

BASKETBALL SPECIAL EDITION 2025



PHOTOS BY LILLY MOLINA



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THE PENDULUM

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Women's basketball team aims to take next step after last year's improvement

Roster features mix of young, experienced players looking to prove themselves

Benjamin Berfield

Elon News Network

There is plenty of anticipation for the Elon University women's basketball team heading into the 2025-26 season. After going from 11-21 in 2024 to 15-15 in 2025, the Phoenix is looking to take another significant step this year. In the CAA's preseason power rankings, Elon is projected to finish fifth, which is their highest spot since the 2022-2023 season.

With the high expectations, Elon enters the season with a very diverse roster. They are bringing back three of their five players who averaged at least 20 minutes last year. The group includes sophomore guard Jayda Angel, who won CAA Rookie of the Year and was named Preseason All-CAA First Team. However, Angel sustained a season-ending injury on Nov. 6 in the team's second game of the season. She was poised to be one of the team's top scorers after averaging a shade under 10 points last year at 9.9 a game, which is the highest among any returning player on the team.

Elon also boasts plenty of experienced players such as seniors Laila Anderson and Ruby Willard along with redshirt senior guard Kamryn Doty.

Some of the team's newcomers are graduate forward Quinzia Fulmore and sophomore forward LaNae' Corbett, who arrived through the transfer portal. Freshman guard Ashanti Fox and center Tamia Watkins round out the roster's newest class of players.

Head coach Charlotte Smith said she loves the collection of players. She said players such as Willard, Doty and junior guard Maraja Pass bring experience, while the transfer additions provide more scoring offensive options.

"The diversity of our team is well balanced which I'm excited about," Smith said. "With that nucleus, you have a lot of leadership."

Although she is only a sophomore, Angel will be one of the team's focal points heading into the season. She averaged a shade under 10 points last year at 9.9 a game, which is the highest among any returning player on the team. Angel said she is excited to build off last year's campaign through improving her leadership skills and putting a bigger emphasis on the defensive end.

Smith said Fox and Watkins have been



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon women's basketball team gather around head coach Charlotte Smith to go over strategies during an away game Nov. 6 against University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

getting more accustomed to the team each day.

"They've done a really good job understanding our system and they play with such a great level of confidence," Smith said.



I WANT TO BE A STRONGER LEADER ON AND OFF THE COURT.

JAYDA ANGEL

ELON SOPHOMORE

One of the players who have tried to provide a welcoming environment for the younger ones include Pass. As one of the team's upperclassmen, Pass said it's her responsibility to mentor the new players. She said she knows the feeling of stepping into a new situation.

"Experience in basketball goes a long way, especially at the point guard position," Pass said. "Being able to help my younger teammates really goes a long way because I know what it's like to be in a new class. It just gives them a sense of belonging and it

contributes to the overall success of the team."

As excited as Smith is for the season, she knows it's important to keep her players present during practices. She said she constantly reminds them about applying winning habits and whether they're living up to that standard. If the team isn't playing well, Smith said she isn't afraid to let them know.

"I keep them grounded by just telling them the truth about how we show up every day in practice, whether we're showing up as championship caliber players or whether we're slacking and being average," Smith said.

Smith said that so far, the players have responded well to her demands. She acknowledged that the only reason she sets a high standard is because she knows what the team is capable of accomplishing. She explained it's important for her players to reach the goals they set for themselves.

"They respond because they know I care," Smith said. "They know I want them to reach their goals so I'm just holding them accountable to what they said."

Smith's confidence in the team has been recognized by players such as Angel. She said Smith often displays trust toward everyone that significantly helps their performance.

"She really pours a lot of faith in us," Angel said. "It's all about building chemistry as a team and the belief she has for us really makes a big impact as a team."

HOME GAME SCHEDULE

NOV. 15 5:00 P.M. HOWARD

DEC. 14 1:00 P.M. LONGWOOD

DEC. 21 1:00 P.M. NORFOLK STATE

DEC. 30 7:00 P.M. NC WESLEYAN

JAN. 2 7:00 P.M. MONMOUTH*

JAN. 4 1:00 P.M. HAMPTON*

JAN. 23 7:00 P.M. NORTH CAROLINA A&T*

JAN. 30 7:00 P.M. COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON*

FEB. 1 1:00 P.M. TOWSON*

FEB. 8 1:00 P.M. WILLIAM & MARY*

FEB. 20 7:00 P.M. CAMPBELL*

FEB. 22 1:00 P.M. NORTHEASTERN*

MAR. 7 7:00 P.M. UNC WILMINGTON*

*Coastal Athletic Association games

CORRECTIONS

There are no corrections from the last edition of The Pendulum.

Men’s basketball seeks to maintain standards despite new roster



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Graduate student Ja’Juan Carr makes a layup during the Nov. 5 home opener game against Belmont Abbey College. The Phoenix won 99-51.

Coaches look to connect new players as season starts

Benjamin Berfield
Elon News Network

Chemistry has been a core emphasis for the Elon University men’s basketball team. They’ve stressed building camaraderie over the offseason and into training camp with the 2025-26 season now underway.

Head coach Billy Taylor said everyone has put a lot of time and effort into becoming the best team possible.

“We’ve been working hard since June,” Taylor said. “The eight weeks we had in the summertime of workouts and then our preseason have all been building to this moment.”

“THE EIGHT WEEKS WE HAD IN THE SUMMERTIME OF WORKOUTS AND THEN OUR PRESEASON HAVE ALL BEEN BUILDING TO THIS MOMENT.”

BILLY TAYLOR
HEAD COACH

Having on-court chemistry will be important for the Phoenix. The team will look much different compared to last year’s roster, which went 17-16 for the program’s first winning season since 2016-17. This past offseason, Elon lost nine players to the transfer portal, along with starting forward Sam Sherry, who graduated. To replace the losses, they added eight new transfers to the team.

Half of their transfer additions are graduates, which include forwards Chandler Cuthrell, Kacper Klaczek and Bryson Spell along with guard Ja’Juan Carr. They also brought in sophomore guard Bryson Cokley and junior guard Randall Pettus II.

Taylor said the coaching staff has spent time over the offseason talking about how to get these players acclimated to their system. He said it’s important for everyone to coexist

both offensively and defensively as the season begins.

“You want your defense to be connected and you want your offense sharing the basketball,” Taylor said. “Those are some of the things that we’ve been talking about as a coaching staff and as a team for months now.”

However, the heart of the men’s basketball team won’t just be their new additions. Among the team’s five returners is junior forward Isaac Harrell, who played in 32 of the team’s 33 games last season. Although he came off the bench in 26 of those games, his 3-point percentage of 39.4% led all Elon players who played in at least 75% of the season.

