

# ELON FACULTY EXPRESS CONCERNS OVER NEW NOTE TAKER PROGRAM



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | SOPHIE ROSENTHAL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University hopes to use Glean, a software program that allows students to record and transcribe lectures, for disability resources note taking. Previously, approved students would anonymously request a note taker, and a classmate would submit their notes through an online portal.

Elon is currently piloting a new program for disability resources' note taking service, eliminating the need for voluntary note takers

**Avery Sloan**  
Politics Director | @AveryLSloan

While Baris Kesgin, political science and policy studies professor, understands the necessity of accessible class notes for students who need accommodations, he is concerned about the effectiveness

of Disabilities Resources' new pilot program, Glean, a service that records and transcribes lectures, eliminating the need for volunteer note takers.

Kesgin, a native of Turkey, said he is worried Glean is not as reactive as Elon's previous policy of only using peer note takers for students registered through disability resources.

"I have an accent — will it capture my accent accordingly? It will miss things here and there," Kesgin said. "I teach Middle East politics — will it capture every word that I say in Middle East politics because they are not English? Probably not."

Kesgin said this is not only a concern for him, but any faculty member who has a different heritage, making any software recording and transcribing a class less helpful and potentially incorrect.

This semester, Elon is testing Glean in select classes, allowing students registered with disability services to take notes in addition to the transcription.

Jennifer Platania, associate provost for academic affairs, wrote in an email to Elon News Network that there are currently over 130 faculty who have opted into the pilot program. Platania said based on results from the pilot program, Elon will

assess whether to expand this program further. Out of Elon's 15 peer institutes, two of them — Marquette University and Furman University — use Glean for note taking.

Platania said that due to difficulties in finding peer note takers and inconsistencies in notes they were receiving, disability resources felt it needed to make a change. Platania also said it found Glean to be a program that helps students to have thoughtful notes,

See **NOTE TAKERS** | pg. 4

## 38 students receive citations from town of Elon police

Students this weekend were cited for underage drinking and open container violations, resulting in 47 charges

**Annemarie Bonner**  
Elon News Network | @ABonnerNews

Since Sept. 2, the town of Elon has charged 20 students with underage drinking and 18 for open container violations. The department worked undercover Friday night to zone in on underage drinking in partnership with Alamance Alcohol Law Enforcement Response Team, which also goes to other towns in the county.

Senior Matt Trez said over the weekend, he noticed a heavy police presence and an increased number of students being stopped for open containers. He said he is concerned that this could lead to more crimes to be committed in the town.

"It creates a culture within Elon where kids feel more tempted to break the law. I know 21 year olds who have no issue getting in a car and drunk driving so that a cop cannot see them carrying their case of beer or carrying whatever," Trez said. "And I think it actually creates a more dangerous atmosphere when the cops scare Elon students off of the streets."

Town of Elon Lt. Kedrick King said over the weekend, his department did cite students for open containers, clear cups with alcohol in them and disorderly conduct while walking through town. He said the goal with undercover policing was

not to intimidate students but to educate them.

"The biggest thing for us is just, it's an educational piece. We want to get out here and let people know that we are observing these things," King said. "We know that this is a big issue within the town, as well as within the university."

However, Trez said he believes this did more harm than good, inciting fear into students, especially freshman. Trez has lived in an off-campus house behind the Elon Fire Department for two years, and last semester, he said there was a neighborhood coalition in the area to bridge the gap between students, Elon residents and police officers.

Now, he said there is a lack of consistency and communication with the police department's goals.

"The expectations should be laid out, and for people who have lived off campus for a second year now, I think a lot of us are, not so much confused, but shaking our head because we had such a good thing going last year with this coalition," Trez said. "And I'm not really sure where that's gone, since, it's pretty obvious the Elon police department targets certain neighborhoods, which is to be expected."

Sophomore Madelyn Slattery also said she saw more police officers and cars being stopped by police this weekend, and the increased police presence made her more nervous to go out this semester.

"I'm definitely very scared now. I think I'm a pretty good student, and not as out of control as some of the Elon students," Slattery said. "Just walking around, I shouldn't be afraid that some police officer is going to come up to me and ask for my student ID, and I'm going to be pushed into some sort of false statement, even if I'm not doing anything wrong."



ELLIS CHANDLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A discarded Fireball Whiskey miniature bottle sits in the grass on West Lebanon Avenue on Sept. 6.



# THE PENDULUM

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## CHEAT SHEET

THE CHEAT SHEET IS AN INTERVIEW WITH A RELEVANT EXPERT TO EXPLAIN COMPLEX TOPICS

# Mikhail Gorbachev's influence on global politics

Following Gorbachev's death Aug. 30, political science professor Safia Swimelar explains his role in the fall of the Soviet Union

**Avery Sloan**

Politics Director | @AveryLSloan

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, died Aug. 30 at the age of 91. Safia Swimelar, professor of political science and policy studies, explains Gorbachev's efforts to democratize Russia's political system, his role in the breakup of the Soviet Union and why Gorbachev's legacy is crucial in understanding modern Russian and world politics, including the Russian-Ukrainian war.

