

Former US deputy attorney general speaks about line between politics and policy

Kassandra Cloos
News Editor

David Ogden, former deputy attorney general of the United States, spoke Thursday night at Elon University about his experiences in government and the moral gray areas that result from interpreting the law through political lenses.

Ogden's speech, titled "Justice at the Intersection of Law and Politics," gave several examples of cases in which the line between politics and policy has been challenging to draw.

Lawyers who decide to dedicate their careers to being civil servants for the United States, its citizens, their clients, are taking on important roles, Ogden said. It's a great privilege, but one that comes with great responsibility, and partisan political beliefs should not be considered in the policy-making process.

"There are plenty of ways the government can go wrong, and to let personal views or narrow interests drive decisions, it can let partisan thinking drive decisions," Ogden said. "It can make just plain bad decisions."

The debate over whether cable

companies should be forced to carry broadcast channels was one instance he gave in which interpreting the Constitution is far less black-and-white when special interests play a role in decision-making.

In this case, the National Association of Broadcasters was concerned that cable companies had a monopoly and people would no longer watch their shows. This meant that people without cable would be hindered from watching television if the NAB was forced out of existence.

President

George H.W. Bush vetoed a statute to force cable companies to carry their channels, but after much deliberation, the veto was eventually overturned when Bill Clinton was voted into office. This raises questions of whether Clinton acted improperly, or if changes in law should be expected with each election, Ogden said.

One student asked whether he thought the line between policy and politics has swayed over the years, based on his experience working with multiple administrations.

"I think more and more decisions

get politicized across a broader and broader spectrum of what the government does," Ogden said. "I think that makes it harder to make decisions without being accused of being motivated the wrong way, and in fact, even sometimes without appearing that there's political motivation."

The Defense of Marriage Act, commonly referenced as DOMA, was briefly discussed and Ogden said he does expect the act, which only recognizes the marriage of opposite-sex couples at the federal level, regardless of state laws, to be brought to the Supreme Court.

"It's an important issue and it's a question of the constitutionality of an issue," Ogden said. "The issue will not become moot because the federal government continues to support the statute even if they don't defend it."

If DOMA is upheld, state laws will not have to change to stop recognizing same-sex marriage. But if the act were to be repealed, it is unknown whether states would be required to legalize and recognize same-sex marriage as well, Ogden said.

"It's a really good question because it really, I think, depends on why the Supreme Court decided DOMA was unconstitutional," he said. "If they decided it was unconstitutional because there was no sufficient rationale for denying people of the same sex to marry each other, then it's a little hard for me to see why a state could deny people of the same sex to marry each other. So if that's the rationale, I think it would have that effect but there are other ways the court could reach that conclusion."

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-David Ogden
FORMER DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL OF
THE UNITED STATES

Campus plans routine testing of E-Alert system at College Coffee later this semester

Caitlin O'Donnell
News Editor

E-Alert will undergo a routine test at College Coffee later this month. A record number of users, just less than 4,500, are currently enrolled with the emergency response system, an increase of almost 1,000 compared to last semester, according to Chris Fulkerson, assistant vice president for technology.

There will be announcements prior to the test, which will include the two sirens on campus, located on

Alumni and East Gyms, and E-Alert messages, which can be received via text messages or emails.

The university originally experienced problems with the system last semester during a tornado warning April 5.

Fulkerson said the issue stemmed from cell phone carriers who had not completed the necessary updates to their service. They have since followed up and corrected the problem.

"We can find kinks in the system, and we found that some of the cell phone companies had to

make corrections in their systems because the messages were delayed so it has to integrate back into our system," Fulkerson said in a previous interview. "So we need to do this every semester to make sure."

Fulkerson said previous testing of the system was generally hit or miss. The university's Safety Committee, however, felt it was important to test on a regular basis. Assessments will now be held around the beginning of each semester.

An RSS feed was recently added to the system, as well.