Redshirt sophomore guard Ned Hull is another returning player who could have a larger role. After sitting out almost all of last season due to an injury, he played 21 minutes in Elon’s season opening win against Belmont Abbey College.

Taylor said he looks forward to seeing the contributions Harrell and Hull can provide to the team. He said each of them always put the team before themselves, which he is very fond of.

“Ned is someone that I threw out there late in games his freshman year, and then to work his way back from injury is a testament to him in terms of how hard he’s worked,” Taylor said. “Isaac is the perfect team player. Whenever you forget about him, that’s going to make shots, offensive rebounds, get steals and deflections.”

Pettus II said that although not many players have much in-game experience, he noted that everyone is here to win and be the best they can possibly be. He said the players are committed to excelling with one another throughout the season.

“What I believe most in is being a team that’s family-oriented,” Pettus II said. “We all play together and we all want to win so we have to come in every day with a mindset to get better.”

For the team to excel, Cuthrell said everyone has to maintain a high level of play throughout all 40 minutes of a game. He said the coaches have instilled that mindset among the team because they trust each player’s ability to execute on both ends of the court.

“We know how we need to play at all times, and we can never relax,” Cuthrell said. “The coaches always say to continue playing hard at all times, because we know we are a pretty good offensive team, and we have to make the same decisions on defense that we do on offense.”



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Top scorer of the night, graduate student Chandler Cuthrell, shoots the ball in during a game Nov. 5 against Belmont Abbey College.



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
From left, redshirt sophomore Ned Hull, sophomore Caleb Middleton, sophomore Bryson Cokley and redshirt freshman Iker Garmendia walk over for a time out during the Belmont Abbey College game Nov. 5.

HOME GAME SCHEDULE

NOV. 15	8:00 P.M.	GARDNER-WEBB
NOV. 29	7:00 P.M.	MERCER
DEC. 3	7:00 P.M.	FURMAN
DEC. 13	1:00 P.M.	NORTHERN ILLINOIS
DEC. 17	7:00 P.M.	RICHMOND
DEC. 22	4:00 P.M.	GREENSBORO COLLEGE
DEC. 29	7:00 P.M.	NORTHEASTERN*
DEC. 31	2:00 P.M.	COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON*

JAN. 10	7:00 P.M.	CAMPBELL*
JAN. 22	7:00 P.M.	TOWSON*
JAN. 29	7:00 P.M.	WILLIAM & MARY*
JAN. 31	7:00 P.M.	STONY BROOK*
FEB. 7	12:00 P.M.	DREXEL*
FEB. 21	7:00 P.M.	NORTH CAROLINA A&T*
MARCH 3	7:00 P.M.	UNC WILMINGTON*

*Coastal Athletic Association games



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Forward Isaac Harrell makes a free throw during the Nov. 5 game against Belmont Abbey College in Schar Center.

Lilly Molina
Elon News Network

Between last season and this one, junior forward Isaac Harrell “had to grow up.”

“This offseason really forced me to become a leader for this program,” Harrell said. “I think with everyone leaving, it made me become like a different person, as in, I had to grow up.”

With the nine transfers that left Schar Center last year, Harrell and four others were the only returning players. Harrell is the only returning player who spent time in the starting lineup last year.

“It was definitely a hard time when everyone left, just because those become your best friends,” Harrell said. “But I figured that staying was best for me because I love the coaching staff.”

Harrell said for him, the relationships he has built here at Elon are more important than

entering the transfer portal. He said when he committed to Elon, it was not mainly for basketball. It was because the coaches cared about him regardless of how many times he scored points for the Phoenix.

“It was because the coaches saw me as somebody more than a basketball player,” Harrell said.

Harrell also said Elon had just felt like the right place for him. He loved the community, the staff and even his classes.

With that, Harrell is ready to make shots and become a real presence on the court. As a sophomore he averaged 4 rebounds and 39.4% three-point percentage beyond the arc. One of his most notable career highlights is his game winning tip-in his freshman year in a game against University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

But Harrell said that his original plan and first “true love” was actually tennis.

“I ended up getting really tall, and

basketball took over,” Harrell said.

Harrell’s older brother started playing ball and he looked up to him. So at the age of 12, he quit tennis and Harrell said he fell in love with the game. And he’s been in love ever since.

“I feel like this year, something that worked in the offseason is just becoming more confident, as in myself, and knowing that I can be a presence offensively,” Harrell said.

Head coach Billy Taylor said he wants to continue to see Harrell shoot the ball with consistency, but also to just see him continue to grow as a leader.

“He’s really teaching, again, our values and what’s important to us as a program,” Taylor said.

But what really stuck out to Taylor was his winning attitude, character and plays. Since high school, Taylor said Harrell came from a winning culture. He won multiple state

championships in his home state of Arkansas.

“He’s got, obviously, a great smile, great personality, great energy, which was just something that’s really important to our program,” Taylor said.

With his attitude for victory also comes his ability to make winning plays. Going into this new season, Taylor said one of the goals he has for Harrell is to continue honing in on making winning plays, which is something that Taylor said doesn’t show up on the statistics sheet.

“It may be something as simple as running as hard as he can, sprinting the floor, which then opens up the opportunity for someone to get a rim run and a layup, because he shoots the ball so well,” Taylor said.

Taylor said that Harrell is also an effective cutter. In basketball, a cutter is someone who is able to make themselves open for a possible pass or score, which for Harrell, gives him the opportunity to make winning plays.

Transfer additions get accustomed to men’s basketball team

Team enters season with 8 new transfers, 4 being graduate students

Benjamin Berfield
Elon News Network

The Elon University men’s basketball team may be trying to replicate last year’s 17-16 record, but they will have to achieve that feat with an entirely different roster.

This offseason, the team lost nine players to the transfer portal. Some of the notable departures included TJ and TK Simpkins, along with Nick Dorn, among other contributors. To compensate for the losses, the Phoenix added eight new transfers before the season.

Half of their additions from the portal are graduate students, as forwards Chandler Cuthrell, Kacper Klaczek and Bryson Spell, along with guard Ja’uan Carr, all provide a ton of experience. Junior guard Randall Pettus II rounds out the upperclassmen in the group. The younger transfer additions include sophomore guard Bryson Cokley, redshirt freshman Iker Garmendia and sophomore center Caleb Middleton.

Head coach Billy Taylor said that this year’s team was far from last season’s team. He said that, whereas players from last season were already used to playing with one another, this was a roster with a team who hadn’t played a regular season game until the team’s opener Nov. 5 against Belmont Abbey College.

