Registrar’s Corner

By: Rod Parks

Dear Readers,

We are delighted to welcome you to the Fall 2013 edition of the Registrar’s Newsletter. The newsletter initiative was launched in the spring to keep the community abreast of all the changes going on in the Registrar’s Office. From changes in academic policy to new workflow technologies to support the campus, this newsletter provides a snapshot of important information relevant to campus constituents.

Across the country, Registrar Offices have been undergoing an electronic transformation. In the last few months, your Registrar team has launched systems that include online grade changes, automated student withdrawal, and ordering transcripts to name a few. These systems barely scratch the surface of innovation on the horizon as we work to meet the needs of our students, faculty, and staff. As we continue to build new technologies and enhance current business processes, please don’t hesitate to let us know how we can best serve your needs.

It’s the End of the Form as We Know It (Life Online)

By: Melissa Holmes

In case you couldn’t tell from our first newsletter, I’m more than a little enthusiastic about some of the new processes and technologies we are rolling out this fall (and vinyl records). Nicole Jones, Assistant Registrar, is contributing another article in this newsletter that highlights our shift to a paperless environment, so I’m not alone in my interoffice excitement! She and I have thoroughly enjoyed working together while developing the online form processing procedures and are in agreement that they are much more user and clerically friendly than the previous paper forms.

The online grade change form is just one of many processes initiated to go paperless in The Registrar’s Office. Beginning this fall, our online version of the grade change form was released in its official format after a successful pilot earlier in the summer. Like the former paper grade change form, this online version is designed only to change permanent grades that have already been recorded from previous semesters and is not intended for use when OnTrack is available for grading.
Faculty members may now access the online grade change form on the Registrar’s homepage under Faculty Resources, and may fill out and submit the form from that screen. The form automatically routes to the appropriate department chair or program director for notification and approval. If the grade change requires an approval and is approved, the form is forwarded to our office and documented to the student’s permanent academic record. The student and instructor are then notified of the finalized grade change. If a grade change is denied, the instructor is notified by email of the reason for the denial and must restart the process online to re-submit a grade change after a denial occurs.

Here are a few helpful tips for first time users:

- The academic policy on grade changes states: Grades of “A” through “F” are permanent grades and may not be changed except in case of error. After an instructor has certified a grade to the Registrar, he/she may change it before the end of the next regular grading period. The change must be made online or in writing and have the written approval of the department chair.
- Instructors must be logged into Elon’s FS domain to submit the online form. They must use their full email address (example@elon.edu) and password to gain access to the form.
- Information to gather prior to accessing the form:
  * student's email
  * student's ID number
  * department
  * course number and section
  * number of credit hours of the course
  * term the course was taken
  * original grade given
  * new grade
  * reason for the grade change

The grade change form was the first online form made available earlier this summer. Since the launch, we have processed 224 grade changes electronically. We continue to develop online forms and workflows, and at this point have processed these transactions electronically:

- Add forms: 140
- Address change forms: 67
- Audit forms: 18
- Withdrawal forms: 640 student/720 transactions
- Grade change forms: 224
- Pass/Fail forms: 18

The feedback we have received thus far has been very positive! While new processes are definitely “works in progress” for a time, our office continues to be confident that we are on the right track in offering the students, colleagues and the Elon community new services that are making overall improvements for everyone. Certainly the positive environmental impact of less paper use coupled with those cost savings are major advantages for our office. We are also highly motivated by reducing the threat of potentially compromised confidential information which was previously retained on paper in the office. We do realize that some of these changes affect other offices and we are determined to work with them to improve overall workflows while increasing the use of new online forms. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns regarding these new online processes. Feedback is always valued as we continue striving to improve our services.

Just out of curiosity… was anyone else humming REM in their heads throughout the article?
Volunteering at Book Harvest
By: Mandy Stovall

Reality evaporates. I’m alone in my room curled up in a papasan chair. The book before me transports me to a different place, another time. The moment is stayed. I’m more fully in storyland than I am in real life. This is one my favorite feelings in the world.

Sadly, this feeling is unknown to many children who do not have access to age appropriate books. To change this bookless reality, Ginger Young started Book Harvest, a nonprofit organization in Chapel Hill.