*This interview was edited for clarity.*

## How was Gorbachev a significant figure in world politics, specifically within Russia?

"To start from the beginning, he was most significant because he recognized, when he came to power in the mid '80s, that the Soviet Union was not the great empire people had been believing in. If you looked at the economy, and you looked at the

**Safia Swimelar**

lack of freedoms that people had, then it was pretty clear that it was stagnating, and it wasn't able to compete with the United States. The way it had claimed a part of that was because it had spent so much money on the arms race and weapons, it wasn't able to be economically strong. And I think he recognized, also as the first college-educated leader of the Soviet Union, that there needed to be some reform — there needed to be some improvements not only in peoples' ways of life, but also in the government more generally.

He decided to open up the system, both on the economic side and the political side. He allowed for more economic market initiatives. He allowed for more open discussion about political issues, and political organization and media. And that opened the floodgates. He gave a little bit of opening and freedom in these areas to a system had been very, very closed. And that took on a life of its own because many people were wanting that. So that's, in part, why he's considered the main cause of the downfall of both the communist system and the system in the Soviet Union.

Under the Soviet system, the states in Eastern Europe who were not officially part of the Soviet Union — like Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, etc. — were under its influence. In the past, if they wanted to go their own way, if they wanted to get rid of communism, authoritarianism and go toward Europe and be more democratic, they really weren't allowed to do that. The Soviet Union, the army in particular, would basically come in and crush any kind of protest against communist rule. They had already done that in the '70s and '80s. So what Gorbachev did, which was super monumental, is he basically said in terms of foreign policy, you guys can go your own way. If Poland, or Czech or Hungary, if you decide you want to do something different, we're not going to come in with tanks and stop you. And that was incredibly important because those countries were also communist dictatorships.

Then they had popular uprising — the rise of the everyday people in Berlin that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall where East and West Berlin were divided. The wall comes down, people are able to travel,



COURTESY OF JOHN KRINGAS/CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Former Soviet Union president Mikhail Gorbachev answers questions from the Chicago Tribune editorial board during a meeting Thursday, March 4, 1999.

visit their family across the wall. There were hundreds of thousands of people in the streets in Prague in Czechoslovakia, same in Poland, and so they were able to kind of go their own way through completely peaceful means, get rid of the communist system that they had and become democratic capitalist states.

I'm not saying that's only because of Gorbachev. Obviously, it's due to the efforts of hundreds of thousands of people in those countries. But because he wasn't preventing them from leaving, the No. 1 significant thing it led to was Europe as a whole, not just Russia, becoming free and democratic from the period of 1989 to 1991. And those countries then have become members of the European Union. They've become central players in the NATO military alliance, and so they have created a Europe that is more whole and not divided.

A lot of people supported him and wanted things to go farther. But also, there were a lot of communist hardliners in his government who didn't want any change. It became a fight within the Soviet Union between the far hardliners who didn't want any change and who were anti-Gorbachev and those who wanted even more change. He just wants to reform it to make it work better. But when he starts to reform it, he threatens all the different sides.

The hardliners tried to have a coup on Gorbachev and get rid of him because they thought he's too progressive, too liberal. He and another Soviet leader, Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, came in and save the day and basically ended the coup, and Yeltsin was more on the far Democratic side. So Gorbachev ended up having to leave office before the end of the Soviet Union. And Yeltsin took over wanting to reform the whole system toward democracy. Gorbachev got it started, but he wasn't the one who sort of took it to the next level. So miraculously, without any major war or revolution, the Soviet Union falls apart into 15 countries. Ukraine is one of them."

## How was Gorbachev a different leader than Putin?

"Many commentators and scholars see Putin going after Ukraine and his invasion in 2008 of Georgia — another former Soviet republic — as Putin's attempt to start to recreate that broader, wider Soviet system.

The other big thing, of course, is Gorbachev's idea for opening things up. The idea of the Russia changing to be democratic went the other way. It opens under Gorbachev, but it closes back up under Putin. And you even have countries in Eastern Europe — that are not full authoritarian governments, and they haven't gone completely the other way — having challenges to their democracy. Those main countries who are in the EU would be Poland and Hungary, and they have been sanctioned and criticized by all the Western democracies

for cracking down on media, human rights, independence and freedom of the judiciary — lots of basic things that democracy is supposed to have.

We should add that it's not just Europe, it's the whole world. The Freedom House organization measures freedom and democracy in the world, and there's been a decline in the number of democracies every year for the past 15 years. In '89 and '90, when Gorbachev and the Soviet Union were shifting, we saw an increase every year in the number of democracies around the whole world. And now we're seeing every single year a decline, and that includes the United States, countries also like India and other major democracies. I'm not saying it's going to fall apart in the U.S., or India or places like that. But there is a kind of challenge from various political actors.

## Do you think that is related to what's been going on with Russia or just a similar trend?

"The anti-democratic trends in the U.S. are not directly connected to Russia, but they are connected to aspects of globalization that many people feel are not benefiting them directly. Economic globalization and corporate power has meant that the middle class is not doing as well as they once were in countries like France, or the U.S. and maybe even in Russia. Changing cultural attitudes and immigration are causing backlash, and then you just have lots of populist leaders. Most of those populists are more on the anti-democratic side. They have some tendencies to be OK with rolling back, civil rights, civil liberties or things related to the media. So, again, it's not directly related to Putin and Russia, but there are some similarities."