“We had a few more guys who were returners last year,” Taylor said. “Now that we have so many new faces this year, we really just have been spending time through this offseason building that chemistry and



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Graduate Chandler Cuthrell dribbles the ball as he tries to get in the paint in a game Nov. 5 against Belmont Abbey College. Graduate Kacper Klaczek guards a player on the Belmont Abbey team. The Phoenix won 99-51.

making sure that we were on the same page.”

He also said that no matter who’s on the roster, it’s important for the team to function on both sides.

“You want your offense and your defense to be connected,” Taylor said. “Those are things we’ve discussed as a coaching staff for months now.”

Spell said Taylor does a fantastic job of allowing players to utilize their skill sets to the highest level. He said he feels very comfortable playing within the team’s system.

“He enables his players to be who they are and do what they’re good at,” Spell said. “I’m

more of a high-IQ type of player who tries to get others involved, and he lets me do that to a pretty high level.”

Spell admitted that it has been an adjustment learning how to play with a brand new group of teammates. He said that because guys like him were used to having a different kind of offense in their previous stops, everyone is getting accustomed to Elon’s offensive system, which involves playing at a fast pace.

“I’m really coming from a program where we played at a slower pace, and now coach Taylor really wants to run, so that’s been an

adjustment,” Spell said.

While the season has just started, Spell said he has enjoyed his time at Elon so far. He said the playing experience really feels like competing for a high-level program.

For Spell, it’s a little bit of a homecoming, as his parents were both athletes at Elon. He said he loves getting the chance to finish his collegiate career here while wearing his father’s number: 33.

“When I hit the transfer portal, it was a no-brainer,” Spell said. “It’s been great ever since I got here, and it’s really cool to finish where my dad played.”

Taylor said that it can be difficult to lose people in the transfer portal — that all the time spent building connections comes to an end once they depart for another school.

However, he said the portal does allow Elon to recruit players who are ready to thrive in a new situation. Taylor said the new additions make the team very diverse offensively as they can score in multiple ways. He said he looks forward to seeing the new additions continue to find their footing over the course of the season.

“You hate to see them leave, but it also presents opportunities for new people that come to our program,” Taylor said. “I think we have a lot of guys who can make three pointers and score in versatile ways. Hopefully, we’ll continue to see that play out for the season.”

Spell said that his only goal this year is to win. He believes the team is more than capable of making a run once the Coastal Athletic Association tournament rolls around.

“We have a really good team,” Spell said. “We’re starting to gel, and hopefully we can make an awesome postseason push.”

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL STAR GUARD OUT FOR SEASON FOLLOWING INJURY

Sophomore guard injured in game

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

Elon women’s basketball star guard Jayda Angel will miss the remainder of the season after getting injured in the second game of the season Nov. 6 against the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, according to a Nov. 11 press release from Elon Athletics. Angel, the reigning Coastal Athletic Association Rookie of the Year, fell while coming to a jump stop on a drive to the basket.

Head coach Charlotte Smith said she hopes for a quick recovery.

“This is a heartbreaking reality that we will pull through together as Jayda’s Phoenix family,” Smith said in the press release. “We pray for a speedy recovery for her.”

“
WE PRAY FOR A SPEEDY
RECOVERY FOR HER.

CHARLOTTE SMITH
HEAD COACH

Angel is coming off a prolific freshman campaign where she became the first player in program history to win both CAA Rookie of the Year and Sixth Player of the Year. Angel appeared in all 30 games, averaging 9.9 points per game, which was second on

the team. She also notched the second most field goals made, free throws made and steals on the team. Her defensive ability was also impactful as she led all CAA rookies in steals per game.

Last season, Angel came off the bench in every game, acting as the team’s spark plug when the starters needed a breather. However, she was in the starting lineup in both games played this year, indicating that an important role was carved out for her this year. With last year’s leading scorer, Raven Preston, gone via the transfer portal, Angel was poised to become one of the team’s primary scorers.

Before the season started, Angel told Elon News Network that she had grown mentally and physically.

“Last year I was adjusting to the pace and pressure, but now I feel way more in control,” Angel said. “I learned to slow the game down, and really just not get too overwhelmed.”

A big focal point in the offseason for Angel was making sure she could compete with bigger guards.

“Last year, I felt like I was a little undersized. I felt a little weak. When I was going against other guards, I just felt pushed around,” Angel said. “This summer I really got in the weight room, lifting more so I can have more tone to my arms and being stronger with the ball going up for rebounds or anything, and not just getting bumped off.”

Angel got off to a hot start in her first collegiate start in the team’s season opener against East Tennessee State on Nov. 3. Angel led the team with 16 points, which included a game-tying jumper with three seconds left in regulation to send the game to overtime.

Elon Athletics did not specify the injury that she sustained.



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Sophomore Jayda Angel follows closely with her opponent, the Tar Heels, on Nov. 6. Angel got injured in the first half.

Transfer center hopes to bounce back after season-ending surgery

Graduate student details recovery process from injury

Benjamin Berfield
Elon News Network

Graduate center Quinzia Fulmore had nothing but painful memories of last season. After a productive start to last season as a transfer addition for the Memphis University women’s basketball team, she suffered a foot injury that sidelined her for the rest of the year. Fulmore said she had never been injured before and was sick of not being on the court.

“It was painful,” Fulmore said. “Just a nerve-wracking feeling that I couldn’t finish the year out and had to sit and watch.”

Following the end of the season, Fulmore transferred to the Elon women’s basketball team, where she hopes to have a strong return from her injury. Fulmore said that it has taken a while to get all of her strength back, adding that she wasn’t able to walk at one point.

She admitted that the recovery process took a long time, and she had to relearn basic exercises without hurting herself. Fulmore said she didn’t want to potentially do something that could aggravate the problem.

“I had to learn how to get my strength back,” Fulmore said. “I had to relearn how to lift and run again. It was a slow process because even after I was fully healed, I’d still have pains, and I couldn’t push myself too much at times.”

Currently, Fulmore said she feels better compared to months ago when she couldn’t move around like before.

“I’m still trying to push myself a little more, but as far as the physical pain, I don’t really go through that anymore,” Fulmore said. “It’s been a challenge, but the coaches have been very supportive throughout the process.”

Head coach Charlotte Smith said she knows how it feels to suffer an injury. She said she had four knee surgeries as a player for the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and understands the frustration of trying to

come back healthy.

“It’s a gradual process,” Smith said. “You don’t come back from an injury and just hit the ground running. Our job is to get her to ideally perform 40 minutes to her highest potential.”

