



GRACE TERRY | ASSISTANT DESIGN CHIEF

CAMPUS VOICES

Where are the Writing Center's consultants of color?



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For years, Elon University has worked toward expanding the diversity of the undergraduate student population. On-campus initiatives such as the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education or El Centro have all popped up in recent years as an attempt to draw more racially and socio-economically diverse students into the student body. Our population views this as positive, because of its increase in our overall numbers — within two years our number of racially diverse students jumped from just 17 percent to a whopping 19 percent. But there is still an absence of students of color in many of Elon's spaces: one in particular being the Center for Writing Excellence.

In a perfect world, 19 percent of the consultants employed in the writing center would be students of color, which would accurately reflect

Elon's current student body. With approximately 40 consultants, this would mean a little under 8 students would consider themselves of color. While this number is not a large one, it would be a far better statistic than the 4 currently employed by the writing center. With just more than 7 percent of the writing center consultant population identifying with a minority status, this is even lower than Elon's overall minority student population (which is already staggeringly low). This statistic begs the question: where are all the consultants of color?

For many students, there is a lack of access to the "Writing Center Workshop" class. Some students may not even know about this course, which is the class that provides a gateway into employment at the writing center. For others, it's the perception of having to be an English major to work in the

writing center. While it may seem that the overwhelming majority of consultants are English majors, there are quite a few accounting, biology and psychology majors sprinkled in with us — all of whom have taken "Writing Center Workshop." While some may not believe it, it is entirely possible for a non-English major to work in the writing center.

For the students of color matriculated at Elon: It is not your responsibility to increase diversity at Elon. It's the responsibility of Elon to become more accessible to our less represented students — students of color, low-income students or first generation students. While these identities should not be a token in a university setting, it is too often seen that they are. Appealing programs, in-house scholarships and a genuine interest in having a more colorful campus (not just for publicity)

are all things that Elon must work on in the next strategic plan. But it is up to students of color to increase their presence as consultants in the writing center. The writing center simply advertises revising services to their students — there is no cost or obstacles to applying like most universities.

You might not see a point to your role in the writing center — simply revising and helping students complete projects — but there is. No pressure, but students are watching. Without ample representation in a space as crucial to learning as the writing center, students feel disregarded, uncomfortable and ultimately left out. In a predominantly white institution such as Elon, the last thing a student of color should feel is left out. Unfortunately, it is all too often that this is the first thing they feel when they step on campus.

By listening to student

experiences, it is clear the lack of representation in the center has an effect not only on the students confidence as a writer, but also the power dynamic of the center as well.

Standard academic English in modern times has been overtaken by white rhetoric, and anything — or anyone — else displays what is thought to be subpar rhetoric. Becoming aware of this dynamic as early as possible helps combat (even if only slightly) the everyday struggles a minority student will face in proving that the English language is not the property of white people. From being accused of plagiarism, to erasure of one's native culture and language through writing, students being praised and proven responsible for their own writing — black, white or purple — is a tactic that a typical human being can use to support another.

CAMPUS VOICES

Be mindful of how you spend this holiday season



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Crowded department stores, stunning light displays, Hallmark holiday movies — these are just a handful of things you might think of during the month of December. It's easy to get caught up in the commercialism and frenzy that's so prevalent this time of year. There may be an unspoken competition your parents have with their siblings to provide the most elaborate dish at a family gathering and mid-night shopping binges to get the best deals on the best clothes your sister is going to wear twice before giving away.

You may be planning to spend your days off this Winter Break skiing somewhere chilly, relaxing somewhere warm or catching up on sleep somewhere in between. But while you're doing whatever you have planned this season, it's important to be mindful of what the holidays are really about.

From a young age, I was taught that

the holidays are a great time to reflect on the year you've had, sit by the fire with your loved ones and maybe eat some sugar cookies. The memories I have from my favorite holiday seasons include spending quality time with my cousins and listening to my grandmother's ridiculous stories over Christmas dinner. I remember watching "It's a Wonderful Life," carrying out zany traditions with my sister and dressing our dogs up in festive sweaters. I know I am endlessly lucky to have had 21 Christmas mornings where I've woken up to a warm home and presents under the tree. As I age, I feel myself becoming more and more grateful for the comfort I've known every December, and I know millions of Americans don't feel quite so lucky.

One out of every 30 children across the country will go without gifts this holiday season, as there is a total of 2.5 million homeless children in America,

as reported in a study by the National Center for Family Homelessness. According to the Gun Violence Archive, 13,397 people lost their lives to gun violence this year across the nation, and the families of these victims will have to spend their first holiday season with an empty seat at the table. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reports that 44,965 Americans died by suicide this year alone, and their loved ones will face unimaginable grief as well. No matter your situation this December, be mindful of the people in our country who are spending this season dealing with loss, pain and misfortune.

Instead of planning how best to blow your hard-earned money for the holidays, try to spend a little more time remembering what these holidays are about in the first place — spending time with friends, family and loved ones. Instead of spreading your money

around buying this, that and the other thing, spread cheer and joy through the little ways in which you interact with the world around you. Help an elderly woman carry her groceries in a snowstorm. Toss whatever change you have in your car into the Salvation Army collection box. Let that overworked mother of four in her minivan have the prime spot in the Target parking lot.

Capitalism will fight for you to sell your soul to materialism this time of year, but a cute new outfit can't move someone the way that compassion and generosity can.

Happiness goes further than you think. You never know what someone else is going through, and it never hurts to be kind. Do it for your loved ones, do it for Rudolph and do it for the millions of people who made the nice list but still won't be getting exactly what they want this year. I'm sure they'll appreciate it.