

## **Board of Trustees**

Elon University is governed by a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees consisting of 41 persons: 36 regular trustees, 2 youth trustees, and 3 ex-officio trustees.

(8/04)

## **Administrative Policy**

The administration of Elon University makes every effort to practice democracy in administrative matters. Authority for the administration of the university is vested in the Board of Trustees and in its selected administrative officer, the president. The faculty, however, is given the responsibility of making the decisions that involve the teaching program of the university. Faculty committees are asked to make studies and to report to the faculty, which renders decisions within the scope of its authority. On matters beyond the authority of the faculty, the faculty may make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. The administration recognizes that the most important function of the university is that of teaching. It is the aim of the administration to maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to good teaching and where faculty members can pursue the search for the truth in an atmosphere of academic freedom. In a democracy, such a freedom is obtained only as the faculty exercises that freedom and assumes its responsibility to guard that freedom against abuses.

(7/96)

## **Shared Governance**

Elon University recognizes that the most effective way of conducting university affairs necessarily entails the active engagement of all of its distinct constituencies. Thus, a vibrant, inclusive, and well-defined system of shared governance is crucial to the University's success as an institution of higher learning. Elon's commitment to shared governance acknowledges that collective intelligence leads to better decision making and creates an optimal environment for fostering academic integrity, delivering quality educational programs, and ensuring academic freedom and democratic practice.

Elon University is composed of multiple constituencies: the Board of Trustees; administrators with faculty rank (with titles ranging from associate dean to president); teaching faculty; support staff with faculty rank; staff without faculty rank; and students. Among the many facets of university affairs (from strategic planning to fundraising, admissions to curriculum), there are few if any that reside solely within the purview of one constituency. Cooperation, transparency, communication, and seeking out the counsel of a variety of university members should be the default positions on university matters.

Nevertheless, the constituencies that make up the University, while united in the common purpose of maintaining and furthering the University's institutional strength, relevance, and quality, have distinct perspectives and areas of expertise. Having an effective system of shared governance recognizes that those differences, when utilized intentionally and successfully, enhance the University's ability to govern itself wisely. It is appropriate, then, for the University to arrange the many rights, responsibilities, and duties associated with conducting University affairs among its various constituencies so as to best employ their respective strengths and talents.

For the purposes of defining more clearly how governance is shared within the faculty as broadly defined in the *Faculty Handbook*, it behooves the University to articulate which aspects of University affairs are the primary responsibility of each of the three categories of faculty as defined in that document. In general terms, these areas of responsibility are divided in the following ways:

**Administrators with faculty rank** have primary responsibility for issues that transcend individual schools, departments, or programs. These include strategic planning, coordination of the needs and interests of the various components of the university, and overseeing the institution's financial resources and infrastructure.

**Teaching faculty** have primary responsibility for aspects of the university related to curriculum (including requirements for graduation, subject matter, methods and quality of instruction, and the evaluation of student work); research; faculty status; and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process.

**Academic support staff with faculty rank** have primary responsibility for programs *that supplement the academic curriculum by providing* educational opportunities for students, *implementing* academic procedures, or otherwise *supporting* the educational mission of the university.

The identification of a particular aspect of University affairs as primarily associated with one category of faculty is not intended to exclude other faculty from conversations or decisions on such matters. It is, however, to recognize that in certain circumstances, one or more constituencies should have a greater degree of decision-making responsibility than others.