A full recovery by Fulmore would provide Elon with a player who can score and rebound in the paint. After limited action as a freshman at Towson University, Fulmore averaged 9 points and 6.3 rebounds during her next two seasons. She was named to the 2023 All-CAA Tournament team her sophomore year. Then, after transferring to Memphis, she started the season strong with averages of about 6 points and 7 rebounds in just 22 minutes per game before the injury.

Fulmore said she is excited to contribute as someone who can control the paint on offense and defense. She said she’s willing to help with anything, whether it’s anchoring the defense or getting rebounds.

“I’m hoping to be a post presence,” Fulmore said. “Whether it’s scoring in the post, rebounding, or defending, I just want to make a full impact.”

Smith said that for Fulmore to continue her recovery, patience is necessary. She said it’s important for Fulmore not to get down on herself, no matter how annoying the process of coming back may be. So far, she believes Fulmore has done a good job applying that mindset.

“It can be a frustrating process because you want to be back to your normal self, so patience is important in overcoming that mental hurdle,” Smith said. “You have to speak positive affirmations over your life so that you don’t become discouraged in the process.”

As the season begins, Fulmore said she already loves the team environment. She described everyone as being very tight-knit and is excited to share the court with them.

“This team honestly feels like family to me,” Fulmore said. “I’m just really looking forward to winning games and working hard with my girls.”



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Center Quinzia Fulmore drives into the paint in a game against the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill on Nov. 6.

Graduate student finds fulfillment beyond the court

Women’s basketball player returns to Elon not just to play, but to mentor

Lilly Molina
Elon News Network

Graduate student and redshirt senior Kamryn Doty stood at the end of the call line. At the beginning of a basketball game, the announcer tells the audience who is in the starting lineup. Those players run through a manmade tunnel before waving to the audience. Except, this time, Doty was waiting for them at the end, giving them a high five and wishing them good luck.

The Elon women’s basketball team faced the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill on Nov. 6, a formidable opponent to the Phoenix. The Tar Heels are 11th in the nation and Elon head coach Charlotte Smith’s alma mater. Despite Doty not playing in this game, she was present for every second of it.

“She’s compassionate, she has a giving heart,” Smith said.

Doty actually crossed the stage this past May completing her bachelor’s degree in finance, but she wasn’t done with Elon just yet.

“I’m just really thankful that I had the opportunity to come back,” Doty said. “I’m really just hoping to get a sense of fulfillment out of it.”

Despite being a seasoned veteran on the team, Doty did not initially see herself as an athlete. She said she was one of those kids that would come home from school and not leave her house for the rest of the day. Then after moving schools, she met her best friend Jaya Nelson, whose dad ran a club basketball team.

“I was just like ‘this girl’s nice, like, I just want to hang out with her more,’” Doty said. “So I ended up joining the basketball team.”

Then once she entered middle school, Doty quickly realized that this after-school program could turn into a college career.



LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Graduate student Kamryn Doty sits by guard Jayda Angel’s side after the sophomore’s injury Nov. 6 in an away game against University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

“Then from that point on, it was like, head down and grind,” she said.

She knew her family could not afford to pay for school, so she saw basketball as her way to attend college without worrying about the financial burden. Doty started getting on Division I schools’ radars when she was in eighth grade. One of the universities that eventually reached out to her was Elon.

Once Doty got to Elon’s campus, her college basketball career started with her first ACL injury entering her freshman year. She played that following season, but then tore her ACL again. She returned last year and is hungry for more, since this will be her second consecutive year fighting in

the pain.

“I feel like it’s been kind of inconsistent,” Doty said. “I’ve hit a couple walls.”

Despite her injuries, she said she enjoys the environment Elon has to offer; it’s one of the main reasons Doty came back.

“I’m getting older, I’m about to be 23,” Doty said. “Basketball is an experience, but I really just care about being around good people.”

Smith said she is excited Doty is coming back to spend another year as a player. Last year, Doty appeared in 30 out of 33 games with nine starts. She also averaged 4.1 points per game, with her career high being 14 points with four threes in a win against Monmouth in March.

“She’s a beautiful and amazing human being,” Smith said. “It’s always a pleasure to be around people who love Elon University.”

Smith said during the offseason she saw Doty gain more confidence in her movement by spending hours at the gym on her own time “perfecting her craft.”

“I’m excited to see what she brings to the table this year,” Smith said.

Besides being a guard for the team, Smith said she is a mentor to the other players. Whether it is helping players understand the team’s culture or being a pillar in the team building, Smith said Doty’s position as one of the captains is well deserved.

“She places others above herself,” Smith said. “She has a heart to serve.”

For Doty, she said she wants to be a resource for her team — especially the freshmen.

“I feel like one of the main things that I’ve struggled with is just making basketball my personality,” Doty said. “Coach Smith tells us all the time, ‘Basketball is what you do. It’s not who you are.’”

Doty said now being almost 23, she knows the battles student athletes can face while juggling academics and performance and how that’s not something most students at Elon can understand.

“Whenever I was injured, I kind of felt worthless,” Doty said. “In the beginning, I didn’t have anything to offer, but I found the joy in it.”

Almost halfway through the second quarter of the Nov. 6 game against UNC Chapel Hill, sophomore Jayda Angel was carried off the court due to a season-ending injury. With the status of her injury looming in her teammates’ minds, the show must go on. Once the referee blew the whistle indicating a designated timeout, instead of huddling up with the other players Doty waited back. She scooted next to Angel who laid on the folded out chairs in pain then Doty comforted her teammate — because she is no stranger to how Angel was feeling.

From professional basketball to the classroom: Athletes pursue education beyond the game

Elon University, Pistoia Basket 2000 partnership helps athletes balance competition, classroom

Monika Jurevicius
Elon News Network

Professional Italian basketball small forward Nicolò Dellosto believes the lessons of sport extend far beyond the scoreboard. A new internship opportunity in Florence will give Elon students the same chance to learn through basketball — connecting academics with the professional game.

A shared commitment to education has brought together Elon University’s School of Communications; Accademia Europea di Firenze, the host institution for Elon in Florence; and Italy’s Pistoia Basketball to create a new internship program for students in Florence beginning in fall 2026.

Dellosto said the opportunity is exciting, as education is at the forefront of his life since one day his playing career in basketball will end. During the summer, he graduated with a master’s in sport management in hopes of pursuing a career in coaching in the future.

“Before I’m a player, I’m a student,” Dellosto said. “I’m very happy with this collaboration because I’m trying to understand if it can also help me because I would like to keep doing what I did in the last year — to open my mind because one day I will stop playing basketball.”