## Why is this something Elon students should care or learn about?

"Gorbachev is super important to everyone's life in the U.S. because Elon students could ask their grandparents, or even their parents, what they remember about the Cold War — hiding under desks, fear of a nuclear war, huge amounts of taxpayer dollars going to fund an arms race against the Soviet Union. As a leader, Gorbachev helping to end that whole conflict is extremely important to the development of the United States and the fact that we didn't have a nuclear war and our system came out on top, so to speak, when the communist system ended. That's the historical answer.

It's also good for young students to remember that what they're seeing now with these anti-democratic trends, particularly in Russia and in Europe, were not always like that. There was another path not that long ago, which means that we shouldn't assume that every Russian person is some kind of supporter of dictatorship. Obviously, Putin has a lot of support, but we can't assume that every person in Russia is supporting this kind of system."

## CORRECTIONS

In the Aug. 31 edition of The Pendulum, a quote from Elly Dirks was misattributed to Erika Link. Elon News Network regrets this error.





The Elon University men's soccer team celebrates after a goal by sophomore midfielder Scott Vatne against Northeastern University at Rudd Field on Sept. 3. Elon lost 2-1.

ELLA PITONYAK | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to a crowd about the Inflation Reduction Act at the Durham Center for Senior Life in Durham on Sept. 1.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Senior defensive midfielder Abby Fusca fights for the ball late in the second half of Elon's game against Asheville on Sept. 4. Elon won 4-0.

KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Elon volunteers packaged more than 27,000 nutritious meals at the Rise Against Hunger event in Alumni Gym Sept. 3.

HALEY PHELPS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# Elon parents share positive, negative feelings on COVID-19 protocol

The biggest concerns are quarantine meal pickup, missing class

Ellis Chandler  
Elon News Network | @Ellis\_Chandler

Going into the 2022-23 academic year, COVID-19 was a concern for Anna Pinckney-Straight, but not an overwhelming one. She knew it was a reality for her daughter, sending her back to school with at-home tests, masks and medication. But, she didn't anticipate it would happen so soon.

Between Aug. 30 and Sept. 5, the university reported 378 positive COVID-19 cases on campus. Pinckney-Straight said her daughter tested positive for COVID-19 in late August and was verified by the school's quarantine support system after sending a picture of her at-home test via email. Pinckney-Straight said she is pleased with

the university's protocol for COVID-19 this year, but her one issue is with the quarantine meal system. This year, students in quarantine can pick up prepared meals behind Lakeside Dining Hall. She said her daughter had what she needed, but it was still a tough place to be because she didn't feel like walking from her dorm in the Global Neighborhood.

"She didn't want to walk to the dining hall when she really felt lousy and sick," Pinckney-Straight said.

Pinckney-Straight learned how to use Instacart in order to send her daughter groceries and a thermometer. She said it's hard not to be with your children when they're sick, but it's also part of college life.

"This is part of the growing up process, learning how to deal with getting sick when you're an adult, and what do you do?" Pinckney-Straight said. "So we made sure she had a few treats along the way just to ease it a little bit."

But other Elon parents are concerned about meal collection as well. Karen Stevens' child also lives in Global but doesn't feel comfortable or well enough to walk to Lakeside and get her meals.

"As a parent, my heart is breaking for her," Stevens said. "For the first day or two, she just didn't eat all day because she didn't want to go pick up food, and then we figured out the Instacart thing and we've been delivering for her but it gets expensive."

Susanna Koppelman's child is a sophomore who tested positive earlier this month — shortly after her roommate did. When Koppelman asked if the roommate was going into quarantine, her daughter said they were supposed to stay in their shared room. So, her daughter borrowed an air mattress and slept in the common room of their Danieleley flat.

"I knew that once a couple girls in the flat had it, everybody was going to get it," Koppelman said.

Earlier in the week, Koppelman said her daughter and some flatmates went out to get frozen meals and other groceries to keep in the dorm for those who were already sick, unable to get groceries and unwilling to walk to the dining hall. Koppelman said the service doesn't seem feasible because while getting groceries is more convenient, it is an added expense to the already required meal plan for freshmen and sophomores.

"It's a long walk from Danieleley to Lakeside when you feel fine," Koppelman said. "When you're not feeling well, as her roommate was, there really wasn't any way she was going to walk to Danieleley and carry the food back with her, which I thought was very unreasonable."

Koppelman's daughter and her flatmates also tested positive via rapid, at-home tests. She said they were verified through quarantine support, and her daughter let her professors know she'd be missing five days of class, as required. But, Koppelman said she wishes there was a remote option.

"It's penalizing the students, but it's not their fault," Koppelman said. "Prior to COVID, if you had a cold or you didn't feel well, you could still go to class, or if you didn't, that was your choice. This is not their choice, but they're also being penalized for missing material. Five days of class at the beginning, or anytime in the semester, is a lot."

There are some policies Koppelman wishes would be reinstated this year, but there's others she has questions about. She said remote learning and reinstating the mask mandate are both options she thinks the university could take to support students and slow the infection rate, along with reinstating quarantine housing.

"Find spaces for kids who are sick to actually isolate themselves from other people. Particularly in a situation like Danieleley, where there's eight people in one flat, I mean, there's just no way to keep it out of everybody else," Koppelman said. "They're sharing a bathroom, they're sharing common space, and the problem is that by the time one person finds out they have it, the others are probably already infected."

