

## ABSS grapples with staff shortages, prioritizing budget

Alamance County has 30-35 vacant bus driver positions

**Avery Sloan**  
Elon News Network

Social studies teacher at Williams High School Robert Alvis said he has one student arrive 30 minutes late every day and another 10 minutes late because of a bus driver shortage in the county. Certain bus routes in the Alamance-Burlington School System for students who live further away from their schools have to make stops at multiple schools in the mornings, leading to students arriving late every day for class.

“There’s just literally nothing we can do to get them to school by the time the class starts,” Alvis said. “That is the amount of drivers we have, and there’s other students in other classes who have routinely the same problems.”

There are between 30 and 35 open positions for bus drivers in the county, Chad Aharon, ABSS driver’s education coordinator, said. But, this is not just a problem unique to Alamance County; school districts across the state and country are facing similar challenges. As of September 2024, there were 12.2% fewer school bus drivers on the road than September 2019, according to data from the Economic Policy Institute. Aharon said it is difficult for the district to compete with other higher paying roles when ABSS bus drivers are making between \$17 and \$18 an hour to drive a bus route and handle discipline issues on buses.

“It’s just like anything else in a



Teachers greet students getting off their bus on the first day of class at Haw River Elementary School on Aug. 29, 2022. The Alamance-Burlington School System is currently facing a shortage of bus drivers, causing some buses to do multiple routes. ENN FILE PHOTO

capitalistic society, if you don’t pay for the work, then you’re not going to get a lot of people,” Aharon said.

The bus driver shortage in ABSS has grown since the COVID-19 pandemic, with more bus drivers choosing to retire, Aharon said. This can be a larger problem in some weeks for the county when multiple drivers call out sick,

Aharon said.

Now, a year after Alamance County faced a mold crisis affecting 32 out of 36 schools and costing the county millions of dollars — the board of education is figuring out how to balance the 2025-26 budget. At the Feb. 24 board meeting, ABSS chief finance officer Tony Messer presented the proposed

budget, which included increased supplemental pay and employee benefits for certified staff members.

Messer also presented a payment model for increasing pay for classified employees, after community support and previous conversations at board meetings. Certified employees include staff members such as teachers and

administrators, whereas classified employees include bus drivers and education support specialists — or employees that do not require specific certifications in order to get hired. The proposal was a 46% increase from the current budget.

**See ABSS | pg. 5**

## Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference gives space to share issues facing Native communities

7 Directions of Service hosted the 2-day event to bond Native communities

**Abigail Hobbs**  
Elon News Network

The Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference, held March 7 and 8, saw around 200 participants looking to learn about the environmental issues facing Native communities today.

The conference was hosted by 7 Directions of Service, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for Native land and rights and headquartered in Mebane. The two-day event took place at Rockingham Community College in Wentworth and the Haw River State Park in Browns Summit — both in the land of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, which covers a majority of

Alamance and Orange counties, including the land that Elon University sits on.

Co-founders of 7 Directions Crystal Cavalier-Keck and Jason Crazy Bear Campos-Keck — both of who have spoken at Elon University — have traveled the world for similar conferences and decided there was a need for something similar in North Carolina.

The conference hosted 15 tribes from across the world within the 200 people who attended both in person and online, according to Campos-Keck. Panels included traditional ecological knowledge, land and resource sovereignty, food sovereignty and sustainable agriculture, climate change and indigenous resilience, cultural landscapes and sacred sites protection, and youth leadership in environmental justice.

Campos-Keck said the intention of the conference was to bring communities together to find common solutions to issues they

are all facing.

“It’s about sharing with other communities because we understand that anything we preserve, anything we solve, we’re doing it for the benefit of all, and we’re doing it,” Campos-Keck said. “It has to be done together, and so we can’t be divided in this.”

Ramona Moore Big Eagle is a Tuscarora Cherokee storyteller and environmental educator. She was part of the land sovereignty and Indigenous foodways panel and discussed the importance of being connected with the Earth and growing food.

