

The Pendulum seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty as well as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

Editorial

THE PENDULUM

Established 1974

The Pendulum is published each Wednesday of the academic year. The advertising and editorial copy deadline is 5 p.m. the Friday before publication. Letters to the editor and guest columns are welcome and should be typed and e-mailed with a telephone number for verification. Submissions are accepted as Word documents. The Pendulum reserves the right to edit obscene and potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters or columns may be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of The Pendulum and will not be returned. You can reach The Pendulum by e-mail at pendulum@elon.edu. If you have questions or concerns about an article, contact a section editor. Please do not respond to reporters directly.

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Stickers are a great place to start

But true campus activism requires more than just angry words

An injustice occurred on Elon University's campus last week. Two students were verbally assaulted by people driving through campus. These anonymous hecklers used racial slurs that have been condemned not only at Elon, but across the country.

But this was hardly another Smith Jackson email-incident with a few Facebook statuses and tweets in response. Instead, there was a swelling of anger and a response from the student body that was vocal and palpable.

And this wasn't the only incident of activism on campus in the past few days.

On Monday, Sept. 12, many students and faculty stood grouped on Young Commons against the North Carolina legislature, which just passed an amendment to the state constitution, legally defining marriage as between one man and one woman. The amendment will appear on the ballot for popular approval in May.

In recent days, residents of The Crest have stood up to the campus administration, protesting parking fees outside their apartments.

At a table in Moseley, students with Amnesty International asked passers-by to sign an online petition requesting a stay in the execution of a Georgia man currently sitting on death row. By this printing, he may be dead.

Elon is ranked toward the top in a lot of categories, but activism isn't one of them. This is not a school full of protests and students rallying in support or against causes, at least not in large numbers.

This isn't necessarily good or bad, and it probably doesn't say anything about the convictions most students have and the passion with which they support or oppose causes in the privacy of their own home.

But it sure is interesting to see a change of pace.

The university administration reported that 2,500 people came to the specially-themed College Coffee on Tuesday, Sept. 13, and last Thursday's SGA meeting was filled with visitors, far more than the usual amount. They came to both of these events to wear their "Not On Our Campus" stickers, demand answers to their questions and collectively say, "This is not alright by us."

Here's the problem: As soon as Tuesday's fervor died off and as soon as Elon President Leo Lambert was done addressing the SGA meeting during a special section, the stickers disappeared from most shirts and the extra audience had mostly emptied out. A few, including Candice Blacknall, remained, but most did not. They had stood where they would be seen. They had said their piece.

Here's the question that needs to be asked now that the sting has subsided into more of a seething frustration: "What now?"

And although plenty of students have asked this of administrators like Lambert and Vice President Smith Jackson, it would also do everyone well to ask the same question of themselves.

The old adage that character is doing what's right when nobody's looking is

as true today as it has ever been. To say "not on our campus" is one thing, but to stand up and tell a person who is using a derogatory term to stop is something completely different. And this applies in all cases, from ethnic minorities to people of different political affiliations to genders to sexual orientation to socioeconomic background to anything else that makes people unique and different.

It is not enough to just say "not on our campus." It is not enough to just be OK with the group of people holding candles, mourning the loss of rights to an institution that is supposed to be a celebration of love. It is not enough to gripe about unfair conditions in a parking lot.

In the case of The Crest parking lot, a change was actually made. A group made its voice heard. And while some might call this issue petty in comparison to racial tolerance, that parking pass fee could mean the difference between being able to afford groceries for a month or getting to pay the rest of the deposit for a life-changing study abroad trip. The point is that something was accomplished and an injustice was righted. The answer to "what now?" was clearly heard.

This is not to say we need to start camping out outside the president's office. And it doesn't mean we all need to become angry, disillusioned youth. But we do need to be aware that life is not all shiny and new, and that a few hours or days worth of anger do not a just society make. Activism is about more than wearing a sticker.

Although, it is a great place to start.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Diversity is not black and white; it is the exact opposite. Black is white. Straight is gay. Christian is Muslim.

Elon announced in its strategic 10-Year Plan that its first priority is an "unprecedented commitment to diversity." Are students ready for such a commitment? Considering that the Class of 2015 is the most "diverse" Elon has ever brought in, what makes Elon a place where people are comfortable victimizing others, and in such a public way?

It is clear from Elon's perfectly trimmed grass and swift replacement of missing bricks that image is important. Thus, reluctance to address a problem that could jeopardize its recent ranking in U.S. News & World Report is understandable. However, students must demand the same standards they valued when they decided Elon was where they belong.

Students, ask others about their expectations for our campus climate. Ask friends what they think of the recent events. Tell professors you want to hear their perspective and engage in class discussions. Challenge yourself to formulate your own opinions and to remain open-minded. Conversations can uncover ignorance. Ignorance can be eradicated by knowledge. Knowledge has the power to begin conversation that fulfills an unprecedented commitment to diversity.

If you were verbally harassed walking to your dorm, how soon would you start filling out transfer applications?

Understanding that neither diversity nor discrimination is exclusive is key to cultivating a campus where everyone belongs. We charge you to be neither apathetic, to feel nothing, nor sympathetic, to feel bad for. We charge you to be empathetic, to feel bad with, in response to acts of hate on this campus.

"If you keep fighting progress, you will find yourself on the wrong side of history." - "Jumping the Broom"

Jamie Albright and Aisha Mitchell
Diversity Advocates

Tuesday



Wednesday



RACHEL SOUTHMAYD | Opinions Editor

MORE ONLINE

"There are so many majors here at Elon that we usually never know who's studying what as we walk past each other on campus."

Which is the most difficult major at Elon? The easiest? The most overhyped? Read more of one columnist's analysis.

<http://bit.ly/EPMajor>

MEGAN MURRAY | Columnist

On this week's "Topics," the benefits and pitfalls of Family Weekend are discussed.

http://bit.ly/EPTopics9_19

RACHEL SOUTHMAYD | Opinions Editor