

Frontrunners emerge for Republican presidential candidate

Grace Elkus
Senior Reporter

Although the 2012 presidential election is more than a year away, frontrunners for the Republican nomination are emerging and Americans are beginning to formulate opinions and speculate the outcome.

The Republican primary is shaping up to be a two-man race between Rick Perry and Mitt Romney, according to Mileah Kromer, political science professor and assistant director of the Elon Poll. While other candidates showed potential early on, they have failed to keep the attention of America.

"Jon Huntsman, who some would argue is the most qualified candidate with his combination of executive and foreign policy experience, just can't seem to gain traction across the broad spectrum of Republican voters," Kromer said. "Herman Cain has gained momentum in terms of appeal and favorability, however he seems to lack the electability factor."

Betty Morgan, associate professor of political science, is skeptical about how much is really definitive at this point. Although she agrees that there are frontrunners, she knows there is always the possibility of another entrant. But she does acknowledge the energy behind the Perry candidacy.

"Very honestly, (Perry) is a fabulous primary candidate," she said. "I don't know if he's the Republicans' best choice for the general election. That's something they're going to work out on their own."

Another candidate in the running is Michele Bachmann, who started out strong when she won the Ames Straw Poll, a presidential poll taken by Iowa Republicans, but is now losing favor. But it's too early for polling to be relevant, Morgan said.

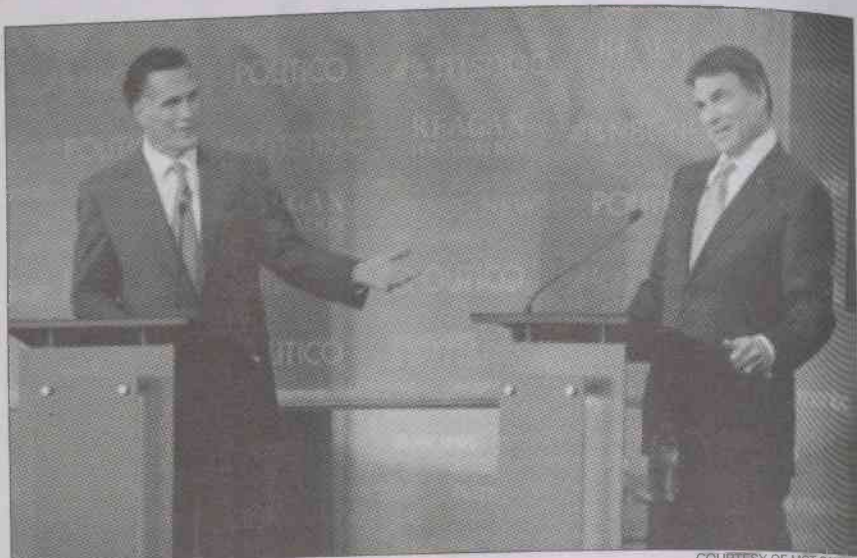
"Polling at this point probably isn't even indicative," she said. "Does it point really to anything that's going to be relevant? It's unlikely."

Although Bachmann is losing support, she will still be around for a while longer, Morgan said.

"I think it's likely that Bachmann and Ron Paul may be around for a while because it doesn't cost them very much to be out there," Morgan said. "They are making it complicated for Perry and Romney because they can bring up difficult topics."

If Bachmann wants to be a major contender, she needs to focus on recapturing the majority of the Tea Party vote, Kromer said. Currently, she is splitting it with Rick Perry.

In terms of the current presidency, Obama is vulnerable, Morgan said. The next several months will be extremely important, and what's



Mitt Romney (left) and Rick Perry are shaping up to be the two top contenders for Republican presidential candidate, according to Mileah Kromer, political science professor. The two men sparred at a Republican debate earlier this month. COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS

going to matter is whether there is any progress on the jobs bill with Congress, if there is clarity about the economic situation in Europe and whether there is any type of national emergency.

While the Democratic Party works on staying in good favor, the Republican Party is working on establishing an identity, Morgan said.

"What brand of republicanism

it wants to claim is going to be as interesting and as important as which candidate gets nominated, or even maybe which candidate wins," she said. "At the end of this campaign, the Republican Party is going to be fundamentally changed. Their decision about which way they go is going to put them on a different trajectory probably for the next decade."

