, loose button-ups and Vineyard Vines, members would have donned 17th century French Revolutionary costumes. Perhaps if the band releases a few more Pitchfork approved albums, this dream will come true.

As far-fetched as this sounds, with new and alternative Greek organizations being introduced, recent trends at the university suggest that Greek Life will continue to expand. This spring, two new organizations were launched and last week, The Pendulum reported that two students are exploring the possibility of starting a Jewish fraternity on campus.

The students interviewed about the Jewish fraternity repeatedly stated the need for an increased Jewish presence and voice on campus. That is a worthy goal and one that should be supported. Why, though, would being Greek validate those values? I pose that same question to young Christians, band members and others who have started their own Greek organization. What some people call "brotherhood," the rest of society calls "friendship."

Greek Life is a meaningful opportunity that should be embraced by those who wish to be Greek. But everyone isn't meant to be Greek. Elon's response should not be to encourage Greek expansion until every possible student feels they have an organization they can fit in. That is not the answer.

Besides, the expansion of anything causes it to lose its

distinction. What it means to be Greek is lost when everyone is doing it.

When I was an employee at the Moseley Center, one of the hardest questions to answer from prospective students and parents was, "How prevalent is Greek Life here at Elon?" I haven't spent enough time on another school's campus to compare the influence it has on their student body. But when I asked this question of someone else, I got an unconventional, but interesting response: Look at the distance between the student center and the Greek Houses. The closer it is, the more influential it is.

Of course, the Moseley Center is just a corn-hole throw away from the Greek Houses of the Loy Center.

This should be no surprise. From an administrator's point of view, Greek Life is an essential component to the university. Elon, North Carolina does not have nearly the physical and logistical features to socially sustain 5,000 students. It's very simple: there isn't enough for everybody to do. With more than 40 percent of students worrying about formals, theme parties and volunteering, entertaining a restless student body is a lot easier.

But with Greek Life developing, any increased resentment that grows should be addressed. Just as no one should be questioned for deciding to be Greek, no one should be questioned for deciding not to be Greek. People shouldn't create ridiculous acronyms to compensate for being unaffiliated. Being Greek is a choice for a college student, as is joining an a cappella group or a rugby team. And just like it would be nonsense to hate five-part harmonizers, hating Greeks is not appropriate either.

Being exclusive is not a crime. It's the nature of the game. Resentment and jealousy of Greeks is out of line. But frustrations over the system are not unmerited. The university must stop prompting one narrative of a successful and satisfied college student. Equally alternative ones are also needed, with or without Coldplay's help.