Both Koppelman and Pinckney-Straight said they are grateful for designated people that walk their children through and assist with the quarantine process, and that the case numbers aren't anything more serious. Stevens said she hopes everyone will use their best judgment and do what they can to limit the spread.

"Most kids at this point with this period are resilient, and they're going to bounce back, but there are a few out there that aren't going to bounce back as quickly," Stevens said. "It's important to just have some compassion for these kids for these kids who are at higher risk."

## Current COVID-19 Status Week of Aug. 30-Sept. 5, 2022

Cases

378

Reported cases

(Includes student, faculty and staff positive cases reported to the university or confired through on-campus testing.)

Testing

572

Tests administered this week

100

Positive tests

17.48%

Percent of positive tests

(Includes Elon-administered asymptomatic tests and tests administered by Elon health services personnel. This does not include at-home test results of tests by external providers.)

## CDC COVID-19 Community Levels

Medium  
Alamance County

High  
Guilford County

SOPHIE ROSENTHAL | DESIGNER

Though Elon University doubled the number of COVID-19 cases reported last week compared to the week prior, Alamance County moved from high to medium risk.

# Glean transcription service to replace volunteer note takers

## NOTE TAKERS | from cover

"It has been designed to teach students how to take their own notes effectively and, in turn, help them to improve their ability to learn and retain information, resulting in improved student outcomes," Platania wrote. "Given this, we believe Glean can be an important new tool by which we are able to support our students."

Kesgin also said he is worried about the message it sends that a class lecture and discussion can be replaced with a recording and transcription, and he expressed concerns that his specific class subjects and teaching methods will not necessarily work through a transcription.

In an email sent to faculty, Susan Wise, director of disability resources, said that Glean will be the primary mode of note taking through disability resources and students will be able to record classes.

"Students are required to sign a recording agreement with our office and are aware that posting and distribution of class information is considered an honor code violation," Wise wrote in the email. "Technology use will be necessary because of these changes. It may be helpful to have a class discussion regarding the appropriate use of technology in your classroom with your students early in the semester."

Kesgin, who has made the choice in his classes to not use

technology, said he feels faculty should have been consulted before the decision was made. He has multiple concerns about using Glean, one of which is that his or other students' words could be taken out of context.

"As much as students [may] be reserved, faculty may be reserved because some of our topics are more sensitive than others," Kesgin said. "And then societal context, removing a statement out of its broader context in the classroom, maybe also harmful."

Robert Leib, a professor of philosophy, has similar concerns about classes being recorded. Leib said even though Glean is supposed to be a secure software, it still psychologically has an effect on students participating

in class, knowing they are being recorded.

"It's the teacher's job to make the classroom safe and comfortable and secure and educational, to have all kinds of different discussions, some of which are difficult to have," Leib said.

Apart from less student participation, Leib said he didn't think that a software that records class would work well with the way that he runs his classroom. Leib, whose classes are technology free and discussion-based, said an audio recording does not come close to the full in-person experience or notes that another student would take for someone else to use.

"There's just to be 30 some

voices on, that may be quiet, may be on point, may be changing the subject," Leib said. "I guess I would question how much value recording of the conversations from our class would have, that is over notes that someone would take."

## GLEAN FEATURES

Glean allows students to record and transcribe class lectures, annotate parts of the recording and add reference materials alongside students notes and recordings.



# Burlington residents grateful for new outdoor gym

Mirroring the fitness courts in Elon and Mebane, Burlington unveiled its own free public court in City Park at the beginning of August

Ryan Kupperman  
Elon News Network | @RyAndKupp

With the North Carolina sun beating down and sweat pouring off his back and face, Burlington resident Travis Medeiros felt his breath and his pace sync up as he entered Pine Hill Cemetery on his morning run. Running through the cemetery because of its silent and peaceful nature, Medeiros intended to check out Burlington's new outdoor fitness gym, located just across the street in City Park.

Entering the cemetery, Medeiros said he was greeted by some dragonflies. He watched them glide between the gravestones. "They kind of made me look in the direction of a few specific graves," Medeiros said. "These graves didn't have dates on them, just the name."

Freeland. Self. Price. Three seemingly unrelated gravestones turned Medeiros' run from a routine morning exercise to an introspective experience.

"Freeland, which first reminded me of America ... Self, making me think of myself. We should think of ourselves and what we give back to our community and how we live our life every day. You're either living your life, or you're not. You've got to give the most you can every day — into your life and the lives of others," Medeiros said. "The name Price on the grave reminded me of what price we're willing to pay for this life. It's all about community."

Over the past year, Medeiros said he would drive by City Park on his way to work and see the outdoor gym being built. Although he said that he is "blessed to work a job where I'm on my feet all day," Medeiros said he enjoys getting out of the house and moving, and he suspects a lot of others in the community do as well.

"Honestly, it's been a busy, crazy year ... Not only does it give people a comfortable, safe place to exercise, but I mean, a lot of people just don't go to the gym — don't have time, can't afford it, whatever it might be," Medeiros said. "This is like a gift for the park community."

Medeiros decided to run a couple of miles from his home to City Park, check out the new fitness area and run back Aug. 27. Upon arriving at the court, Medeiros was pleasantly surprised by its simple and effective design, allowing him to achieve a good workout.