Moore was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017 and was given the option of surgery or chemotherapy. Going home from her appointment, she watched “What the Health?” — a documentary about the connection between diet and disease. She decided to see how changing her diet would affect her cancer.

She stopped eating all meat, dairy, sugar and processed foods

and grew her own food for a year before going back to the doctor. In her 2018 mammogram, her cancer was gone.

She grows her own food using tower gardening, a process of vertical hydroponics, which ensures that there are no pesticides or other

harmful chemicals in her food. She encouraged attendees to share their methods of life with younger generations to make sure they are continued.

**See NATIVE | pg. 5**



Ramona Moore Big Eagle shares her journey in growing her own food during the land sovereignty and Indigenous foodways panel March 7 at the Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference at Rockingham Community College. ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Elon’s highest award granted to trustee member

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Nursing program earns accreditation

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Milk club fosters community on campus

**PAGE 7 LIFESTYLE**



THE PENDULUM

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EVERY SLOAN

Executive Director of Elon News Network  
Managing Editor of The Pendulum

CHARLOTTE PFABE

Managing Editor of [elonnewsnetwork.com](http://elonnewsnetwork.com)

ANJOLINA FANTARONI

Broadcast News Director

ERIN MARTIN

Design Chief

ABIGAIL HOBBS

Copy Chief

ETHAN WU

Photo Editor

MILES HAYFORD

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NIA BEDARD

Assistant Managing Editor for  
[elonnewsnetwork.com](http://elonnewsnetwork.com)

LILLY MOLINA

Audience Engagement Manager

FIONA MCALLISTER

Executive Producer of ENN Tonight

ABBY GRAVELY

Producer of ENN On-Air

Jaya Iyer, Sarah T. Moore, Sophia Sta. Rosa, Gaby Maldonado, Virginia Vance and Karsyn Vann contributed to the copy editing of this edition. Sarah T. Moore and Megan Walsh contributed to the design of this edition.

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CORRECTIONS

In the last edition of the Pendulum, the story on Elon pitcher Justin Mitrovich said he had losses against Texas A&M and Binghamton, but those games were recorded as no decisions for Mitrovich. Elon News Network regrets this error.

# Gerald Whittington awarded Elon Medallion, dedication of residence hall in his honor



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Senior Vice President Emeritus Gerald Whittington talked to attendees after his speech March 6 in Global Commons. Whittington received the Elon Medallion for his contributions to Elon University.

Whittington honored for lasting  
impact on Elon University after 32  
years of service

Abigail Hines

Elon News Network

After receiving a call from Elon President Connie Book informing him the university would be dedicating a building in the Global Neighborhood to him, Senior Vice President Emeritus Gerald Whittington was at a loss for words. Whittington said he was further shocked to hear he would also receive the Elon Medallion, a testament to his dedication of advancing Elon as an institution throughout his 32-year career.

At the dedication ceremony March 6, Book credited Whittington for developing Elon's campus, noting several buildings he helped fund and create, such as the Moseley Center, Koury Business Center, Lakeside

Dining Hall and Global Neighborhood.

The Elon Medallion is Elon's highest award and is granted to faculty, staff, trustees or alums who have demonstrated meritorious service to the university, Jim Piatt, senior vice president for university advancement and external affairs, said.

While at Elon, Whittington worked under President Emeritus J. Fred Young and Leo Lambert and President Book. He also served as senior vice president for business, finance and technology, and he later served as corporate treasurer of the board of trustees and corporation. President Emeritus Leo Lambert said Whittington exemplified what a great leader is and helped advance the university by saying "yes" to new ideas.

"Leadership is a team sport," Lambert said. "Gerald personified that idea. Too many CFOs in this country hide under their green eye shades and say, 'No' a lot. Gerald, in contrast, helped his colleagues get things done."

To conclude his speech at the medallion

ceremony, Whittington gave a message to Elon.

