

LAMBERT | from cover

institution and worked hard as a community to practice those on a daily basis.”

Elon's campus has grown significantly since Lambert first arrived. More than 100 buildings have been built or acquired during Lambert's presidency. But in his 19 years here, he has grown as well.

Personal growth

While Lambert has transformed the campus, some of those closest to him said they have noticed how the presidency has transformed him.

Steven House, provost and executive vice president of Elon, works closely with the president and has watched him change over the years.

“When [Lambert] came, as you can imagine, [Smith] Jackson was the star on campus, and President Lambert was still learning about the university,” House said. “As time went on, he got to know the students extremely well, and now he's the rock star on campus. [He also] has a more national presence — he is known across the country and is looked to as a senior president. People look to him because they want to know what he is thinking.”

Lambert's co-workers attribute his ability to keep the institution student-focused to his strength of connecting with students.

“President Lambert is student-centered,” House said. “He is learning-centered, and he really knows how to get the best out of us when it comes to thinking of new things that we want to do. What we always ask is, ‘What's the best for the students? How can we help them learn? And how can we really work to transform their lives?’”

House was hired by Lambert in 2001 as dean of Elon College, The College of Arts and Sciences. In 2015, House was promoted to his current position as provost and executive vice president.

Lambert is one of the reasons House has stayed at Elon for the past 17 years.

“He's just a joy to work with,” House said. “We have a great relationship, and it's one of the reasons I've stayed



Above: Spencer Schar, Martha Schar, Dwight Schar and Leo Lambert participate in the Schar Center groundbreaking Oct. 21, 2016

ALEC MANDELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Right: Lambert speaking during the dedication of the Phoenix Statue in 2003.

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Below: Lambert with Isabella Cannon during her birthday celebration May 12, 1999.

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at Elon all this time.”

Working with Lambert is a joy many students have been able to experience, as well.

“It's sad to see Dr. Lambert leave. I love Dr. Lambert, but I'm not as sad as I could be because I know Dr. Lambert will still be around,” SGA Executive President Morgan Bodenarain said.

Bodenarain is glad Lambert will continue to work with students outside his role as president emeritus

because to her he is “the Dr. Lambert, and he will always have that impression on students.”

Bodenarain's experience as SGA executive president will certainly be different from her successor's, junior Kenneth Brown Jr., who will take on the role during Book's first year as university president.

“It will be a bit of a change, but we are just going to have to see what happens,” Brown said. “It will probably be more different on the

transition side — with helping to celebrate and honor Dr. Lambert while also helping Dr. Book get to re-know the campus.”

A transition of presidency like this hasn't been seen at Elon for the last 19 years. Brown can't wait to see this take place during the new year.

“We don't know what that is going to look like but we are just going to go with the flow,” Brown said. “It adds to the excitement of what the year might bring.”

Yearlong sabbatical

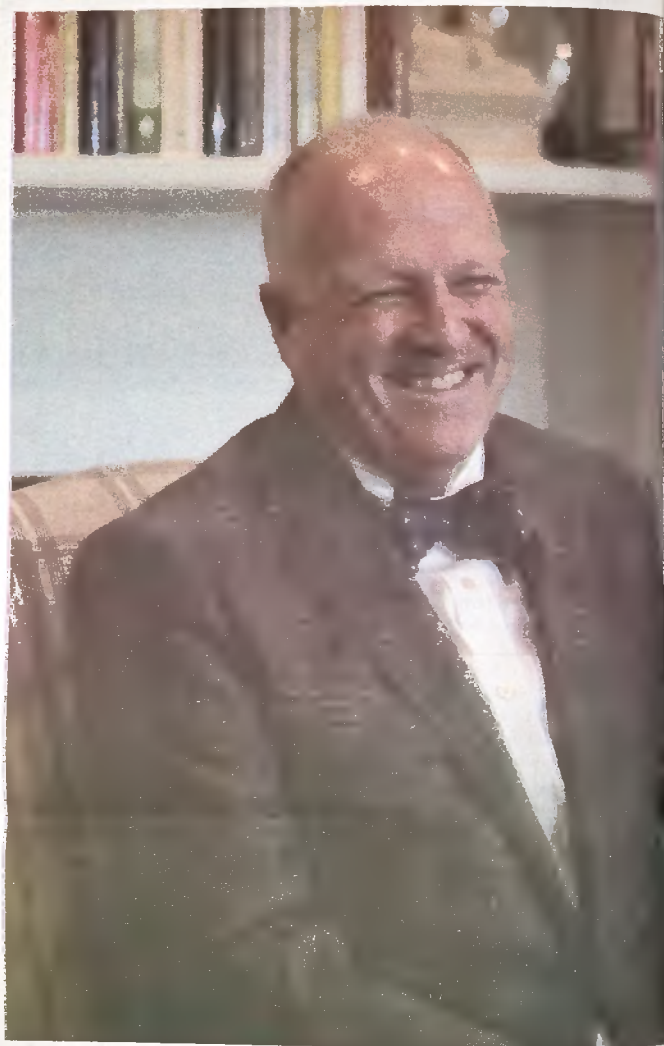
Lambert plans to take a yearlong sabbatical once he leaves office. Though this sabbatical is temporary, Lambert said he plans to enjoy it to the fullest — away from campus at an “undisclosed location.”

“On March 1, my wife and I are heading on a vacation,” Lambert said. “We are going somewhere warm and sunny and we are getting out of dodge.”

When his vacation is back in town, but he will continue to keep his presence.

“My first year ... I'm going to have a very low profile,” Lambert said. “I'm back on campus anytime Connie needs me to be here, but I am going to be gone for a year, essentially.”

Lambert will be back for the class of 2018's commencement ceremony where he will be delivering the commencement address.



Leo Lambert laughs during an interview in his newly constructed office in the Martin Alumni Center Feb. 14.

20 YEARS OF LEO IN PHOTOS:

From inaugurations, to commencements, to groundbreakings, Leo Lambert's role as president of Elon University has transformed the institution almost as much as the role has transformed him.