As a team-building exercise with a socially-conscious purpose, staff from the Office of the University Registrar volunteered at Book Harvest on Thursday, July 25th to sort books. Divided into groups of three or more, we sorted books into different categories ranging from nursery age children to young adults. For several hours, we all came together as one to achieve a common goal – to help children in need get books so they can discover the joy of reading.

Since the start of Book Harvest, more than 150,000 donated books have been collected and distributed to underprivileged children. On that day in July, for a few hours, each of us: Rod, Susan, Robin, Karen, Melissa, Nicole, Cheryl, Casey, Ashley, Erin, Stafford, and I were book evangelists, giving back to those in need.

The State of Summer School
By: Nicole Jones

This past January I got my first taste of what goes into promoting a Summer College at a university. Our University Registrar Emeritus, Mark R. Albertson, worked for many years building and marketing the Summer College, and he had established a quality program. Our challenge was to continue to improve it and be more creative in keeping a successful program growing.

In January 2013, Elon’s new Registrar, Dr. Rodney Parks, recruited me to help devise a plan to change the summer school marketing strategy and increase the enrollment in our summer classes. With the help of student Sarah Deike (Communications), Lucas Lovette (iMedia), Corbin Sapp of Ivar’s Inc., and support of my office teammates, we created a new Summer College logo, produced great promotional items, sent memos home to students during Spring Break, showed our presence in Moseley Center and College Coffee, and made a strong effort to speak to every student that came into our office about Summer College and its benefits. The fruits of our labor proved to be effective as our enrollment figures went up for the summer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer College Enrollment</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer Session I</td>
<td>1451</td>
<td>1659</td>
<td>208 (+14.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Session II</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>94 (+16.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here it is, Fall 2013, and guess what I am already doing? I am helping plan the strategy for Summer College 2014. By starting early, we are hoping to reach even more students, have even better promotional items, implement some creative marketing ideas, and have great incentives to offer. By attracting more students to summer classes, we aim to expand their academic experiences and broaden their degree options. Be on the lookout for what is to come for Summer College 2014.
Over the past several months, the physical appearance of the Registrar’s office has undergone a dramatic remodel. This isn’t the only big change. Behind the scenes, we have been hard at work designing processes that will be more convenient for the students. One big step was to go paperless and put all of our forms online.

In the past, to update an address, students had to come to the Registrar’s Office, fill out a form, and turn it in. Now students can go to the Registrar’s website, look under Forms, and find the link to the Address Change Form. Once the student clicks Submit, the form is queued to be processed. Once that is done, the student receives notification that the change has been made.

Additional electronic forms include Pass/Fail and Audit forms. Once the form is completed by the student, it is automatically routed to the student’s advisor, if necessary, and our office.

The Registrar’s Office hopes that these new resources will make things much more accessible to students. This initiative also allows our office to be more sustainable by not having to create a paper record of the transaction. Once forms are received electronically in The Registrar's Office, they are processed and sent to a document imaging system, Fortis, where they are attached to the student’s academic record. Not only does this make us more “green,” but we are able to use our new office space much more efficiently without having to make room for paper storage. We welcome any feedback on these new procedures.

Recognizing Good Academic Standing

By: Nicole Jones

Being recognized on either the President’s List or Dean’s List is an honor that rewards excellent academic work. The Registrar’s Office wants that to be an accomplishment that is not only shown on a student’s transcript but is also recognized with a certificate that can be displayed to showcase this achievement. In the spring of 2013, the Registrar’s Office assumed the responsibility for sending the President's and Dean’s List certificates out to students. With the help of Print Services, a new commendation card was developed. This new certificate is a 5x7 design printed on a high quality parchment-style paper. We feel that it is something that students will be proud to display. We have received many compliments from parents and students about the new design.
In addition to improving the President's and Dean's List notification, we have also looked at the way we have been evaluating students' academic standing. There are instances where a student may have incomplete grades that prevent him or her from being on President's or Dean's List. But then grades come in at a later time and the student becomes eligible to receive this honor. In the past, Elon did not have a procedure to review a student's academic standing after a grade change. Now a procedure has been implemented and everyone involved in the Registrar's Office with changing grades has been trained to reevaluate a student's academic standing after a grade change is completed. If the student becomes eligible for the President's or Dean's List, we update the academic record and have a commendation card printed and sent to the student. We also notify University Communications and they update the website listing students who have received these awards that semester.