"In my view, Elon is the antidote to this world of crisis. So Elon, take courage, be that leader, and make true the slogan of 'Long Live Elon,'" Whittington said.



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GERALD WHITTINGTON

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT EMERITUS

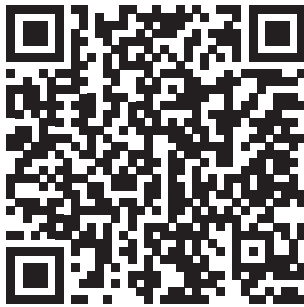
## Elon's Student Government Association announces election results



LIVA RIKE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Executive candidates for executive candidates forum March 5 at Oak House. (From left: Nic Fillippa, Anya Bratic, Sammy Azua and Morgan Minoff).

SGA ELECTION  
RESULTS







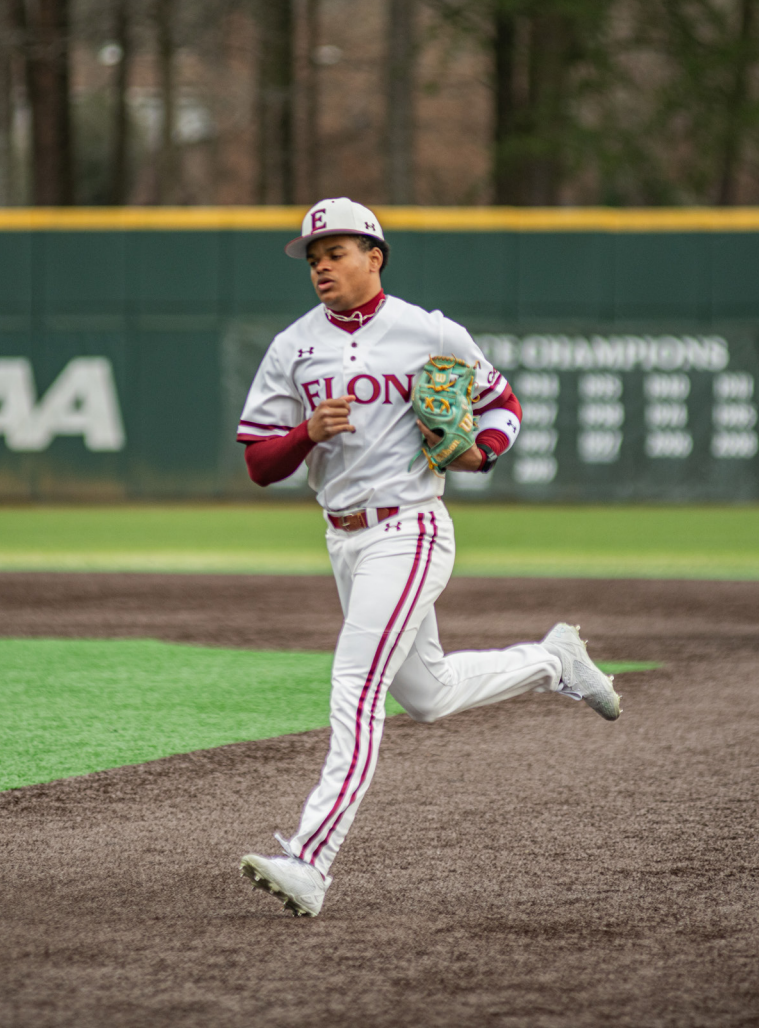
Junior Kaia Brown walks on stage during Runway Around the World hosted by the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education and Late Night Elon on March 7 in Yeager Recital Hall.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR



Junior Sarah Carss, bingo emcee, points to the audience with Vice President for Student Life Jon Dooley during Student Union Board bingo March 6 in McKinnon Hall.

VIRGINIA VANCE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Jackson Alford was praised by Elon Baseball coach Mike Kennedy for his proactive approach during the Phoenix's game against Charleston Southern on March 7 at Latham Park. Elon lost the game 7-2 and lost the next two games of the series, giving Charleston Southern the series sweep.