"Literally a 3-year-old could do some of this, a 100-year-old could get out here and do some of this, and it's pretty safe — that's the



A newly-constructed outdoor fitness court is located in Burlington. Designed by the National Fitness Campaign, the court is built to encourage outdoor fitness using free-weight exercises.

big part of it," Medeiros said. "I think they did a lot of thinking and planning on this ... This is great. They did a really good job with this."

The completion of Burlington's outdoor gym makes it the third one of its kind in the Alamance County area, along with the ones located on Elon University's campus and in Mebane.

Each court is essentially a replicated version of the others — containing variants in color and visual aesthetic — as they were all designed by the National Fitness Campaign.

According to Sean Echeverria, supervisor of Special Events & Paramount for the City of Burlington and Parks Department, Burlington's parks department was familiar with the courts in Mebane and Elon found it a "no brainer" to have one built in City Park once some grant opportunities became available.

The court in Mebane is the original, opening up to the public at the end of 2020, while Elon's was unveiled in September 2021 and Burlington's at the beginning of August.

Echeverria estimated that the outdoor gym cost the city around \$120,000 after a \$20,000 grant from the National Fitness Campaign and a \$50,000 sponsorship from Impact Alamance.

"Even on the back end of the pandemic, now everyone seems to have really caught on to the idea of outdoor exercise and staying active," Echeverria said. "I think that this is a perfect way for people to come and enjoy a free amenity that's here in the center of Burlington."

Al Combs, another Burlington resident, also checked out the outdoor fitness court for the first time on the morning of Aug. 27 while his son was at baseball practice not 30 yards away. His son's baseball team, which usually practices in Fairchild Park, had moved to City Park that day due to an all-day softball tournament at Fairchild.

"I played on this field when I was his age and younger ... so this is like home to me," Combs said. "Seeing what the city has done, putting this here — all the stuff that they do — is good."

According to Medeiros, part of the appeal of the outdoor fitness court is its accessibility, as 200 people could be attending a baseball game right next to the court, and one could still utilize it without interfering with the game.

In terms of location, Medeiros also said he likes that the park is across from a cemetery because it gives him a great deal of motivation.

"Obviously the graveyard is a reminder of where we're headed, and it shouldn't be a negative thing, it's a memorial. But it should be a reminder that we got to live our life every day," Medeiros said. "Give back to others, give back to the community."


After completing half of his run, with almost as much sweat on him as sunlight, Medeiros admired and exercised in the outdoor gym.

He said he was grateful that the community put time and resources into constructing it, and he even set a goal for himself of being able to run to the park from home, do 15 to 20 pullups on the fitness court and run the rest of the way back home.


"This is the first time I've run in a while, and of course, I am reminded how much I love to run ... Some people may be struggling with their life situation, their job, whatever it might be. I'm no stranger to life," Medeiros said. "This is a place they can come and do stuff. Get out, get the air, get the exercise, meet people. This is huge. This is something that can just grow and keep getting expanded on, and I'm glad that this community did this. This is what we need more of right now."

Erin Martin and Max Wallace contributed to the reporting of this story.

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RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Michael Myers sits at Belk Library's service desk at 4:25 a.m. Myers is approaching a year working at Belk, taking the 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. shift during Elon's academic year. A 26 year old with his undergraduate math degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Myers is currently taking an acting for non-majors class at Elon, attending martial arts classes in the Koury Center every Tuesday and Thursday and thinking about pursuing a masters degree in library science, statistics or computer programming.

## Get to know the overnight Elon University staff: A look inside Belk Library from midnight to 7 a.m.

**Ryan Kupperman**  
Elon News Network | @RyAndKupp

It's 3 a.m. inside Belk Library. Because the building is open all night during weekdays, all the lights remain on. From the first floor, it's impossible to hear Tammy Wilson, Belk's overnight janitor, wiping office windows and emptying trash cans on the second and third floors. Even for a library, the silence is overwhelming.

The library's grand, oblong skylight invites the eye to spiral up towards the remaining floors. Going through the building's front entrance, it's easy to miss the figure lurking to the left. Yet there he sits behind the service desk, waiting. Who is he?

Michael Myers.

Not the fictional, Halloween serial killer, though — the 26-year-old part-time student with hobbies and interests as unique as his sleep and work schedules.

As a salsa, ballroom, rumba and swing dancer, a student in the martial arts — especially judo, jujitsu and aikido — a climber, an actor and a musician, Myers also works the overnight shift in Belk Library. Every Sunday through Thursday from 11:30 p.m. to 7:30 a.m., Myers can be found parked at the library's service desk ready to help students with their printing issues and book renewals.

According to Myers, the best part of working the overnight shift is the freedom that comes with it.

"You really get to be your own boss, like you get to really set your own schedule here because I can check the book drops anytime, and check the email anytime, during my shift," Myers said.

While burning the midnight oil at Belk is his primary job, Myers said he does work a part-time shift about once a month at Food

Lion to keep paying his bills.

Myers started in the library in September 2021 after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in math, and he is currently thinking about pursuing a master's degree in either library science, statistics or computer science. During his time at Chapel Hill, Myers also took four years of Arabic, which he said he can speak and understand relatively well to this day.

Because he attended an early college high school at Rockingham County Early College, Myers received his associate degree at the same time he received his high school degree — which means he took college courses when he was 14 years old, alongside typical college students.

