

Editorial

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.

Student body can't ignore other 'F-word'

Revising harassment policy will help, but students must share responsibility

The F-word is ugly. No, not the four-letter one, but the other one, a once harmless British word meaning "bundle of sticks." If you're waiting to see it printed here, keep looking because you won't find it. In today's society, it is an ugly, offensive term and should be treated with the same level of scrutiny as the N-word, and fortunately for everyone out there who feels the same way, Elon University agrees.

Here at Elon, rumors are as common as squirrels. When there were whisperings about students being punished by the administration for the use of the F-word, we jumped on it. Why wasn't the student body made aware? Who decides what's worth sharing or not? How do these incidents differ from the racial slurs at the beginning of the semester?

Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life, said students are alerted about harassment or similar incidents when they can help apprehend the suspects involved, like someone shouting a racial epithet from a moving car. An alert is also put out when students need to protect themselves, like if a person wielding a gun was spotted on campus, or if the harassed student wants the student body alerted.

In recent issues involving the F-word, the victim didn't want the specifics shared, and

all judicial proceedings for these types of issues happen behind closed doors. Jackson said this procedure prevents "re-victimizing" students who were the subject of any type of attack, be it physical, sexual or emotional.

The problem with these steps is that many people in the student body, and perhaps even among the faculty and staff, don't know how unacceptable

the F-word is on this campus. That Not on our Campus slogan doesn't just refer to the N-word, or at least it shouldn't in the minds of those who proudly tout it. Instead, it should stand for intolerance of any disrespectful language or behavior toward any group of people based on who they are or how they identify themselves.

The university agrees, which is why the harassment policy is being amended. And while the events from this fall have been a catalyst for speeding these changes up, Jackson said this has been under consideration since last summer. He also said the university was influenced by

changes in federal statutes and something called the "Dear Colleague Letter" from the Department of Education, which discusses the obligations schools have when responding to sexual harassment and sexual violence under Title IX.

These changes will be encompassed in a new website, which will explicitly list what is punishable and what that

punishment is, according to Jackson. There will also be additional training for faculty and staff and the topic of harassment will be addressed

at New Student Orientation. In addition, two new faculty positions are being created to specifically deal with discrimination and harassment-related issues. And these are great steps, as long as Elon follows through and enforces these punishments equally across the board.

But the administration can only do so much. At some point, we have to remember there are 5,000 undergraduate students on this campus with 5,000 different opinions and 5,000 different ways of expressing themselves, some

of which include offensive language. We have to be the ones to stand up to one another and say, "No, this is not OK." As a cohort, we have to police ourselves. If we don't, we run the risk of becoming desensitized and insulting scores of people who don't deserve to have their way of life tarnished with ignorance.

"Unfortunately, we don't get a lot of reports about (the use of the F-word)," Jackson said. He added, though, that he's sure it's happening often, and calls it "not OK" since it isn't necessary and can be harmful.

Increased vigilance from every corner of campus about the F-word and any other forms of disrespect is surely the only way we can battle this as a community. Jackson said after this new policy goes into effect, the university will probably see an increase in the number of incidents that are reported, but this doesn't mean more are actually occurring. It just means less people are getting away with it.

Next time you hear the F-word or the N-word or anything else you think is offensive or cruel, say something. The use of offensive language that is degrading to others is unacceptable at Elon, and that's the way it should be.

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Violating the University's Harassment Policy

First Offense

Second Offense

Disciplinary probation **Letter sent home** **Restitution hours** **Educational program**

Counseling assessment **Disciplinary suspension** **Banned from campus**

RACHEL SOUTHMAYD | Opinions Editor

What is harassment?

"The threatening of or verbal abuse directed toward any member of the university community. Offenses that occur in a classroom may result in temporary or permanent suspension from a class, pending the outcome of a hearing. Examples include, but are not limited to: communication of a threat, whether or not the person communicating the threat demonstrates any intention to actualize the threat; defamation of character, excessive use of profanity, verbal assaults, indecent language or images on a telephone or computer; and derogatory, sexist or racist remarks or any behavior that puts another member of the university community in a state of fear or anxiety or might be perceived as jeopardizing the physical, moral or scholastic well-being of any individual."

-2011-2012 Student Handbook

MORE ONLINE

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<http://bit.ly/EPUSIsrael>

MICHAEL GROSS
Guest Columnist

On the opinions podcast, "Topics," we discuss the power of words and how much harm they can do and when the university should tell students about incidents involving harassment.

http://bit.ly/EPTopics11_28

Letter to the Editor

The following was in response to "One more time, Elon needs to pick a side" in the Nov. 16 edition.

I don't think there is anything ambiguous about Elon's response to what Shuman tweeted. The university obviously decided not to use him as a poster boy for the issue. Sure, Shuman does represent Elon as an athlete and is accountable, but if he faced judicial sanctions for violating other social policies, would we run that in the paper?

The real problem with Shuman's tweets was not racial epithets, but his frustration with his coach and disregard for the university. Rappers have been using the N-word for years. The Pendulum is wrong on this issue. There is no reason the university should publicly crucify one of its own students to serve a PR objective or promote dialogue. He violated the Elon Honor Code, not the Global Experience.

John Tinkelenberg
Class of 2013

THE PENDULUM

Established 1974

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