Pistoia Basket 2000 is a professional Serie A Italian basketball league in Pistoia, Italy, which Dellosto plays for. Head of University Relations for the team and Accademia Europea di Fienze professor Marco Bracci said the opportunity is unique in Italy, as Pistoia Basket is the only league in the nation

that collaborates with multiple American universities.

Gonzaga University was the first to team up with the league, with both programs offering in-depth internships that expose students to the behind-the-scenes action of sports.

“Players are like students,” Bracci said. “They are learning by doing. They are learning by practicing. I think that is a mutual, reciprocal, learning process. The holistic vision of the player, which is consistent with the university’s approach to the holistic vision of the student.”

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BEFORE I’M A PLAYER, I’M A STUDENT.

NICOLÒ DELLOSTO
PROFESSIONAL ITALIAN BASKETBALL PLAYER

Elon men’s basketball forward Iker Garmendia knows a lot about European basketball — having played both on Spain’s national team and premiere league Joventut Badalona. One of his teammates, graduate student forward Kacper Klaczek, played for the Polish national team. Garmendia said it made his transition to Elon easier for him as he had someone like Kacper to connect to.

The redshirt freshman started playing basketball at 8-years-old with his older sister “as a package” at the same club in his hometown of Barcelona, but he eventually

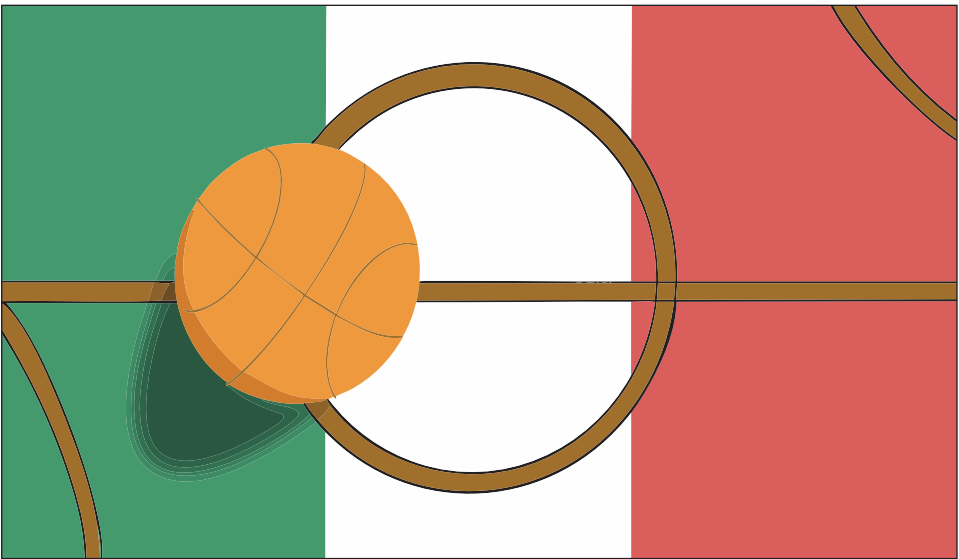


ILLUSTRATION BY REAGAN SIZEMORE

started switching teams as he got older.

The balance between academics and athletics is what brought Garmendia to the United States. He was always interested in the sciences — math, physics and energy — especially after his grandfather introduced him to renewable energy. Staying in Spain would have required playing basketball as a full-time job, whereas Garmendia had passions of his own that he could achieve in the U.S.

“My story is that I’m doing environmental engineering. It was impossible to do both [in Spain],” Garmendia said. “Here in the states, they combine both perfectly, a good academic level with the highest basketball level. Basketball is not for life and you have to have a ‘plan B’ always.”

Before coming to Elon, Garmendia played at University of Illinois, Chicago. But

Garmendia did not play in a collegiate-level game until he got to Elon.

His first game was against the Belmont-Abbey Crusaders on Nov. 6, but he said the environment was one of the biggest changes for him, being able to immerse himself in a college community where he could see many familiar faces and build relationships with fans.

This collaboration proves basketball’s greatest lesson — learning never ends, whether in class, practice or competition, Bracci notes.

“Education is important for a basketball education,” Bracci said. “A formal education in the classroom or like offering internships to students – education in a broader sense. It’s important not only for your future, but also for better understanding what you’re doing now as a player.”



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR
Junior Jocelyn Bogart performs original music during SUBFest on Nov. 7 in Young Commons. The music festival was hosted by the Student Union Board and featured five performances by student bands and musicians. Bogart is director of promotions for Limelight Records, a student-run record label that many of the SUBFest artists are part of.



BEN SHUMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Elon alum Madison Williams '25 prepares chicken, vegetables and pasta for people in need at the Allied Churches of Alamance County on Nov. 5 at the ACAC's food distribution center in Burlington.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR
Elon University President Connie Book answers questions from students Nov. 6 during the Student Government Association's Fireside Chat in Irazú Coffee. One topic of discussion was Roberts Academy. Learn more about the upcoming school on page 8.



ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Members of Elon's cheer team perform a routine alongside the Fire of the Carolinas marching band during the football game tailgate Nov. 8 outside Rhodes Stadium.



ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Redshirt freshman quarterback Landen Clark tries to pick up some yards against Rhode Island University at Rhodes Stadium on Nov. 8. The Phoenix lost 34-20, making it the team's fourth consecutive loss of the season. The football team's next and final home game will be at 2 p.m. Nov. 22 against North Carolina A&T.

Elon announces establishment of private school for children with dyslexia



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University President Connie Book announces the opening of Roberts Academy at Elon University in Sato Commons on Nov. 6.

Roberts Academy to open fall 2026

Elon News Network

Elon University President Connie Book announced that Elon will welcome the Roberts Academy at Elon University to campus in fall 2026.

The Roberts Academy at Elon University will be a private school for children with dyslexia. It will be the first private school in North Carolina located on a university campus and dedicated to serving students with dyslexia.

"The reality is there's no school like this in North Carolina," Book said in an interview with Elon News Network.

Book announced the plans for Roberts Academy to the Elon community Nov. 6.

According to Book, the academy will be temporarily located at Trollinger House, which currently houses the I-House Living-Learning Community. The temporary location will enroll children in third and fourth grade.

The opening of a new 30,000 square foot building on East Haggard Avenue is planned for fall 2028, expanding enrollment to include students in first through sixth grade.

Students will attend the school for two to three years before returning to the schools they attended before the academy.

According to a press release shared with Elon News Network, between 150 and 200 students will be enrolled each year once the academy is fully opened, with no more than a dozen children per classroom.

Book said at a fireside chat event Nov. 6 that Elon University is not paying for any of the academy's expenses.

