

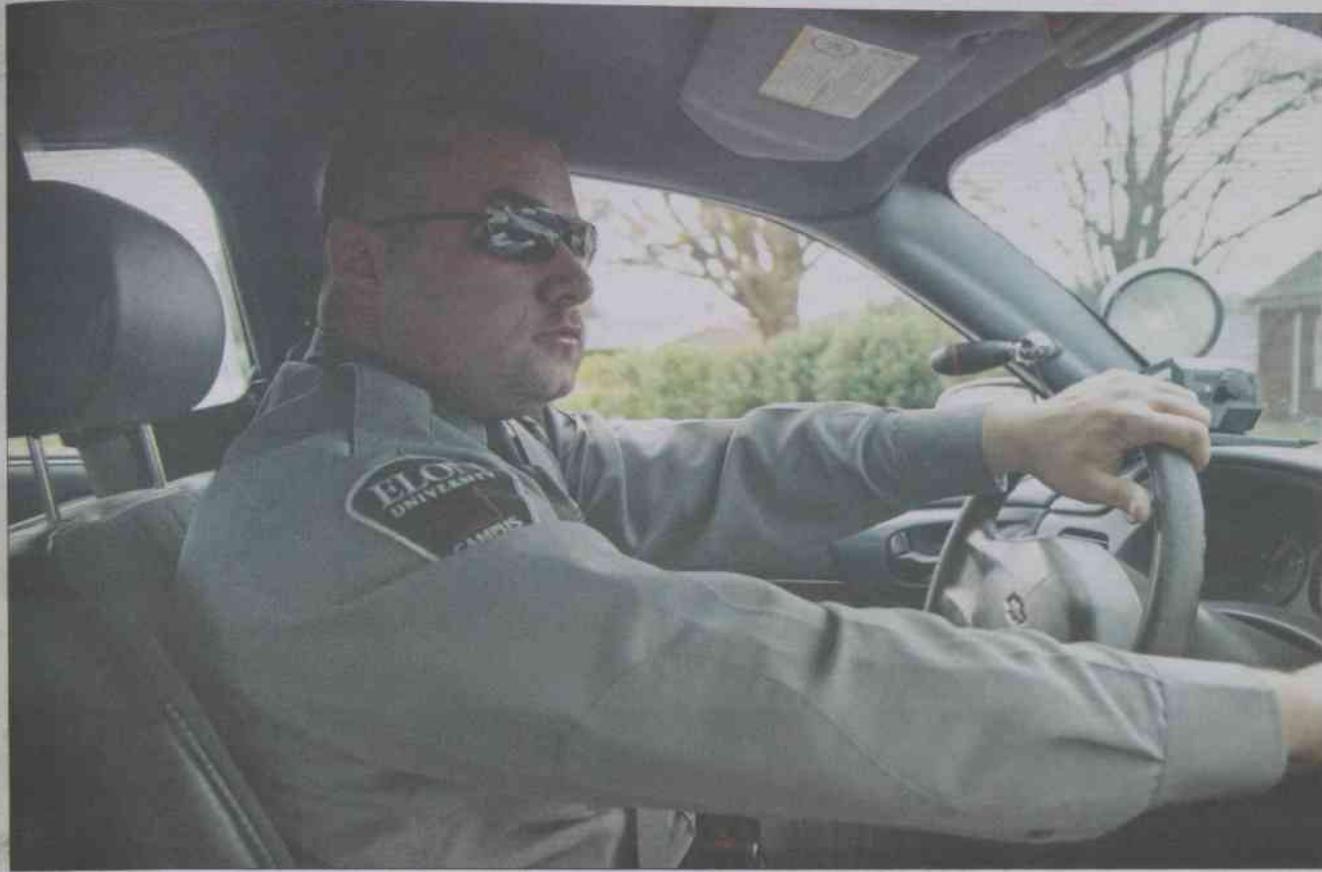


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Officer Darrell Bliesner has been a police officer with Elon Campus Safety and Police since August 2007. The North Carolina Supreme Court recently ruled that police officers at religious-affiliated schools such as Elon are required to uphold state law, overturning a previous ruling by the N.C. Court of Appeals.

As Tap House thrives, security issues increase

Grace Elkus
Senior Reporter

Elon University students cram into College Street Tap House, a popular bar just off Elon's campus, several nights a week. While the bar is known to many for its affordable drinks and large stage, underage students know it as the bar where they can consume alcohol without getting caught.

"It is easy to purchase drinks — ask an older person to buy you one, go into the bathroom and drink it," sophomore Ali Garcia said. "Or just cover the Xs on your hand. There are too many people for bouncers to notice it. And I never notice any police."