"It was different, the age gap there," Myers said. "Interacting with people much older ... that was really interesting."

Born in Eden, North Carolina, Myers said he was also the first person in his immediate family to live outside the state of North Carolina, as he spent a year abroad in the United Kingdom. Myers' brother, David, works the second shift in Belk from 3 p.m. to midnight — giving the brothers half an hour of overlap during their shifts.

Myers is the youngest of three, and while neither he nor his brother has kids, his sister has two daughters — four and 12 years old respectively — making him an uncle. Eventually, Myers said he'd like to have a child to have the experience of being a father.

With both of his parents still living, Myers said his mother worked as a bank teller for over 20 years and his father worked at a cigarette factory for about 12. Because of this, Myers said everyone in his family had been addicted to smoking at some point in their lives.

"My whole family, at one point or another, smoked — like habitually," Myers said. "Except for me ... I've seen the habit it could create and I could see the impact on your health it could have, so I made the decision that I'm not going to touch that."

Although his job is relatively stationary, Myers said he likes to stay active. Originally getting into martial arts because some of his friends did it in college, Myers picked up the hobby again and attends martial arts classes in the Koury Center every Tuesday and Thursday in studio six at 8:30 p.m.

Although not a huge sports fan, Myers

said he also follows North Carolina college basketball teams like Carolina and Duke, as well as Kansas' team because head coach Roy Williams used to coach for UNC.

In terms of his interests, Myers said he likes listening to music and watching Netflix — both of which he is allowed to do during his overnight shift.

While he said he has a broad music taste — citing genres like hip hop, R&B, classic rock and heavy metal, as well as artists such as Michael Jackson, Kendrick Lamar, Donald Glover, Nelly and Lil' John — his favorite pastime is watching "cringey" reality dating shows like "Love Island."

On top of that, Myers also said he has played the guitar on and off for the past 12 years, gravitating to genres like classic rock and heavy metal.

Myers currently takes an acting for non majors class at Elon every Monday and Wednesday from 4 to 5:40 p.m. To wake up in time for school and work, Myers said he'll typically wake up around 3 p.m. and spend the time after class but before his shift going to the gym, taking his dance or martial arts classes,

hanging out with friends or exploring the area.

As of the end of August, Simply Thai is Myers' favorite restaurant to eat near campus.

As he thinks about his future plans, Myers is currently looking for homes in Raleigh where he might be able to better pursue further education or begin a career still unknown to himself. While he said he has yet to decide what career path he wants to follow, Myers said he would eventually like to live in Boston, where he could be in a city close to the beach.

A man of many talents and hobbies, Myers is one of many hidden Elon gems on campus known mostly to the nocturnal and the insomniacs.

Though he enjoys helping and interacting with students, Myers estimates that he might see up to five students ... on a busy night. If you ever see him, don't hesitate to strike up a conversation. Not only is he more interesting than perhaps the more famous, fictitious Michael Myers, but he is also a whole lot friendlier.

"I'd say one of the cons is I like to have someone to talk to," Myers said. "Sometimes it can get a little bit lonely."



RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Tammy Wilson takes out and replaces the trash from a recycling bin on the second floor of Belk Library at 1:41 a.m. Wilson has worked as a cleaner for the second and third floors of the library for the last eight months, switching to the overnight shift during the school year and working normal hours over the summer. During the fall 2022 semester, Wilson can be found cleaning the library Sunday through Thursday from 10 p.m. to roughly 6:30 a.m.



# LIFESTYLE

## Racing for a cause

An Elon senior is competing in her second triathlon, this time raising money for Burlington Animal Services

**Miranda Ferrante**  
Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com

When Elon senior Maria Torres Monteverde completed her first triathlon, she said she crossed the finish line overwhelmed with pride — a feeling motivating her to not only compete again, but also raise money for a cause close to her heart.

“It was great to do, but I want to do something bigger than that,” Torres Monteverde said. “I love Burlington Animal Services so much. I know there are so many other shelters that need help as well, but I think Burlington just stands out.”

Torres Monteverde will fundraise and spread awareness for Burlington Animal Services while participating in the White Lake Fall International & Sprint in White Lake, North Carolina, Sept. 11. Torres Monteverde will swim 750 meters, bike 14 miles and run a 5K race.

Torres Monteverde, an international student from Spain, said her passion for the pet adoption and research center arose early in her sophomore year — a time she spent searching for community outside of campus as COVID-19 case numbers spiked at Elon.

“I remember telling my boyfriend, ‘I think I need an emotional support animal,’” Torres

Monteverde said. “Somebody that’s unbiased, somebody that I can go to, and cry and cuddle.”

She said while a dog seemed like too much work to take care of as a college student, she wanted to try a cat. Research led her to Burlington Animal Services, an experience she is grateful for.

“I started getting more into volunteering with them when I heard the amount of work that they need and the amount of volunteers,” Torres Monteverde said. “They get animals in every day, whether it’s kitties, stray cats, feral cats — they find puppies behind Walmart, which is devastating. But thankfully, a lot of people end up adopting and fostering ... There’s so many animals here in cages that could benefit from being in a home.”

Burlington Animal Services will provide a tent for Torres Monteverde and her two friends, junior Emma Leonard and senior Maddy Murdock, to use for fundraising the day of the event.

