

Passage of Amendment One elicits strong reactions from many

Katherine Blunt
Assistant News Editor

By midnight May 9, the results were finalized: Amendment One passed in the North Carolina primary elections with 61 percent of the vote. The strong amount of support for the amendment elicited strong reactions from all who had voted for or against its passage.

The amendment legally defines marriage as a union between one man and one woman and does not afford legal rights to any other form of partnership, heterosexual or homosexual. The issue drove many residents to vote in the primaries after weeks of campaigning both in support and opposition of the amendment.

Elon University's LGBTQ office held a debriefing on the results the evening of May 9, and the room was filled with emotion, said Emily Kane, an education and advocacy chair for Spectrum, Elon's queer-straight alliance.

"There was a lot of anger and a lot of sadness and a lot of crying," she said. "A lot of people were just kind of tired. We put a lot into this fight, and to not win it is hard."

Many students and community members outside the LGBTQ community were disheartened by the results, as well.

"Students are upset, and rightfully so," said Darien Flowers, executive president of the Student Government Association. "That our fellow citizens decided to make it legal to take civil rights and liberties away from a group of their fellow North Carolinians is saddening."

But some students were pleased

with the outcome and the definition of marriage now enshrined in the North Carolina Constitution.

"I was proud of the state of North Carolina for looking past the propaganda and doing their research and recognizing that the state needed an amendment," said freshman Austin Faur, who publicly defended his viewpoint on marriage at an SGA Senate meeting two weeks ago. That night, the SGA passed a resolution stating the amendment contradicted Elon's discrimination policy.

The greater community of North Carolina ought to recognize the amendment as discriminatory as well, Flowers said, recalling a statement made by Newark Mayor Cory Booker in response to New Jersey Governor Chris Christie's proposal of a similar amendment.

"Booker said the government should never put to a popular vote the civil rights of a minority group," he said. "When you do that, you effectively tell a minority group that their wellbeing or their rights to express themselves are left up to the majority."

The passage of the amendment raised Flowers' concern for the future of the state.

"It's organized and systematic disenfranchisement," he said. "With this kind of precedent, what's the next thing? I'm fearful that you're going to have more and more legislation introduced that limits civil rights of people in this state."

But some opponents of Amendment One assumed a more optimistic outlook.

"I don't see (the passage) as a loss," said Clinton Edmonson, an Elon graduate



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS
Kate Bruce, right, watches election results during an Amendment One opposition party May 8 in Raleigh. At Elon University, the community gathered May 9 to discuss the passage of the amendment, which received 61 percent of the vote.

who followed the results online from Los Angeles. "Laws like Amendment One are achieving the exact opposite of what they aim to prevent. All these people (who voted for the amendment) really strengthened a cause they didn't have a chance to beat in the first place."

Faur, who has recently been the victim of several verbal attacks regarding his stance on the amendment, agreed the results intensified the opposite sentiment. But he is not deterred from his beliefs.

"My friends are supportive and

recognize that everyone who voted for (the amendment) is being attacked," Faur said. "The future will be interesting. There may be lawsuits or something like that, but a similar amendment has been passed in 30 other states, and I think people forget that."

But Kane said she believes the numbers can be overcome. The LGBTQ office might hold a meeting in the fall to discuss moving forward against the amendment.

"We are definitely not giving up," she said.

Associate chaplain leaves Elon legacy of student engagement

Mary Kate Brogan
Senior Reporter

He is easily identified by his bowtie.

When Phil Smith first arrived at Elon six years ago, he was one of few on the campus who wore a bowtie, but as he prepares to leave Elon University, the associate chaplain leaves a larger legacy behind.

He said he feels he has grown and learned a lot, and now it is time for him to move on. While teaching the life entrepreneurship program for sophomore students, he found the lessons were applicable to his own life, he said.

"I realized a lot of what I was sharing with them about knowing when you need to move toward something, I found myself speaking to myself," Smith said.

Throughout his time working with the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, Smith has witnessed the departure of chaplain emeritus Richard McBride, the search for and training of current chaplain Jan Fuller, the hire of program assistant Jan Register and the planning of a brand new Multi-faith Center.

While Smith said he has had a lot of spiritual growth at Elon, he has also learned a lot from other groups on campus.

"This job has really allowed me to be engaged with several other areas of campus outside of Religious and Spiritual Life," Smith said. "And those have been tremendous opportunities, especially with leadership. I've worked with the Isabella Cannon Leadership Program, Elon 101, learning about academic advising, helping students that might not have had a connection with our office. Working with them has been developmental education for me."

Jan Fuller, university chaplain, said Smith has worked hard for the past few years, comparing his will to that of the Energizer Bunny, and saying his detail-oriented nature is what made the two of them such a great team.

"I really have appreciated him, and I am going to miss him a lot," Fuller said. "He's got a great sense of humor. He's as hard a worker as I've ever known."

Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life, said while Smith has demonstrated his commitment to the university through his involvement in programs such as "Better Together," QUEST, the interfaith Morocco Winter Term trip and College Chapel, his greatest asset is his approachability.

"I think working with students on every level is where he's made a tremendous impact,"

Jackson said.

Many students have felt that impact. Sophomore Morgan D'Arcy, who has worked with Smith during his participation with Habitat for Humanity and Sigma Phi Epsilon, said he believes Smith has made a large impact on the campus as a whole.

"I think that Phil is someone who pretty much everyone on campus knows," he said. "Anyone I'm talking to, when I say, 'Oh, I'm meeting with Phil Smith later,' that person's like, 'Oh, I love Phil Smith.'"

Freshman Lianna Mills has known Smith since she was a young girl when he worked at her church, and since arriving here, the two have spoken on several occasions. She said she believes Smith has done a lot for the Truitt Center and for Elon.

"He's a spiritual stronghold for the campus," Mills said. "I think his presence will be greatly missed."

Smith said he is looking at several options for the future, but has not chosen a path quite yet. He does know his time at Elon has had a great impact on his life.

"I love what we do here," Smith said. "Elon is a place where the way we go about education, we do a good thing, so, yeah, it's going to be hard to leave that behind."



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS
Phil Smith poses at a Phoenix athletics event with the Elon mascot.

Phil Smith's words of wisdom for the Class of 2012

"First of all, beware of people dispensing words of wisdom. But if you are still reading, here are mine: Just when you think you have it all figured out, something or someone comes along and causes you to question everything and to recalculate and/or recalibrate.

Hopefully that has happened lots during your time at Elon and will keep on happening. That is probably how some of your best learning will take place."

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