PAUL BARRETTO | PHOTO EDITOR



Senior Clara Watkins speaks at Elon University's Senior Toast on Elon Day, March 6, in the Great Hall in Global Commons.

VIRGINIA VANCE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# Elon Nursing Program receives high marks from accreditation body for DEI efforts



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Juniors Jenna Petrarca (left) and Gia Agrawal prepare to start an IV on a simulation arm in the nursing skills lab at Francis Center.

Program applauded for equity in healthcare course, study abroad trip to Cuba

**Charlotte Pfabe**  
Elon News Network

Elon junior Eva Korn came to Elon University to study nursing, even though she knew the program wasn't accredited.

"I knew that by the time I was in the spot where I was graduating, and I needed to be worried about the accreditation, that it would be there and that I would be able to do everything I wanted to do with this degree," Korn said.

Over the past two to three years, Elon's nursing department has been preparing a self-study to send to the National League for Nursing Commission for Nursing Education Accreditation. After the program's launch in fall 2021, Elon's nursing program received accreditation from the NLN CNEA in February 2025.

There are five standards the NLN CNEA sets for nursing programs seeking accreditation — a culture of excellence, a culture of integrity and accountability, a culture of excellence and caring from faculty and students and a culture of learning and diversity.

Nursing department chair and program director, Dr. Cathy Quay, started at Elon in June 2024. Quay said since the accreditation process takes two to three years, she came in at the tail end of the process as the program was submitting its self-study.

Each faculty member in the nursing department was responsible for championing one of the five NLN CNEA standards, according to Quay.

"The accreditation process, in and of itself, is really reflective of the entire collaboration within the department," Quay said. "Faculty, staff and students have

worked really hard the past few years to get us to this point."

After the department submitted its self-study, three representatives from the NLN CNEA visited Elon for two and a half days in September 2024 to meet with students and faculty and visit classes. Once the visit was complete, the accrediting body evaluated all the information from its visit and decided if the program passed and received accreditation.

Quay said that while the accreditation focuses on meeting the five standards, the NLN CNEA also looks at how the program will improve over time.

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THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS, IN AND OF ITSELF, IS REALLY REFLECTIVE OF THE ENTIRE COLLABORATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT. FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS HAVE WORKED REALLY HARD THE PAST FEW YEARS TO GET US TO THIS POINT.

**CATHY QUAY**  
NURSING DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

"It also shows that we have the dedication to putting processes in place where we are going to continually look to improve and strengthen the program that we have in regards to what it means for students," Quay said.

Nursing students who receive degrees from accredited programs have more

options when they enter the workforce. Most graduate nursing programs in the country require students to come from an accredited program, including the University of North Carolina's School of Nursing.

Korn said she had faith that the program would receive accreditation by the time she was graduating. But, now that she knows the program is accredited, she has more control over her career after graduation.

"I get to make the decision now, and I have a lot more freedom," Korn said.

According to Quay, the NLN CNEA was impressed with the ways the program includes diversity, equity and inclusion in its courses. She said the program requires nursing students to take classes that focus on equity and inclusivity in healthcare. One course specifically, called NRS 2000: Healthcare Relationships I: Disparity, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, counts as an advanced equity requirement and is taken by nursing students during their first year at Elon.

Korn took the course during the second semester of her freshman year. She said it set her up to think about equity and inclusion in the healthcare field both in and out of the classroom.

"It was kind of our first taste of nursing," Korn said. "I think it made me be able to kind of have that all in the back of my mind while I learned more stuff, and then also while I was going into hospitals and actually seeing it for myself."

The accreditation body also applauded the program for its Winter Term study abroad course, according to Quay. The course, which travels to Cuba, focuses on showing students the differences between healthcare in the U.S. and healthcare in Cuba but also the limitations of each country's systems.

The course ran for the first time this past January, with Korn being one of the inaugural students on the trip.

"I wouldn't trade that experience for

anything," Korn said. "I learned so much. It was so interesting to see how different two places can be and two healthcare systems can be."