Leading up to Sunday’s triathlon, Torres Monteverde’s efforts to create awareness about the organization and the race have been through social media and conversation. Between the funds raised beforehand and the day of, she hopes to raise at least \$5,000 for Burlington Animal Services. As of Sept. 4, she said she has raised \$1,300 and expects to hit the \$5,000 mark at the triathlon.

Director of Burlington Animal Services Jessica Arias said she is appreciative of the efforts.

“So grateful Maria has selected us to be the recipient of



Elon senior Maria Torres Monteverde plays with a dog at Burlington Animal Services after volunteering at the shelter Aug. 22.

her fundraiser,” Arias said. “We really count on the support of the community through volunteer opportunities and donations. It really helps support the animals in our care.”

Arias said the shelter’s medical programs benefit from these funds, allowing them to provide required medical procedures for pets prior to adoption and lifting an additional cost from potential owners.

“We’re so appreciative of donations for our medical care fund that directly support shelter pets,” Arias said. “We especially appreciate Elon students, they have been a tremendous help for our agency and fostering pets short term.”

Leonard met Torres Monteverde through the Alpha Kappa Psi co-ed business fraternity, as Torres Monteverde was her mentor. Leonard remembers going over to Torres Monteverde’s apartment and saw she had a cat.

Before she met Torres Monteverde, Leonard said she didn’t really know what it meant or looked like to have a pet on campus. She got involved with the shelter after interacting with Torres Monteverde and because she loves cats.

“I really want to raise money so that they can get the help they need, but also spread awareness of Burlington Animal Services,” Leonard said. “I think it was just

such a positive change to my life, so I want others to recognize how great it could be, and how they could help out too.”

With the support of Leonard and Murdock, the latter of whom called Torres Monteverde “inspirational,” she hopes to make a difference and bring attention to Burlington Animal Services and the work they do.

“I love it so much, it’s one of my hobbies,” Torres Monteverde said. “I’m not a person that loves to go out and party, and I love to be outdoors or spending time with animals. It’s just been such a blessing to see animals coming to the shelter and then get them out of there, finding them a home. It’s just so rewarding.”

## Street art blooms in downtown Elon

Mary Ryan is the solo artist behind new murals lining West Lebanon Avenue

**Annemarie Bonner**  
Elon News Network | @ABonnerNews

When public artist Mary Ryan wakes up early in the morning during a project week, she gathers

her supplies, puts on her paint-covered shoes and says goodbye to her husband before heading off to paint alone for eight hours — this week, in downtown Elon.

Ryan, founder of Mary E D Ryan Art, has been doing public art for five years, after previously working in healthcare. She painted a colorful crosswalk next to Magerk’s Pub and Grill last month and is now back on West Lebanon

Avenue to paint a street mural on top of parking spaces, which when finished, will house outdoor seating spaces.

The design will have leaves, a blue sky and trees, and Ryan said she chose the nature-themed design after collaborating with the town. According to Ryan, the difference between public art and gallery art is that it’s accessible to everyone.

“Public art is so fun and colorful, and it really cheers things up,” Ryan said. “Everybody gets to enjoy it anytime they go by.”

The crosswalk she finished last month was just the beginning of her work in town. She said there is a lot of opportunity to bring more public art to Elon, and she prides herself on being flexible. Each city, Ryan said, has its own culture, and she must work with town representatives to bring what they want to the space.

Ryan paints alone, even for larger projects, because she said it allows her creative freedom.

“It’s such a different experience than working in a studio by yourself,” Ryan said. “I enjoy that too, but I really prefer to work with the community and work with the public ... I still take surveys from people, like, ‘What do you think should be here? What do you think would work on this?’ And that’s really fun because people come up with all kinds of ideas that I might not have thought of.”

Ryan is not a resident of Elon and lives about 30 minutes away in Rockingham County. Before this project, she was not familiar with Elon but discovered the town when Downtown Development Director Jill Weston asked her to paint its first public art display.

When Weston started in her position five months ago, her first goal was to bring art to the town.

“People are wanting more than

just a brick building to look at now downtown,” Weston said. “They want historic buildings and art and just culture.”

Quinn Ray serves on Elon’s Town Council and is also an advocate for public art in the town. He said having this display is beneficial for everyone in the community, including students, businesses and town residents.

“It goes over a little bit better with people when we’re actually doing it instead of asking other people to do it,” Ray said. “It’ll show that the town actually cares about ... the vibe of the downtown.”

Ryan’s goal with this project is to display something everyone can appreciate while sitting outdoors and having a meal. From local restaurants such as Magerk’s and TANGENT Eat+Bar, the mural space became an outdoor dining area during the pandemic. Now a permanent fixture, Ryan’s new design sits atop the space.

When she is finished with this project, Ryan said she hopes to come back and do more in Elon, as public art can brighten up a space and draw outsiders in. She also said she predicts that children will appreciate the public street art more than most.

“Kids really are going like this one because it’s down at their level, it’s on the ground,” Ryan said. “It’s a different experience to sit in a dining area that is on top of a mural instead of a parking lot.”



Mary Ryan paints over the parking lot across from TANGENT Eat + Bar on Sept. 3.