Garcia's observation is likely because of the confusion over who monitors the bar. Elon town police and Campus Safety and Police point to each other as the department that monitors Tap House. Chris Russell, the owner of Tap House, claims his employees act as his security team and said he is not required to hire off duty law enforcement unless a university event takes place at the bar or a Greek organization wants to rent the space, which occurs about once a week. In these situations, the organization is responsible for hiring one off-duty officer per 100 guests, who is usually from the Elon town police department, according to Shana Plasters, director of Greek Life.

"Their role there would not be the enforcement of underage drinking policies," Plasters said. "They are there at the hire of the organization, and often don't even go inside the establishment. Their role is more of a responder if there were to be an emergency situation."

Gerald Whittington, senior vice president for business, finance and technology, has a different understanding than Russell about the monitoring situation and the extent to which the town police are involved.

"The Tap House is, generally, monitored by the town police," he said. "If there was an occasion for them to call upon the university police for some reason, I am sure they would. Clearly, any property where alcohol is sold has risk management issues that the lessee of the property is required to address and follow applicable laws."

Russell leases the building from the University, which pays the property tax of the bar. He describes his relationship with the institution as a traditional landowner-lessee situation, which to him means no involvement from the landlord. But Whittington said he considers Elon to be somewhat involved.

A minor issue would have little to no response from the university, whereas a major one would have a significant response. But the biggest incident that has occurred was a girl who scraped her foot one night because she was wearing sandals, according to Russell.

Although Russell is not required to have a police department monitor the bar, the lack of extra security has not gone unnoticed by students, many of whom consider Tap House to be an exception to Elon's alcohol policy.

"Elon's strict alcohol policy is only strict if you get caught," Garcia said. "I honestly think it's too strict because on

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State Supreme Court upholds Campus Police Act Private university officers maintain right to enforce state law

Hannah DelaCourt
Senior Reporter

The North Carolina Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of the Campus Police Act, upholding the right of police officers at religious-affiliated universities to enforce state law. Elon University is one of a dozen private colleges and universities with historic religious affiliations that has a campus police force.

The decision earlier this month comes after a previous ruling by the N.C. Court of Appeals that stated police officers could arrest people at such universities who violated the freedom of religious establishment clause of the

First Amendment.

The case that spurned this appeal involved the arrest of Julie Yencer who obtained a DWI charge at Davidson College in Mecklenburg County.

Her appeal was mirrored after a similar incident that occurred in 1994 at Campbell University. An arrest was made near campus for a person driving while intoxicated.

The client's attorney sued the university, stating that because Campbell was then a strong religious institution, and by operating a state-approved police force, it violated the establishment clause of the Constitution that separates church and state.

When State v. Yencer made it to the

Supreme Court, the Court disagreed with the Appeals ruling, noting the primary purpose of a university is education.

But Chuck Gantos, director of Campus Safety and Police, said even though this is great news for all the schools in North Carolina, it doesn't impact Elon.

"We had two cases which went through the judicial process, and the judge ruled in favor of the university in both cases," he said. "In order to be a religious institution, you have to have had a certain number of criteria and we didn't meet that criteria."

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Definition of harassment expanded in diversity plan

Hannah DelaCourt
Senior Reporter

The standard response to racial harassment at Elon University has been re-worked as part of a strategic diversity plan to be implemented at the beginning of the spring semester. The plan also includes evaluation of diversity on campus and training for faculty and staff.

The decade-long plan falls under the leadership of Brooke Barnett, faculty administrative fellow for diversity and global engagement, Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life, and the newly-formed Bias and Discrimination Response Council.

"First of all, we think that one of the most important things that we all do is that the faculty and staff all participate in more training and professional development so that we can try to create the most inclusive campus environment possible," said President Leo Lambert. "And that when events happen we are more ready to handle them."

Barnett said she has always studied these subjects, but recent incidents involving racial slurs accelerated the progress in this area.

"This is a difficult process," she said. "We are trying to create something quickly but in the right way, but we have to go through policy changes."

The first training session for staff, attended by Lambert, took place the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

As another part of training, two experts from the University of San Diego will be on campus Dec. 8 to discuss the academic part, such as course construction and the assessment part of diversity.

Carole Huston, associate dean of

the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Diego, is an expert on student learning outcome assessment, and Carlton Floyd is the associate provost and co-director of the center

for inclusion and diversity at San Diego.

"We will meet with our committee looking at the diversity program and talk to ResLife to see how we can infuse diversity into that," Jackson said.

Training will be offered to

senior staff and the staff that are on the front line, meaning those that work directly with students. Jackson said they are bringing in a company that will do training through the Anti-

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