"If you're talking about cash, we're not doing cash," Book said in an interview with Elon News Network. "We're definitely giving leadership time and the faculty time to help partner to get this set up. So, from a strategic effort, the university is participating in that."

Hal and Marjorie Roberts donated to Elon University to establish the Roberts Academy at Elon University. The Roberts are from Lakeland, Florida, and have established a network of Roberts Academy programs across the country.

The Roberts said they approached Elon with the plans for the academy in July of this year.

"The development office at Elon accepted our dream and shared it with others, and have very rapidly moved forward with enthusiasm to support what we want to do," Hal said in an interview with Elon News Network.

Vanderbilt University, Mercer University and Florida Southern College are a part of the Roberts Academy network, focusing on the education of children with dyslexia and



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

The Trollinger House will be used as the location for Roberts Academy at Elon University in fall 2026.

related conditions. The Roberts Academy at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, was the first to open in the network in 2010.

Marjorie told Elon News Network that her and her husband's grandniece went to Elon and they heard about the university's ranking in undergraduate teaching. She also said they intentionally chose private universities.

"You need a private school. Working with state universities, it's too difficult to go through too many loops," Marjorie said in an interview with Elon News Network. "And also you need a school that has a school of education, because we want to train teachers."

In addition to the Roberts Academy at Elon University, the gift from the Roberts will establish the Roberts Center for Dyslexia and Engaged Learning within Elon's Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education.

"The gift is really a full wholesale intervention on dyslexia into perpetuity for the state of North Carolina," Book said in an interview with Elon News Network.

The Roberts Academy will teach using the Orton-Gillingham method, which Hal called the gold standard for teaching kids with dyslexia. According to the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education, the Orton-Gillingham method is a highly structured approach that breaks reading and spelling down into smaller skills involving letters and sounds and then builds on these skills over time.

Hal said their grandchildren who have dyslexia learned at a school that used the Orton-Gillingham method.

"They benefited so much from that experience, and they were there two or three years, and it ignited their enthusiasm, their

abilities and our inspiration," Hal said in an interview with Elon News Network. "So we decided we just had to share the information."

Senior Vice President for Advancement and External Affairs at Elon Jim Piatt said the announcement is like no other.

"It's a day that reminds us of the unique privileges of our Elon University community, united and shared mission and vision to serve the betterment of our students, our campus, our community, our county, our state and beyond," Piatt said.

The announcement not only attracted the Elon community but also staff and board members from the Alamance-Burlington School System, such as Superintendent Aaron Fleming and Chair of the Board of Education Sandy Ellington-Graves.

North Carolina Superintendent of Public Instruction Mo Green also attended the event but declined Elon News Network's request for an interview.

In her announcement Nov. 6, Book said it was an extraordinary moment for Elon University and the larger community.

"Today is a day where transformational, philanthropic belief meets profound human need, and where our engaged learning model extends its reach in ways that will impact countless lives," Book said in her speech.

Book explained that Elon was selected to open Roberts Academy because of the university's high impact, engaged learning.

"Elon prepares students to be active participants, to connect knowledge with action, to see learning as a partnership," Book said. "That is exactly what children with dyslexia need. Not just intervention but engagement. Not just accommodation, but empowerment. Not just support, but belief."

In her remarks, Book said Roberts Academy will be more than just a building.

"It is a promise, a promise to children with dyslexia that their learning differences are not limitations, but different pathways to success, a promise to families that they're not alone, a promise to our teacher candidates today that we will prepare them to reach every learner," Book said.

Marjorie spoke on behalf of her and her husband, beginning her address with tears. She explained that parents of children who have dyslexia have cried because they don't know what to do to help them succeed in the classroom.

"My child is smart, but she can't read. On school days, she must be pulled out of the car screaming, crying. She has stomach aches," Marjorie said to the audience, telling them of stories she would hear from parents of children with dyslexia.

She said after testing and acceptance into the academy, the solution for those problems was there; the children were no longer in pain. The parents returned in tears — but this time, happy tears.

"One child said, 'I did not have to hide mom, everyone is like me,'" Marjorie said in her speech.

Dean of the Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education Ann Bullock said the academy will provide Elon University education majors with the ability to apply what they learn in the classroom to the real world.

"This is going to provide a living laboratory for them on really honing in on their reading skills and really reading knowledge to become even better educators than what we prepare now," Bullock said in an interview with Elon News Network.

Bullock also said that Roberts Academy will offer student-teaching placements for Elon education majors in the future. She said the School of Education curriculum requires coursework for elementary and middle grades education majors to focus on teaching children with learning differences.

"They are also learning specific special education pedagogy and methods to work as the primary teacher of children with learning differences," Bullock said.

Starting in early 2026, applications for enrollment will be accepted. According to the Roberts Academy at Elon, information about tuition, financial aid and scholarship opportunities will be shared closer to its opening in fall 2026.

Elon University will be holding an information session about dyslexia and Robert's Academy for interested parents and community members at 6 p.m. on Dec. 10 at Johnston Hall.

Charlotte Pfabe, Anjolina Fantaroni and Fiona McAllister contributed to this story.

Future of athletics uncertain with Queens University merger



On left, a statue of the Queens University of Charlotte mascot, Rex the Lion, is outside of the Queens Sports Complex at Marion Diehl Park. On right, the Phoenix Rising statue sits outside of Elon's athletic complex. Both Rising Phoenix and the Rex the Lion statues were created by North Carolina-based artist Jon Hair.

NOLAN WILLIAMS & MONIKA JUREVICIUS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon leadership plan to ask NCAA to continue 2 separate DI programs

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

Elon University’s planned merger with Queens University of Charlotte could have lasting impacts on the two schools’ Division I athletic programs.

According to Elon President Connie Book, the plan is to have two separate athletic programs.

“We are going to ask the NCAA to allow us to operate two DI programs,” Book said during a Student Government Association meeting Sept. 18. “The NCAA has, in the last three years, been much more flexible in this regard as universities merge. Our plan is to ask for permission from the NCAA to continue to be one program.”

Elon and Queens will continue to operate two independent athletic programs for the foreseeable future, according to Elon University Assistant Vice President for Strategic Communications and Media Relations Eric Townsend.

“We are grateful for the strong traditions and student-athlete experiences that reflect our shared values,” Townsend wrote in a statement to Elon News Network. “Athletics has long been a source of pride and excellence at both Elon and Queens, and any future decisions will be guided by what best supports our student-athletes and their success.”

According to Travis Smith, a consultant for intercollegiate athletics at Higher

Ed Consolidation Solutions, the NCAA will consider a number of factors. Smith said that the NCAA will look at whether the campuses have different registrar offices, financial aid offices and other distinguishing features beyond the distance between the two campuses.