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**Our Digital Presence**

*By: Casey Hayes*

One of the many duties of the Registrar is to keep the student body abreast of the services provided by the office. Unfortunately, maintaining effective communication with students can be difficult. Not only are new avenues of communication opening up every day, but students have different preferences for which avenues they'll use to receive information. Just sending a postcard to the student's campus box won't guarantee he/she will read it. That postcard might just be one of fifty pieces of mail the student puts off sorting until mom discovers it collecting dust behind the computer when moving out at the end of the year.

In an increasingly digital world, students also expect – sometimes need – more online accessibility. As a result, our office has begun expanding our digital presence. Facebook, Twitter, and Google+ are three of the social media platforms that we're using to keep our followers informed of important dates and events. Through Google+ "Hangouts" and Skype, we're able to host virtual meetings with students who are unable to physically come to the office. All of these avenues also provide additional opportunities for general information inquiries.

While we still have traditional means of communication via postage, email, phone, and walk-ins, our intent in creating a digital presence is to be as available as possible to students when they need us and unimposing when they do not.

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**Online Transcripts Update**

*By: Karen Pore*

Our recent transition of ordering transcripts online has been a huge success. We processed 2111 document requests in the three and a half months from the opening of the system in early June through October 14, 2013. That is a lot of transcript requests. For our office, some benefits of online ordering and tracking have been a reduced number of calls asking if a transcript has been sent and less time spent verifying order information. Those students and alumni ordering transcripts seem to enjoy the automated email updates on the status of their orders and email verification of a sent transcript.

We continue to work with our colleagues in Administrative Computing on redesigning the transcript. Once the transcript redesign is complete, we will work with our transcript partners at Parchment to complete Phase 2 of this project, automatic PDF transcript delivery. This means instantaneous delivery of a digital copy of the transcript directly to email – no more waiting a week for postal delivery. We are excited about this project and will be sure to let the Elon community know when we are able to offer this service to our students and alums.
Most folks at Elon know that all seniors meet with our Senior Associate Registrar for their graduation audit. This year, more than 1,200 students will have such a meeting. But did you know that all students studying abroad for a semester or summer also meet with a member of the Registrar’s staff?

Semester study abroad has grown from approximately 30 students attending a single program to more than 500 students per year attending one of 94 affiliate and exchange programs, plus other students attending non-Elon programs. A hallmark of Elon’s Study Abroad has been our pre-departure course approval through the Registrar’s Office. We want students to know before they leave Elon if and how their course choices fit into their academic goals. This is a critical part of the planning process for students because the grades they earn for their courses abroad are posted to the Elon transcript and added into their Elon GPA calculation. The Office of the Registrar works with the staff of the Global Education Centre to develop academic planning tools for students and update affiliate academic and course offering information. In 2012-13 I met with more than 530 students one-on-one to review their course selection. Questions and topics vary by affiliate, but for all students, having answers before they leave Elon for study abroad helps them make more informed course choices.

Good news for students who complete all of their requirements at the end of fall and winter term. In the past, students who completed their requirements at these times had to wait until May to graduate and receive their diploma. But no longer! Now these students will actually graduate and receive their diploma in the mail in December and January, facilitating their applications for graduate programs and employment.

During the senior application process, students indicate when they plan to complete their studies and if they plan to attend commencement. In most cases, the answer is yes to attending commencement. As such, they will only receive their diploma in the mail without the cover. We will hold the cover until May when they will receive the cover from Dr. Lambert as they cross the stage.

In the past, approximately 100 students finished early and all were given a contingency plan in case they were not able to attend commencement. In the future, students are to contact me via email as soon as they are absolutely certain they cannot attend. They will graduate in absentia. In this email, they will also send an address where we can mail their diploma cover along with a commencement program.

Many seniors come to my office for the official audit of their final requirements before graduation and they state that they are receiving two degrees. Often times this is because the terms “degree” and “major” seem to be interchangeable. After digging a little deeper and learning that the student is actually earning two majors, each major under a different degree, they assume they will receive two degrees. According to Elon’s academic catalog, “Students who qualify for more than one major must select the primary major for which they will receive a bachelor’s degree.” When I tell the students this information, inevitably they counter with, “But my advisor told me I could get two degrees.” There is a discussion concerning awarding two degrees but there is much work to be considered before presenting the idea for approval from the faculty. Until the proposal is approved, Elon will continue awarding one undergraduate degree according to the primary major the student selects.