Now that the program has received accreditation, Quay said the nursing program's focus is now on how the curriculum will change to reflect the rapidly evolving healthcare system. As a member of Area Health Education Centers, a consortium of nursing education programs and clinical partners, Quay said she and other nursing program leaders meet on a quarterly basis to discuss what some of the needs are in the local areas and for nursing education and practice.

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IT WAS KIND OF OUR FIRST TASTE OF NURSING. I THINK IT MADE ME BE ABLE TO KIND OF HAVE THAT ALL IN THE BACK OF MY MIND WHILE I LEARNED MORE STUFF, AND THEN ALSO WHILE I WAS GOING INTO HOSPITALS AND ACTUALLY SEEING IT FOR MYSELF.

**EVA KORN**  
ELON JUNIOR

The first class for the nursing program started in 2021, and will graduate this May with accredited nursing program degrees.

"We're really starting to talk about longer term," Quay said. "What's our vision in terms of ensuring that our curriculum is current and staying up to date with what we're seeing in healthcare."



# Native communities share environmental issues



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Betty Osceola, member of the Panther Clan of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians in Florida, discusses traditional ecological knowledge March 7 at the Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference at Rockingham Community College.

## NATIVE | from cover

“I’m just saying y’all, there are things we learn from our grandparents that we need to pass on to our children and our grandchildren, and if we don’t, they will not know,” Moore said. “They aren’t learning about how to survive by taking their health, healing, wholeness, their survival, their foodways in their own hands. It’s up

to us to teach them, and you have to do it with love.”  
Throughout, panel speakers shared their experiences and tips on how to build a stronger community and overcome the issues they are faced with. With panel speakers ranging from states across the East Coast, there were a variety of perspectives and environmental issues shared, including mercury in fish in the Florida Everglades and flooding in western

North Carolina.  
Keynote speaker Brandy Brown led the Office of Climate and Energy in Michigan created under Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. Brown shared her difficult experiences being a Black, Indigenous woman in politics, standing up for Native land in Michigan.

While in Whitmer’s office, people didn’t know she was Indigenous. She was working on Line 5 — a pipeline in Michigan that has brought controversy over leaks and infringing on Native treaties. After a meeting one day, another state employee saw Brown’s Facebook profile, where she doesn’t hide her Native identity. The other employee asked, “Brandy, are you, like, Indian?” Brown said, “I am.”  
“After she saw who I was, guess what miraculously disappeared from my schedule? All Line 5 meetings. Guess what information I was locked out of? All Line 5 meetings,” Brown said in her speech. “I’m sharing that experience with you so you can understand that in these rooms, even with the people who seem the crunchiest, people that say they care about climate, environment, when it comes to making decisions about our people, we have to be in that room doing it ourselves.”  
Campos-Keck said the organization

— and others in the Southeast — will continue to have events like this to build and strengthen relationships to fight back against environmental issues.

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WE HAVE TO BUILD A NETWORK OF COMMUNITIES BECAUSE ONE COMMUNITY BY ITSELF HAS A VOICE, BUT A VERY SMALL VOICE. BUT ALL OF OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER HAVE A HUGE VOICE.

**JASON CAMPOS-KECK**  
7 DIRECTIONS CO-FOUNDER

“We have to build a network of communities because one community by itself has a voice, but a very small voice. But all of our communities together have a huge voice,” Campos-Keck said.



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Attendees listen to the panel March 7 at the Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference.