“There has to be a pretty blatant separation to justify having more than one athletic department,” Smith said.

Smith said that athletics is typically the last thing universities decide on during a merger because everything else has to be separate. He said that Elon and Queens will have to hold meetings with NCAA governance staff members and also present to a DI committee that will consider signing off on the merger or not.

Smith said that he would be shocked if the NCAA doesn’t allow both schools to have their own athletic programs.

“I don’t see either campus president or board agreeing to give up their athletic identity,” Smith said. “They’re not big campuses, but they are very much going to be supportive of their athletic identity. So, I don’t see either of them giving up ground on that.”

Other recent mergers across the country haven’t seen the same results that Smith predicts for Elon and Queens.

Villanova University and Rosemont College announced a merger agreement earlier this year, which dictated that this year would be the last year of intercollegiate athletics for Rosemont. In the future, all athletics will be at the club level at Rosemont.

However, Rosemont is a Division III

athletic program and Villanova is DI. This differs from Elon and Queens. Rosemont athletic director Ross Trachtenberg said that distinction is important because DIII and DI sports are such different levels of athletics. He said that two DI programs merging, like Queens and Elon, could run into some problems recruiting.

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I DON’T SEE EITHER CAMPUS PRESIDENT OR BOARD AGREEING TO GIVE UP THEIR ATHLETIC IDENTITY.

TRAVIS SMITH
HIGHER ED CONSOLIDATION SOLUTIONS
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS CONSULTANT

“If they’re separated by mission of the department, level of competition, maybe even what sports are offered, they can certainly coexist in that nature,” Smith said. “It would be very difficult if there was a recruit that was looking at both schools for a sport that was at both schools. I could see that being a challenging situation to work through.”

According to Trachtenberg, mergers that combine athletic programs can provide financial support and cost savings, but it can also lead to a loss of identity.

“It can be kind of a loss of identity

of one school compared to the other,” Trachtenberg said. “There’s that feeling of loss, maybe for alumni and employees and even the student body, if they feel like, ‘Which school am I part of?’”

Smith said Queens and Elon are helped by the fact that they are both DI. He said it is usually more chaotic for committees to approve a merger if the two schools are from different divisions. According to Smith, a merger between two DI schools is unique. He said that this process isn’t new to the NCAA, only the fact that it’s two DI schools. Smith said the consolidation and similarities between the two campuses will factor into how seamless this transition is for athletics.

“It’s just that you have to document these things, and they’re going to have questions to answer about the structure and so it has nothing to do with athletics. It has everything to do with the bones of the merger proposal,” Smith said. “Are we going to be consolidating services? Are we going to have the same financial aid people, same system? Are we going to have the transcripts be the exact same, or are they going to say like ‘Elon campus’ or ‘Queens campus?’”

Smith said that he believes protecting their athletic identity might affect how each school approaches the merger. He said that because athletics is so important to both schools, a merger wouldn’t move forward without a separation between the two programs.

Elon’s and Queens’ boards of trustees are set to review and vote on a definitive agreement to merge Nov. 20.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

From left, Alamance County Chief Judge Chips Chapman, town council member-elect Steve Exum and Elon Mayor Emily Sharpe talk about the cooler temperature Nov. 4 as more voters arrive at the First Baptist Church of Elon.

Elon town council member-elects, mayor reflect on voter concerns, plan for upcoming term

Residents motivated by new development, tax increases

Kate Gray
Elon News Network

Incumbent Randy Orwig and newcomer Steve Exum were elected to the Elon town council, winning 31.97% and 39.88% of the vote, respectively, according to the North Carolina State Board of Elections. Michael Ratigan, the third candidate in the town council race, received 27.17% of the vote.

Emily Sharpe, current town of Elon mayor, won her unopposed reelection bid with 98.18% of the vote.

Exum and Sharpe spent Election Day sitting outside the First Baptist Church of Elon as residents cast their votes Nov. 4. Exum expressed that getting to interact with voters in person helped him connect with his neighbors and meet new people.

"It's not like a campaign where you're running for a district and a majority of people don't know you personally, they just know of you," Exum said. "A lot of these people knew me, and I got a lot of good responses. I felt like it was a fun, celebratory unfolding of the day as a new friend would come up, or someone I had worked for or worked with. That small town vibe is pretty satisfying."

According to Exum, a current concern he heard from voters was the PARC development, set to bring around 1,000 new housing units to the town of Elon.

"We had a few people stop and talk about the development north of town and how that's being managed," Exum said. "Some worry about the changing nature of the small town and what that would mean."

The town council also recently purchased a new building to relocate the Elon Town Hall and Elon Police Department, and has been developing and expanding downtown Elon for several years.

"Development is on a lot of people's minds," Sharpe said. "As the town is growing and we are seeing more development than what we had in a really long time, I think that our voters just want to make sure that we're doing it in a really smart and strategic way."

Elon resident Lamont Tyson shared his confidence in the mayor and town council as he cast his vote at the First Baptist Church of Elon on Nov. 4.

"The leadership of the mayor in Elon has been excellent," Tyson said. "She kind of

motivated my family to get more involved in different things in Elon. And I've liked what she's done to try to retain Elon students and make the city a little bit more comparable for all ages, not just the older folk."

Another voter, Bailey Paul, voiced her approval of the town of Elon's sustainability efforts. She also emphasized the importance of local elections, as they have a direct impact on everyday services like education and roads.

"We just want to keep the town sustainable, and we want to keep our schools, especially the elementary school my son is at, as good as it is," Paul said. "The town is doing a great job taking care of it, and we want it to stay that way."

Prior to Election Day, Exum focused much of his campaign on sustainability in Elon. He talked to Elon News Network about his personal choices to reduce his environmental impact such as owning electric vehicles, tracking water usage and installing solar panels on his home. Exum hopes to apply some of these strategies to the town of Elon.

"I'd like to see solar panels on any municipally owned building that it makes sense, you know, if you don't have tree blockage and a clear exposure to the path of the sun," Exum said. "Then once it's there, I'd like for the town to sponsor, almost like open houses, to discuss solar energy."

Orwig also prioritized sustainability through his term on town council. According to Orwig, rising costs are often a concern for voters, but sometimes cannot be avoided. The town of Elon purchases water from the city of Burlington, which means that the

Elon Town Council has little control over price fluctuations.

Orwig also oversees the Sustainability Committee, tasked with incorporating sustainability measures into town operations.

