



English deaprtment
holds reading series
» PAGE 3



Is torture ever justifi-
able?
» PAGE 5



A tale of two seniors
» PAGE 7

the Collegian

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Eagles for PRIDE vs AU’s Social Issue Policy



The Eagles for PRIDE logo (left) features an eagle decorated with the colors of the PRIDE flag. The 2018 members of Eagles for PRIDE executive board (right).

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After Eagles for PRIDE’s third year without being accepted for a charter, the Board of Trustees is currently in the process of redefining the social issues policy on campus to help clarify the charter process for clubs. Every year, student organizations on campus are required to go through a process in order to become chartered, funded and publicly recognized by the university. Among those that apply annually is Eagles for PRIDE (EFP). EFP is a provisionally chartered group that aims to make Ashland University an accepting campus and community by educating the community that “regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, everyone has a place,” according to the group’s mission statement. Once a club is provisionally chartered, a trial-like period is placed to ensure they keep up membership numbers and are holding positive activities. Since EFP is on their third year without full approval, there is much interest in the revision of the revised social issues policy that the Board of Trustees is

proposing. The Board of Trustees has sought input for this policy, which president of the faculty senate, Dr. Diane Bonfiglio, admits is “unusual,” but is the result of students and faculty advocating for a resolution to the issue. Bonfiglio, associate professor of psychology, will be collecting responses from faculty senators to provide to the board. The social issues policy draft was created out of the Board of Trustee’s perceived need to figure out how the VPSA (vice president of student affairs) would be involved in approving or denying a charter, Bonfiglio said. The draft of the social issues policy was released to faculty senate and student senate on Feb. 1. The faculty senate and the student senate now have until March 15 to give back feedback to the board, who will then vote on it. “The Eagles for Pride charter has been sort of taken out of the normal system to the administration, but it’s not clear how exactly the administration can proceed, so this social issues policy draft is supposed to lay out how the vice president of student affairs would be involved — that is the stated goal

of that part of the policy,” Bonfiglio said. There is concern that a passage such as this in the student activities manual would imply that administration has the power to make the final determination on clubs, but the policy is not clear enough on that issue, Bonfiglio said. “The front page [of the policy] seems to be attempting to define our identity as an institution, and that’s why a lot of faculty have become interested. We would like greater conversation around whether what’s written there aligns with how we understand the third-way,” she said. The third-way is what Ashland University is referred to, meaning that it is not a Christian college, but it is a university that was founded by the Brethren Church. The proposed social issues policy states, “clubs that promote lifestyle choices, activities, and belief systems that are contrary to these historical Brethren values will not be approved for institutional funding or recognition,” and goes on to state that the university’s identity requires a “consistent message... with all outlets and expressions consistently supporting the institution’s mission, vision, and values.”

Brian Le, senior history major, was in Student Senate during the 2016-2017 school year to vote on the approval of EFP’s provisional charter and he now serves as the Activities, Budgets, & Charters Chair (ABC chair) which oversees all student organizations. In the fall of 2016, EFP applied for their provisional charter with Sean Honaker and Joe Farber co-leading the organization. Le heard there were concerns within the Board of Trustees, but the organization’s provisional charter was passed through both Student Senate’s ABC Committee and the Senate itself with an overwhelming majority, he said. In the fall of 2017, EFP was eligible for application to full charter status which would allow for the organization to apply for funding from the university (which comes directly from the Student Activities Fee every student pays). “However, before the application was to be reviewed by the ABC Committee, the application was pulled out of the process, presumably by the Board of Trustees through the Vice President of Student Affairs, who at the time was Dr. Hannah Clayborne,” Le said. Fast forward to the 2018-2019

school year, the Board of Trustees Student Affairs Committee has drafted what is titled the “Social Issues Policy” which stipulates, among other things, that the Board of Trustees and the VP of Student Affairs reserves the right to review all student organizations to maintain a closer adherence to the university’s “traditional Christian ethos.” “I have a lot of thoughts about this, mainly anger,” Le said. “However Jacob Nestle [the president of Young Americans for Liberty] and I [as president of the College Democrats] have a rough draft of what our thoughts are.” “The goal is to present concerns with the vagueness of the document’s language, that would have left the possibility for some abuse at the expense of the students,” Nestle said. At the time of publication, members of the Board of Trustees could not be reached to respond to student concerns regarding the social issues policy. If students are interested in reading the proposed social issues policy in its entirety, Le and Bonfiglio urge them to consult their student senators before March 15.

Dr. Dean Goon named Dean of College of Online and Adult Studies



Dr. Good accepts position as AU’s first Dean of the College of Online and Adult Studies

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On Feb. 11, Dr. Dean Goon was hired as the Dean of the College of Online and Adult Studies at AU after working seven years as an associate professor and the president of innovative education at Mount Vernon Nazarene University. Goon will lead more than 20 employees in advancing online and non-traditional education at AU. He will also be directing and providing oversight to the Founders school of continuing education. “This dean position is a new position for Ashland,” Goon said, “It’s something that we want to be forward thinking and very strategic for the future of not only online education, but non-traditional modalities going into the future.” Goon said he accepted the position a month into the spring semester to get an early start in his tenure at Ashland University. Throughout his first two weeks, Goon has been riding the learning curve to understanding where Ashland stands and where the university needs improvement for the years to come. “Anytime you start a new adventure you spend your first couple of weeks just understanding the

culture of the university, meeting a lot of folks, sitting in on a lot of meetings and trying to understand where we’re at and where we need to go,” Goon said. Goon is leaving an institution in Mount Vernon Nazarene where he orchestrated profound changes in the university’s realm of online education. Goon pioneered a project called “Summer learn” involving lower tuition rates and easier acceptance for guest students from other universities to increase the number of students enrolled in online classes at Mount Vernon Nazarene. “We really were doubling our growth in the first couple of years” Goon said, “When I left, we had over 600 students that were taking courses with us online in the summer.” Despite the seismic change he cause at MVNU, Goon sought the opportunity to bring his skill set to AU. “I always had great respect for Ashland and knew I would love to be [a] part of a larger institution,” he said. From 2008 to 2010, Goon worked as an adjunct professor at Ashland University and will be teaching classes again as a part of his new position.

“I guess for a lack of a better work I will be wearing two hats,” Goon said. Goon carried a dual role at Mount Vernon Nazarene giving him prior experience wearing multiple hats. Goon said his experience as both a professor and an administrator has given him a ‘heart’ for faculty members. “I want to equip people to do good work and however I can best support the people that are working with me, not for me, is very important,” Goon said. As the dean of online studies, Goon said he desires to drive learner’s satisfaction and flexibility through online education. “We’re past the point of which is better,” Goon said, “we’re talking about ways to always make it better.” Goon said he wants to keep Ashland University on pace with the educational advances occurring across the country such as competency-based education and College Credit Plus with high school students. “I think within the next couple of years you are going to hear some really good things of what’s coming out of this office,”Goon said.

INDEX	
Opinion	2
News	3
Features	4
Sports	6

