Education About Sexual Violence on College Campuses is Vital

From time to time, I will use my column to tackle difficult, complex and uncomfortable subjects. This is one of those times.

From the recent *Time* magazine cover story on "Rape: The Crisis in Higher Education" to the just-released NCAA report titled "Addressing Sexual Assault and Interpersonal Violence," conversation about sexual violence on college campuses has moved to center stage in American society. This is a good thing.

I recall the immediate mixed reaction I experienced this summer when reading about a nail polish being developed by students at neighboring North Carolina State University that changes color when dipped into a drink that has been laced with an incapacitating drug. My first reaction was to commend the good intentions of the student inventors. My second was to think it is a reflection of a cultural sickness that such a product requires invention.

I have three important messages to share about sexual violence. I hope you, the readers of *The Magazine of Elon*, will think about them carefully and then consider your own personal responsibilities to join in this important national conversation.

First, I am proud to report Elon has a first-rate, comprehensive prevention and response strategy regarding issues of sexual violence. At the heart of this strategy are enormously talented people. Becca Bishopric Patterson is a full-time professional dedicated to creating a healthy campus through peer education, including such important topics as developing healthy relationships, high-risk alcohol and substance use, active bystander intervention and numerous other public health topics. Our Safeline (336.278.3333) is staffed by a full-time, professional responder, Jess Clark, and supplemented by evening and weekend staff to provide 24/7 support. Leigh-Anne Royster and Jana Lynn Patterson, respected members of the Elon community with offices in the Ellington Health and Counseling Center, work together to develop comprehensive institutional policies and strategies to make Elon a safe and inclusive community and to address head-on issues of bias, discrimination and violence when they occur. My own personal education on this subject has been informed over many years by Professor Ann Cahill of the Department of Philosophy, whose book, *Rethinking Rape*, has been a cornerstone in the academic conversation about gender-based violence.

Second, this issue requires consistent and excellent training for all members of the university community, and this year we have redoubled our efforts. All members of the Class of 2018 were required to complete an online course before arriving on campus that addressed the root causes of sexual violence and bystander intervention. This is in addition to the required online course on alcohol and substance abuse awareness. We are also

I want you to know that here at Elon, we abhor and stand against sexual violence and have been doing so for many years. Our policies and practices align with laws, but our efforts don’t begin or end with our legal responsibilities. They begin with our responsibilities to each other, as valued members of this community, and end only when we have stopped this violence. ... Despite the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses, we refuse to believe that we as a community are powerless to stop it. Every single one of us can act to confront and challenge norms and behaviors that condone or even encourage sexual violence—and it is the expectation that every one of us will.”

—Excerpts from President Leo M. Lambert’s New Student Convocation address on Aug. 23.
creating new training modules for all faculty and staff. I addressed the issue of sexual violence with new students during New Student Convocation this past August and was heartened by a very positive response from Elon parents for clearly stating our institutional expectations and responsibilities to each other in this regard. We are convinced that increased education and training will lead to the changes in our broader societal culture that are required for sexual violence to cease.

Third, and perhaps most important, the university and parents must be good partners in talking with young men and women about the important issue of consent. I know these are difficult and sometimes awkward conversations to have with college-age students, but they are crucial to raising good, decent and kind human beings. Consent is a key concept in the prevention of sexual violence. Young people who decide to become sexually active need to be taught that consent must be clear, given freely and can be withdrawn at any time. By having these conversations, we can create meaningful change in the world. By avoiding them, we put our young people in harm’s way. Let’s step up together and do the right thing.

Leo M. Lambert
President

Elon Trustee Barbara Day Bass ’61 and husband Walter Bass III ’62; Mark Albertson, retired registrar; Neil Bromilow, retired director of construction management; and Kate Hickey, retired dean and university librarian, received Elon Medallions during an August ceremony. Elon Medallions are the highest honor the university bestows on individuals for meritorious service to the institution.

Barbara and Walter Bass have advanced Elon through dedicated service and generous support for more than 50 years. The couple established the Walter H. and Barbara D. Bass Scholarship to give talented students with financial need the opportunity to attend their alma mater. In 1985 Barbara was elected to the Elon Board of Trustees and served as board secretary and vice-chair of the Campaign for the Elon Vision, and was a member of the Phi Beta Kappa committee. She was named Elon’s Distinguished Alumna of the Year in 1986 and this March, following nearly 30 years of board service, she was elected life trustee. She is one of only six trustees to receive the honor.

Mark Albertson joined the Elon staff in 1978 as assistant registrar and was named university registrar the following year. During his 35-year tenure, Albertson personally certified about 26,300 students for graduation and led many major initiatives to enhance the operations of his office, including the transition from manual to online registration and placing students’ transcripts online. He also brought prominent people to campus and helped develop Elon’s distinctive Winter Term program and courses.

Kate Hickey played an integral role in creating and continually improving Belk Library. During her 16 years at Elon, first as library director and later as dean and university librarian, Hickey oversaw the move of Elon’s library resources from McEwen Building to the new Carol Grotnes Belk Library. She doubled the size of the library collection, introduced online resources and expanded the archives and special collections—all improvements that were key to Elon’s selection to shelter a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

Neil Bromilow started working at Elon in 1995 as the director of the physical plant and was named director of construction management three years later. Before retiring in 2012, he managed the design and construction of many of Elon’s outstanding facilities during a period of institutional growth, helping to shape one of the most beautiful college campuses in the nation. Among the projects he supervised are the construction of Rhodes Stadium, the Academic Village, Colonnades Dining Hall and residence halls and the Station at Mill Point.