Another reason to celebrate is the change in our undergraduate diplomas. The new, larger diplomas are 11”x14”. In the past, diplomas had only the degree posted. Now the student's majors will be included on the diploma as well. Of course, the diploma cover still has the historical Alamance building etching and the student's name continues to be imprinted in gold. The seniors loudly showed their approval of these changes at the senior meeting earlier this fall.
Changes in Graduation

By: Cheryl Loy

After being out in the open space of the Registrar's Office for more than 30 years, I now have my own office where I can concentrate on the management and maintenance of graduation and registration.

Acquiring a new vendor for diplomas has been an interesting and challenging process. The new system relies heavily on importing correct data from Datatel and managing students who intend to walk in the ceremony versus those who wish to receive their diplomas early.

Many people are not aware that the Registrar's Office has ordered and assembled diplomas and covers for the last 30 plus years. Keeping over a thousand diplomas in exact order is a big task, but it pays off in a flawless commencement.

In the past, we manually added gold honors stickers to each diploma for those who receive Latin honors. Now that the undergraduate diplomas are bigger (11x14), majors and Latin honors are printed on the document. As you can imagine, this has been well-received by the students. Students who graduate in the Fall Semester or Winter Term but want to walk in the Spring ceremony, we hold the diploma cover to be handed to them during the ceremony.

The logistics of storing these larger diplomas and covers has been a challenge. Additionally, getting senior grades on time will be more critical than ever before with the pre-printing of Latin Honors and majors on the diplomas. Consider for a moment a student scheduled to complete more than one major. If the student does not complete all the requirements for one of those majors the diploma will need to be reprinted and shipped to Elon within 48 hours. The same thing will be true for students who need last minute adjustments to honors. We encourage faculty to take this delay into consideration when creating their spring syllabi.

Ultimately these changes will be worth it for our students as they walk off the stage with an accurate diploma representing an outstanding institution.

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The Degree Audit, a Joint Effort

By: Mandy Stovall

In May, the Offices of Academic Support and the University Registrar made completing graduation requirements easier to track by activating the HTML-based degree audit. This new user-friendly view enables students to track academic progress, increases student awareness of degree requirements and progression, records expectations to program requirements, and facilitates degree certification.

After implementation of the audit, I asked students for feedback on the changes. English major Margaret Achey said, “I was happily surprised to open the degree audit and see the new HTML format. Readability was improved and the information was easily laid out, which I like because I can quickly and accurately see which requirements have been fulfilled and which are still pending.” Alyssa Kendall, psychology major said, “I like the color coded sections. Green allows me to see what’s complete, blue lets me know what’s in progress, red tells me what’s not started, and orange shows me what’s pending completion.”

While a student’s senior year of college can be stressful, the joint efforts between Academic Support and the Registrar’s Office have made it easier for students to track graduation requirements and complete their degree. Additionally, the Registrar’s Office has extended the assistance of Casey Hayes to Academic Support to help manage the Degree Audit. We’re excited about working together to improve the tools on which the students rely so heavily.
As the newest student assistant, I have learned a lot about the inner workings of the Registrar’s Office. Prior to working here, my knowledge of the Registrar’s Office extended little beyond requesting college credit for my high school classes. As a sophomore, I have been fortunate enough to go through the course registration process without a hitch. Still, when I accepted the job as a student assistant, I was a bit nervous; I did not really know what to expect.

The Registrar’s Office is the place for all things course-related. We receive requests to add or drop a class, and requests to accept transfer credit from other institutions. For students applying for internships and jobs after Elon, the Registrar’s Office also provides an online transcript request service. Susan Patton, Senior Associate Registrar, keeps busy with seniors’ graduation appointments. And for those who are eager to plan ahead, the Registrar’s Office posts the Winter and Spring Term courses to OnTrack.

During my time here in the Registrar’s Office, I have had a snippet of a behind-the-scenes look at what makes Elon run smoothly!