"When I came in, I was concerned about water," Orwig said. "There may be some developments — I found out that there's very little we can do right now, but there could be some windows of opportunity that I'm going to pursue in this next term. And then secondly, was the sustainability operations that we're doing at the town with the Sustainability Committee, and I really would like to continue that."

Taxes were also on voters' minds. Alamance County increased property taxes as part of the 2025-26 budget passed on June 16, but the town of Elon opted to keep property taxes constant in its 2025-26 budget passed on June 10.

"With the last real estate revaluation in the county, the values of homes went up, and when the value of someone's home goes up, the amount that they pay in real estate tax also goes up," Sharpe said. "While the town lowered our tax rate with that revaluation, the amount that homeowners were paying did go up. Especially for people that are on a fixed income, like retirees or people who are on social security or disability, that can be really hard for them because their income doesn't always go up enough to cover a higher amount of taxes."

Elon University and the Twin Lakes retirement community, both located in the town of Elon, are designated as nonprofit organizations and are exempt from state and local taxes, according to the North Carolina

Center for Nonprofits. The resulting lack of funds from these large nontaxable entities was a major topic of discussion at the town council candidate forum on Oct. 21, where Sharpe said Twin Lakes and Elon University provide ongoing annual contributions to the town.

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WE WANT TO MAINTAIN WHAT WE HAVE, AND WE WANT TO TAKE CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE. WHILE WE WILL HAVE MORE REVENUE COMING IN THE FUTURE WHEN NEW HOUSES ARE BUILT, OUR COSTS ARE STILL GOING TO GO UP.

EMILY SHARPE
TOWN OF ELON MAYOR

Orwig said he would consider other avenues of funding to make up for the difference in taxes.

"You can talk all you want, but the truth of the matter is that there's a very limited range that we can do," Orwig said. "But we'll keep trying to do the things we can and keep working on them. I'm hoping that we can build the capacity to get grants — although that's a very uphill battle — but we want to create a lot more sidewalks, and basically the ability for people to get around town and do things."

Sharpe assured that any changes in tax rates would be for the benefit of residents in the town. She also added that the new PARC developments will bring in more residents and sales revenue to help boost the budget.

"We want to maintain what we have, and we want to take care of what we have," Sharpe said. "While we will have more revenue coming in in the future when new houses are built, our costs are still going to go up, and so I do anticipate that taxes will go up in the next couple of years. I have not been shy to share that with people."

Exum, Orwig and Sharpe are scheduled to be sworn in on Dec. 9.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

The First Baptist Church of Elon polling location as seen Nov. 4 during the North Carolina municipal elections.

Community Closet provides Burlington residents with free professional attire



A librarian helps a patron of the Community Closet with a jacket during the event at May Memorial Library on Nov. 8.

MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Biannual event helps provide community members with resources

Megan Walsh
Elon News Network

Burlington's May Memorial Library was filled with racks of new or gently used clothes donated for community members to take for free during the Alamance Public Library's Community Closet event.

The event held Nov. 8 offered professional attire for community members in need of clothing for any professional need or transition. Clothing is offered in sizes extra small to 5XL, as well as shoes, ties and coats.

According to librarian and program coordinator Christina Rhone, this event serves as the closing for the library's annual Career Compass program, geared to help people transition into new jobs or prepare to enter the workforce.

Rhone said their goal is to provide access to what people need so it can level the playing field of the job market and keep people from feeling alienated.

"Our mission really stems from helping our community be prepared as they prepare to endeavor in any kind of transition, be it a career transition, or transitioning from being in college and going off into their first job, or maybe they're just transitioning from one country to another," Rhone said.

According to the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' annual County Map Book for 2025, Alamance County had a 3.3 percent unemployment rate as of April 2025, ranking 43 out of 100 counties in the state. Additionally, the County Map Book states that in 2024, the average weekly wage in Alamance County was \$1,025, ranking 40 in the state.

According to Rhone, the Community Closet event began at the Graham Public Library in May 2022 before being moved to May Memorial Library the following year. Rhone took over the event in March 2025.

As the new coordinator for the program, Rhone said she hoped to bring community

partners to Community Closet. She also planned to condense the timeframe of the Career Compass program from one workshop a month for several months to an intensive few weeks of workshops ending with Community Closet.

This month's event was the first where vendors were set up at the Community Closet to help community members.

Throughout the event, representatives from A Cleaner World dry cleaners taught attendees how to care for their new clothes. A local alterations shop took clothes for alterations. The Alamance County Community College employability coach provided advice on the job market and interviews. Also, a representative from the New Arrivals Institute provided people new to the country with resources.

In addition to community partners, Elon University senior theatrical design and technology student Brooke Gustafson was asked to bring her research project "Fitting Futures" to the event. Gustafson said Fitting Futures is a research project she is working on through Elon College Fellows to connect with local communities and provide clothing alterations.

At the event, Gustafson and other Elon students provided basic alterations such as hemming or sleeve shortening to the shoppers of the closet.

"It's been a perfect match, and I've really, really enjoyed getting to be in the community in addition to what we've done prior, which is bring community members to campus," Gustafson said. "It's been really sweet to have this opportunity to be in the community with people who live here, with the library in Burlington. It's been a very immersive and wonderful experience."

Gustafson said that she loved helping people have garments specially tailored for them.

"A lot of times when you don't have a lot of income to purchase personal clothing for yourself, you get secondhand stuff, which I'm very used to as well for my whole childhood, but it doesn't fit you exactly, it's slightly off," Gustafson said. "It's one thing to



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon senior theatrical design and technology major Brooke Gustafson's Fitting Futures research project offered basic alterations, such as pants hemming to patrons at the Community Closet on Nov. 8.

have professional attire, but it's a whole other thing for it to fit you and for to be specifically made for you, it brings a different level of confidence, and that's what we're hoping to achieve."

Rhone said Community Closet serves as the perfect way to fill the gaps in resources for the Burlington community.

"In Burlington, we have a lot of organizations that support, and while sometimes those organizations do a great job of preparing folks who are coming in, or just preparing their regular community members for things that they need, they sometimes have gaps," Rhone said. "And this is a way that we are able to fill that gap by having something like this that's free and open to the public so they can come and be able to get those resources."

In the future, Rhone said she wants to make use of the extra clothes that don't get taken during Community Closet by letting community partners know they still have the clothes between events.

"We're wanting to partner with community organizations and have them reach out to us if they have a client that's in need of particular clothing when we're not running our program, so we can give those things to them," Rhone said. "That is a pipe dream for down the road, but we're just going to expand it with our community partners and ensure that we're providing services throughout the year."

The Community Closet is held twice a year in November and May. Rhone said the library will begin accepting donations for the May Community Closet in April.



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