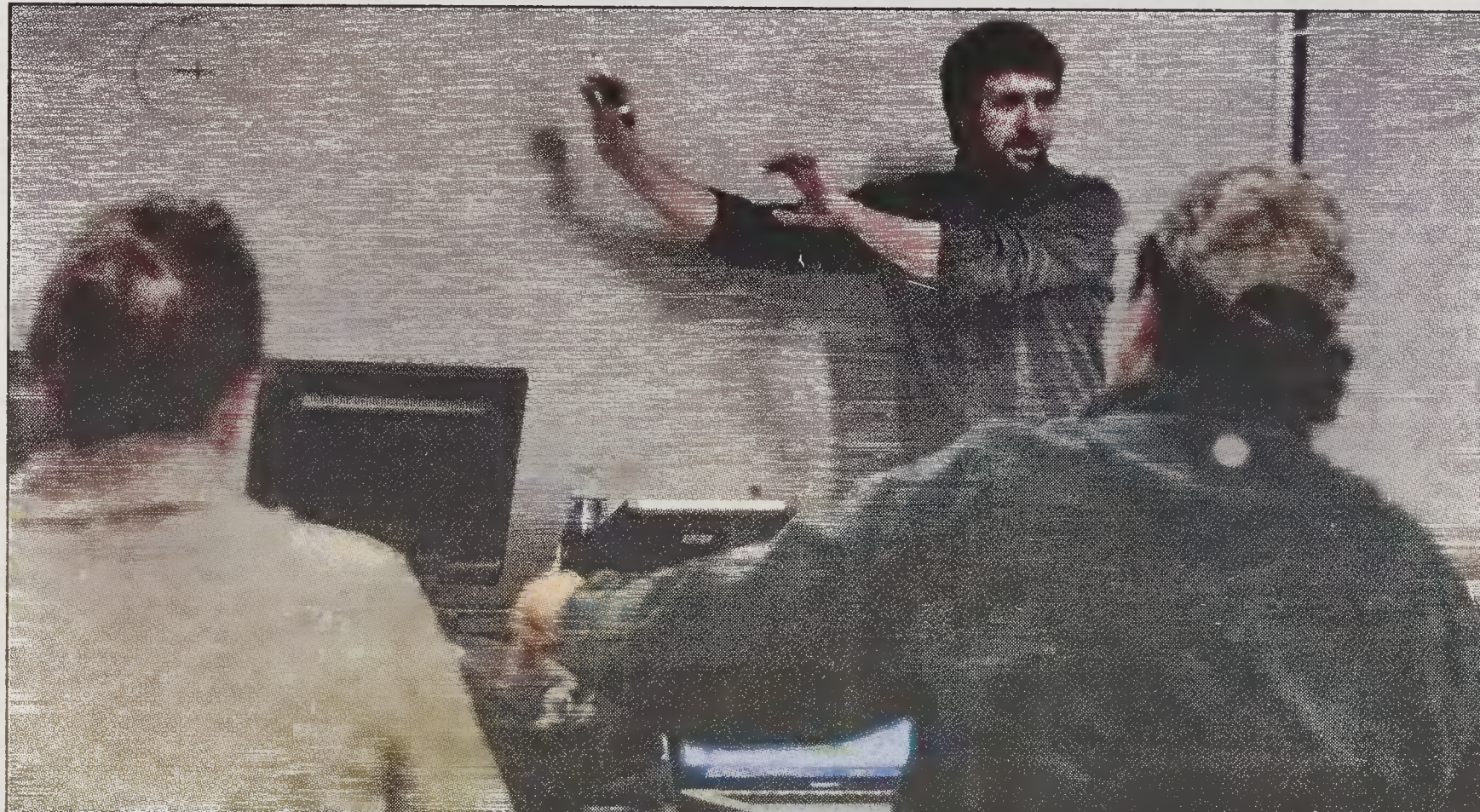


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North Carolina teacher tenure in peril



Jarrett Lancaster is one of seven adjunct professors in the Elon University Physics Department who does not have tenure.

CAROLINE OLNEY | Photo Editor

Michael Bodley
News Editor

In North Carolina, state Republicans are pushing teachers to give up their tenure early, before it expires in 2018, in accordance with a law recently passed by the state legislature. To do so, lawmakers have provided an incentive for teachers willing to sacrifice tenure, part of a \$200 million bump to teacher pay throughout North Carolina.

The average starting salary for a North Carolina teacher is currently \$30,800, or about \$6,000 below the national average, not including the supplements individual districts often pay to teachers when county funds become available. Teachers holding advanced degrees used to earn 10 percent more than their colleagues, with the possibility of further raises stemming from seniority.

Supporters of the measure have called it a necessity in fiscally-troubling times, and as such, the Republican-led State Legislature slashed slightly more than a billion dollars from educational funding for the 2014 fiscal year.

In early February, Gov. Pat McCrory laid out a plan to increase the starting salaries of new teachers by up to 14 percent.

Teachers with more than four years of experience are mostly unaffected by the plan — a move thought to be in response to the criticisms from teachers after the legislature passed similar restrictions curbing teacher pay over the summer.

In July 2013, the state legislature passed a bill that removed pay incentives for teachers with master's and other advanced-level degrees.

"I'm concerned about the school system as a whole right now," said Joe Ferrell, principal of Walter M. Williams High School in Burl-

ington, to The Pendulum in Fall 2013. "Why would teachers seeking master's degrees come to North Carolina, where they're now not rewarded for their work in furthering their own education?"

In the wake of the budget cuts that raised caps on classroom sizes, Angela Owusu-Ansah, associate dean of the school of education at Elon University, called an exodus "imminent" for underpaid North Carolina teachers to neighboring states that better compensate their educators.

McCrory announced statewide pay raises for young teachers in early February, criticizing the starting salaries of teachers in the state.

"That's not even enough to raise a family or pay off student loans," McCrory said in a press release. "How do we expect someone to pay that loan with that starting salary?"

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Study shows end-of-life care views differ based on circumstances, religion

Katy Canada
Managing Editor

A recent study by the Pew Research Center indicates changing trends in how Americans view end-of-life medical treatment. Down 7 percent from a 1990 survey, 66 percent of Americans now say there are circumstances in which medical professionals should allow their patients to die.

The study also showed an increase in recent years of people who said, for their own medical care, they would prefer to end medical treatment, depending on the exact circumstances. This group stands at 57 percent, as opposed to the 35 percent who said they would do everything possible to stay alive.

The study also signifies Americans' overwhelming belief that individuals have a moral right to end their own lives. On a case-by-case basis, 62 percent say that if a person is suffering and shows no sign of improvement, it is that person's moral prerogative to commit suicide. This is a 7 percent uptick from 1990.

But Americans have consistently disapproved of physician-assisted suicide. In 2013, 49 percent of respondents said they did not believe physicians have the right to end a person's life, up from 45 percent in 2005.

Options for end-of-life care

Elon University sophomore Tom Riley spent the last few months at the Hospice and Palliative Care Center of Alamance-Caswell County helping patients work through their advance care directives. Advance directives specify a patient's wishes and instructions in the event of a medical emergency during which he or she can't make decisions.

Patients at the hospice center are required to be in the final six months of their lives. Many have decided to discontinue medical treatment for serious illnesses.

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