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**Employee Spotlight: Mandy Stovall**

*By: Erin Walker*

Over the summer, the Registrar’s Office acquired a new part time Program Assistant, Mandy Stovall. She has been a wonderful addition to our team. You may have already met Mandy when you came into the office to make a graduation appointment, study abroad appointment, or just to ask a general question. I sat down with Mandy to get to know our bubbly, new team member.

**EW: Welcome to Elon, Mandy! Are you enjoying your time here so far?**

MS: “I am! Everyone has been wonderful, very welcoming and inviting. Elon is like a home away from home. It’s been very refreshing.”

**EW: What university did you attend, and what did you study?**

MS: “I went to High Point University. I studied Media Studies, which is essentially what our Communications major is here.”

**EW: Is it different for you to be a staff member instead of a student on a college campus?**

MS: “It is very different. Even though I’m a staff member, there are times when being on campus makes me feel like a student again.

**EW: Tell us a little bit about your family.**

MS: I am very family-oriented. I absolutely love and adore my family. My husband and I got married in Jamaica five years ago. I’ve always been extremely close to my mom, and that closeness has grown since the passing of my father. I have a sister who lives in Kentucky, and a nephew who is more like my brother that I am very close to.”

**EW: What are your hobbies and interests outside the office?**
The Office of the Registrar now has a preferred name procedure for students who elect to use a preferred first name in certain university related records. A preferred name is a name a student chooses to be used in place of his or her legal name on certain university related records or documents. At this time, examples of where a preferred name would be used include:

- Campus Directory
- Class Rosters
- Moodle
- OnTrack
- Degree Audit

Legal names will continue to be used on the official university documents such as transcripts, certification of enrollments, and diplomas.

A request for a preferred name may only be submitted by the student. Interested students should contact Robin Straka, to fill out a brief application for a preferred name.

New Preferred Name Policy

By: Rod Parks

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A request for a preferred name may only be submitted by the student. Interested students should contact Robin Straka, to fill out a brief application for a preferred name.
In addition to the impending launch of the PDF transcript, the Registrar’s Office has a number of projects planned for 2014. One that remains high on our list to address is the need to move from a paper-based to an electronic academic catalog. We have brought three vendors to campus to demonstrate new software to produce a true web version of the student catalog. This would provide a document that is searchable and easy to navigate in an online browser. Additionally, the office is currently experimenting with the Schedule 25 software in hopes of moving room scheduling to this platform versus the manual process currently used. As you can imagine, these are both big changes requiring technology resources as well as a shift in our traditions here at Elon, so we are proceeding cautiously.

We will also see some changes in Summer College 2014. We now have approval to offer online courses in both summer terms so we will be working with faculty to encourage them to offer more summer online classes. The office will use some new marketing campaigns to help promote Summer College, including a fall newsletter to parents and a video highlighting summer courses.

Finally, by fall 2014 we hope to allow students to “Register for Graduation” online via OnTrack instead of completing a PDF form. We also hope to merge the Graduation application with our online scheduling calendar. This would allow students to make their own appointment with our graduation clearance staff when they apply to graduate. Big things have small beginnings!

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**Dr. Parks Contributes Chapter in New Book**

*By: Casey Hayes*

*Developing and Sustaining Adult Learners* was recently published with a chapter written by Dr. Parks. His chapter, titled “Changes in Academic Rigor Over Time,” takes a look at students who left higher education for non-academic reasons over twenty years ago and if they perceived an increase in academic rigor.

Developing and Sustaining Adult Learners is the second volume in a series of scholarly publications associated with the annual Adult Higher Education Alliance (AHEA, The Alliance) conference. The title of this volume, derived from the theme of the 2012 conference co-sponsored by American Association of Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) in Las Vegas, NV, encompasses significant issues and questions at the forefront of the field of adult education. The Alliance, which values collaboration, transformative dialogue, and collegiality among professionals, considers this volume a continuation of those conversations as the presentations were expanded into chapters.
2013 Registrar Publications

Our office is committed to contributing to topics and research around higher education. In 2013, the following publications supported this agenda:


Additionally, many of our Student Assistants have publications currently under review:


Sometimes We Cut Loose...

We hope you enjoyed our second newsletter! Look forward to our next issue that will include:

- Feedback on the new PDF transcripts,
- Changes in course substitution approval and workflow,
- And a review of the adjustments to registration start times.

In the Next Issue