September 21-27

September 21

- "I Love You Man: Straight Men on Gay Issues": 7:30 p.m., Commuter Lounge
- "Gold Rush: Discovery of Gold Deposits in the Deep Sea and the Extraordinary Animals that Live on Them": 7:30 p.m., McCrary Theatre

September 23

- "Life Is What You Make It: A Concert & Conversation with Peter Buffett": 4:30 p.m., McCrary Theatre
- Collage, a program of song and dance: 7 and 8:15 p.m., Yeager Recital Hall

September 25

- Coffee at the President's House: 8:30-10 a.m., Maynard House
- Dance in the Landscape concert: 2 p.m., Lindner Hall Pavilion

September 27

- "Hands and Temperaments: Art History and the Early Medieval Artist": 6 p.m., Yeager Recital Hall
- Golden Dragon Acrobats: 7:30 p.m., McCrary Theatre

September 22

- First in the Family Interest Group Meeting: 5:30 p.m., room 206 in Belk Library
- Urgent Message Dance Troupe Auditions: 5:30 p.m., Oak Commons

September 24

- Family Weekend Picnic, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Collage, a program of song and dance: 6 and 7:15 p.m., Yeager Recital Hall

September 26

- Managing a Chronic Health Condition in College support program for students: 5:30 p.m., Room 105 in Truitt Center for Religious & Spiritual Life

For more dates and information about campus events, visit the calendar on the Elon website.

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NEWS BRIEFS

Elon recognized by U.S. News & World Report as best in several categories

Elon was recognized in six of the eight key program categories mentioned in the 2012 "America's Best Colleges."

In the magazine's annual ranking Elon was named #1 Southern University with "an unusually strong commitment to undergraduate teaching."

In the overall Southern masters-level universities, Elon ranked #2 for the fifth year in a row.

The magazine's annual ranking was released Sept. 13.

Elon hosts Fulbright Teaching Assistant from China

The Department of Foreign Languages and Isabella Cannon International Centre are hosting Zhang Xiaoxiao, a Fulbright Language Teaching Assistant from China.

Zhang will teach Chinese and work with student groups. He is available for guest lectures, presenting to campus groups and organizations and other activities in the classroom.

Organizations and classes interested in having Zhang visit should contact the Department of Languages at languages@elon.edu.

University welcomes students' families

Family weekend will take place from Sept. 23-25.

Check-in for the weekend is Friday from 3-7 p.m. Families will pick up their registration packets including a schedule, tickets for events and other information.

There are several events that will highlight the weekend including a Collage Concert 7 p.m. and 8:15 p.m. Friday, President's Update 9 a.m. Saturday, Family Weekend Picnic 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday and the Elon University Phoenix play the The Citadel Bulldogs 1:30 p.m. Saturday.

Additional events on Sunday include coffee at the President's home 8:30-10 a.m.

Two alumni travel to Sri Lanka for Training for Trusteeship conference

Two alumni took part in the 4th Annual Training for Trusteeship workshop this month in Sri Lanka. Both alumni are members of Elon University's Class of 2011 Periclean Scholar program, which worked with Sri Lanka.

Jesse Lee and Natalie Lampert, both class of 2011, were the only Americans accepted for 2011. They attended seminars, participated in workshops and worked in groups to come up with proposals for sustainable programs that address environmental or social justice issues.

Lee and Lampert plan to continue their stay in Sri Lanka to volunteer for Foundation of Goodness.

Elon Law selects Leadership Fellows

Seven students from the Elon University School of Law Class of 2014 were selected as Leadership Fellows.

These program now has 26 fellows. The inaugural group of Leadership Fellows enrolled in fall 2009.

Students invited to the program demonstrated leadership experience through community, military or their college experience. They have also demonstrated academic achievement. Students must show how these leadership skills could be further developed at Elon, in the practice of law and in their communities through the Fellows application.

Students receive student-funded stipends for summer internships

Two members of the Elon Law Class of 2013, Melodie Menzer and Kaitlin Shimansky, received a stipend from the Public Interest Law Society (PLS). Menzer interned with legal counsel for the Guardian ad Litem program in Wake County and Shimansky interned with the Orleans Public Defenders in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The stipend is created from a fund developed over a four-year development campaign.