ANNEMARIE BONNER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# Gibsonville groomer opens new realm of ‘pawsibilities’ for residents

Prim & Pawper, a pet groomer and retail store, will celebrate its new location’s grand opening Sept. 10

**Kyra O’Connor**  
Executive Director | @KO\_reports

Gibsonville resident Jacki King walks through the doors of Prim & Pawper, a Gibsonville dog grooming business, and is greeted by co-owner Josh Tabor, who rings up her total and goes to the back to get King’s cairn terrier, Rosie.

King chats with another customer while she waits for Rosie, who comes out to play with a ball — chasing it around the shop and having fun with Tabor before going to her owner.

“I’m a customer — well, I’m the mother to a customer,” King said, as she pointed at Rosie playing with the ball. “She is happy. There are places I’ve taken her that she was scared, she did not like it. ... This is what makes it a positive experience for her.”

King is one of many customers who keep returning to the family and veteran-owned business for her pup’s monthly grooming. Prim & Pawper opened in 2021 at a smaller location in downtown Gibsonville before moving to the space it is in now at 120 W. Main St.

Run by husband and wife team Danielle and Josh Tabor,

the shop has expanded to include additional groomers, bathers and a clientele that will often involve 20 dogs in and out of the shop per day.

“My favorite thing is being part of the Gibsonville community,” Danielle said. “It’s nice to have a place I can call my own and build on the community that we live in.”

## Starting out

Danielle grew up around dogs and knew she wanted to work with animals when she grew up. While attending college to be a veterinarian, she said she quickly realized it was not a good fit for her because she couldn’t stomach the idea of having to put down a dog.

“

AS MUCH AS I LOVE BEING AROUND DOGS, IT’S A DIRTY JOB. IT’S A DIRTIER JOB THAN PEOPLE REALIZE.

**DANIELLE TABOR**  
OWNER OF PRIM & PROPER

While in school, Danielle had a part-time job as a dog bathers. When her employer at the time asked if she wanted to try

grooming school, she accepted — and hasn’t looked back since.

“It’s been a way for me to still work with dogs and do all the same things that I love about being around dogs, without the sad depressing atmosphere,” Danielle said.

High school sweethearts Josh and Danielle broke up after graduation and reunited after Josh’s service in the U.S. Navy. The pair moved to Chicago, where Danielle continued grooming. While her clientele was growing, the Windy City proved too cold for the pair, and they moved back to North Carolina.

“We almost opened a shop in Chicago,” Danielle said. “I think it got to negative 23, and I was like, ‘Josh, we’re moving home.’”

After the positive feedback Danielle said the couple got from pet-sitting and grooming out of their home, Danielle said she felt like it was the right time to expand.

“What I like about it is that it keeps me busy,” Danielle said. “There’s always, always something new, you don’t do the same thing every day.”

## Moving to Main Street

Josh said he and Danielle looked at the storefront in the original location once and were sold. The Main Street location was a big part of the decision to begin work out of the 700-square-foot shop, Josh said. After great success in the original shop, the two decided to expand to

accommodate the growing number of customers.

Just three months later, Prim & Pawper moved to its current space, which is over three times the size of the original store. Now, the shop has retail items, more grooming space and new employees to help with the expansion.

While Danielle loves her work at Prim & Pawper, she said the most common misconception people have about her job is the nature of grooming itself.

“The biggest thing I tell people when I’m a dog groomer is ‘Oh you get to play with dogs all day!’” Danielle said. “As much as I love being around dogs, it’s a dirty job. It’s a dirtier job than people realize.”

Mebane resident Cesar Rios, one of the newest employees, knows all about the dirty work behind the scenes — as a bather, he spends his days washing and blow drying fur as well as cleaning dogs’ nails and ears.

“He has a good temperament for dogs,” Josh said. “You have to be pretty patient with dogs at times, and he does good with them.”

Rios said he has grown up with dogs and enjoys interacting with them at his new job, but Josh and Danielle also make working at Prim & Pawper really special. Another new addition to the team, Brooke Byrd, agrees.

Byrd said her favorite part of being a groomer at Prim & Pawper so far is seeing the before

and after for each dog who comes in. Byrd started at Prim & Pawper in April and works alongside Danielle at the shop.

“That’s really the best part of it so far is just seeing customers’ reactions and me being able to see the before and after of it,” Byrd said.

## Making grooming a treat

There are many reasons why customers at Prim & Pawper come back month after month for their pet’s needs, customer Isabelle Amick said. From the Tabor’s two-year-old son, Leyton — the official “treat giver” at the shop — to the prices and atmosphere, customers say there is a lot to like.

Amick’s dog, Brownie, has gone to Prim & Pawper countless times. Even though Amick moved from Gibsonville to Greensboro recently, she still makes the commute to bring Brownie to Danielle.

“I love that it’s a family business,” Amick said.

Josh, Danielle, Leyton and the Prim & Pawper staff will celebrate the grand opening of the new, larger space this Saturday, Sept. 10, from 1 to 4 p.m. The shop will be accepting donations for a local rescue group and will also include the chance to enter a raffle giveaway. The raffle prize includes a grooming certificate, dog treats and dog toys. Customers are also welcomed into the salon, people and dogs alike, for a tour of the space and the opportunity to meet staff members.



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Groomer Brooke Byrd cares for cockapoo Mattie at Prim & Pawper dog groomer in downtown Gibsonville on Sept. 2, 2022. Prim & Pawper recently moved into this location after searching for a bigger space and is now settling in at the new spot.