Voter ID bill vetoed by Perdue, challenges continue

Kassandra Cloos
News Editor

Recent cases of voter fraud that have come to light in North Carolina have rekindled the fight to overturn Gov. Bev Perdue's veto of a voter identification bill proposed in the spring.

The bill, proposed by Reps. Ric Killian, David Lewis and Tim Moore, would have required all voters to present photo identification at the

polls and was vetoed by Perdue over the summer on the grounds it would have prevented open access to voting.

"I was happy she vetoed it," said George Taylor, professor of political science at Elon University. "I don't see a need for it. It's just another way to keep people from voting."

In a previous interview, Rep. Killian said voter fraud was the primary motivation behind the bill. Investigations were recently filed against four individuals for voter

fraud, but it is largely not a problem in North Carolina according to Taylor.

"We must always be vigilant in protecting the integrity of our elections," Perdue said in a statement regarding the veto. "But requiring every voter to present a government-issued photo ID is not the way to do it. This bill, as written, will unnecessarily and unfairly disenfranchise many eligible and legitimate voters."

If the bill had passed, those

without photo identification would have been able to acquire IDs from the government free of charge. But taking time out of work or finding transportation to the county board of elections could have presented a challenge for those without readily available means of transportation.

"There was a time in North Carolina history when the right to vote was enjoyed only by some citizens rather than by all," Perdue said. "That time is past, and we should not revisit it."

First LIFE@ELON session focuses on gifts of later life

Nick Zanetti
Senior Reporter

John Sullivan, a former Elon philosophy professor, presented the first session of the LIFE@ELON program last week, a non-credit educational program for alumni and friends of Elon who are 50 years of age or older. The first session was called Welcoming the Gifts of Later Life: Lessons from Autumn and Winter.

Sullivan taught for 36 years at Elon. He has written four books, one of which is specifically about the benefits of aging and the gifts of later life.

While Dot Lindley said she had many

reasons for attending the first session of LIFE@Elon, one of the things she was most excited about was the presenters.

"When I saw who the presenters were, I knew I wanted to attend," Lindley said. "I admire them all so much. Elon does everything so well, I knew this program would be special."

During the lesson, Sullivan presented the various stages of life as they were understood in ancient India, where every stage of life had a purpose.

"Aging is not decline, but relaxing into something deeper," he said. "We tend to think of life stages only in chronology, not in purpose. In ancient India, each stage of life had a task."

Lindley said Sullivan's presentation was particularly relevant to her own

stage in life.

"The things that John talked about gave me such peace and understanding," she said.

Anne Maynard was another participant in the first session. She is an Elon alumna who grew up in the town of Elon, just a few streets from where the session took place in the Johnston Hall Alumni Center.

"I love the way that John's stories put his message into focus. He's such a great speaker," Maynard said.

Another part of Sullivan's speech centered on the tasks of grandparents. He said grandparents can use their broad perspective to "keep the big things big and the little things little." He also said that grandparents encourage creativity in young people.

"The youngster going through the first love and first betrayal thinks that their whole world has collapsed, but elders know that they will find new love, they will live through betrayal," Sullivan said.

Maynard said the talk helped her put things in perspective.

"I feel like I have gained a way of accepting changes in life, and how I can use changes to help others," Maynard said.

Sullivan also said the transition into elderhood is one should be reimagined, and later stages of life are poorly understood in today's culture.

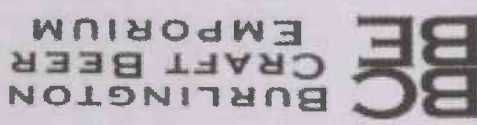
The LIFE@Elon program will feature 11 more sessions this fall. Because of overwhelming response and participation, there will also be an additional 12 sessions taught in the spring.

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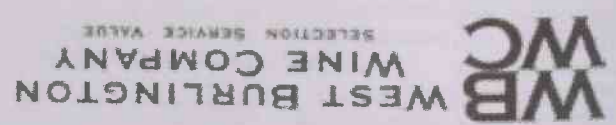
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