# ABSS Board of Education balances costs for 2025–26 budget

## ABSS | from cover

This also comes amid additional changes within the ABSS board of education after an announcement at the Feb. 24 meeting from board member Chuck Marsh, saying he is stepping down from his position. The board has yet to announce how it will select a new board member.  
Alvis said he feels that all staff members should be prioritized within ABSS, as classified members help the schools function in many ways, including the school’s receptionist, who takes all parent calls and greets students each morning, child nutrition workers, teacher’s assistants and data managers.  
Due to the budget constraints of last year, there was also a reduction in force across the county where several positions were eliminated. Alvis said one thing he liked about the proposed budget is that it reinstated some of those positions. Due

to the reduction in force at Williams High School, Alvis said last year the school started with four assistant principals but ended the year with two.  
“You can imagine how much of a struggle that was to try and run with half of the normal positions eliminated,” Alvis said.  
There used to be a full-time user coordinator for the school library, but now that position is shared with Williams Middle School. The position of library coordinator was also already filling multiple roles as it handled maintaining the library itself, keeping track of and distributing Chromebooks to students and staff, and maintaining technology across the library.  
“He’s here for half today at middle school for half the day, so for half the day when our students need to use the library or they have a computer issue that they need to go and get fixed. It’s, ‘Sorry, he’s in the middle school,’” Alvis said. “You already had individuals who were stretched pretty thin, but then you stretch them across two

different schools as well.”  
ABSS Board of Education member Seneca Rogers said many of the employee supplements, for both certified and classified employees, were things that the

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WE NEED TO BE DISCUSSING IT AND TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT CAN BE DONE FROM A DISTRICT POINT OF VIEW, TO TRY TO HELP FILL AS MANY OF THOSE VACANCIES AS WE CAN AS POSSIBLE.

**SENECA ROGERS**  
ABSS BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER

board had discussed previously, but due to the mold crisis were pushed back. Rogers said that budget constraints of the time made for hard decisions on what positions were cut.  
“I can’t say any of those positions were not needed. I feel like all of, all of, the positions, all of the things that was done then, was all needed things,” Rogers said. “And even now, if you visit some of our schools and talking to principals, teachers, even some of the parents, they’ll tell you how they wish that that did not have to go on.”  
Rogers said while the board does have multiple priorities within its budget, supporting classified staff members, including bus drivers, has been a topic of discussion for the board for a long time and is something he feels is important.  
“We need to be discussing it and trying to figure out what can be done from a district point of view, to try to help fill as many of those vacancies as we can as possible,” Rogers said.



# Limitless trailblazes hip-hop out of scarcity

A campus R&B collective builds community at a predominantly white institution

Alex Nettles  
Elon News Network

Nailah Ware, president of Limitless, is convinced loving a rapper starts with knowing their story.

“When you are bringing that story you are bringing that truth with you. You know their story. That authenticity is what makes you root for a person,” Ware said.

To Ware, understanding a rapper’s experiences is the starting point for understanding the rapper.

Limitless is Elon University’s student hip-hop and R&B organization. It took two years for Limitless to grow from a handful of beatmakers, rappers and stage technicians to a community of 40 members. After its genesis in a predominantly white institution, Limitless seeks to expand to other North Carolina colleges.

Ware has a smile and a silent fervor, attuned to her environment, she is keen to speak about Limitless. She performs as N Major, inspired by Kendrick Lamar, J. Cole and Nicki Minaj. Ware insists that she can summarize the organization, without any doubt, like snapping her fingers.

“We are a creative collective of individuals,” Ware said. “We also happen to put on showcases too. That’s part of what we do now.”

When Ware first came to Elon she was in search of a space to continue her rapping. The student record company, Limelight Records, rarely had rap acts performing. The junior said she felt “like an alien” at the showcases she attended.

“I felt like, ‘Where’s the culture?’” Ware said.

The most recent data shows 5.3% of Elon undergraduate students are Black, and 78.4% of its students are white, according to the 2023 Elon Diversity Dashboard. Elon’s 78% white undergraduate college students is much higher than the nationwide 52.3% total white undergraduate students, according to 2022 data by The National Center for Education Data Statistics.

“

THAT’S THE COOL THING ABOUT RAP. YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU WANT AND TELL ABOUT YOURSELF. THE MORE REAL YOU ARE, THE MORE PEOPLE WILL FEEL YOU, AND LIKE YOU AND UNDERSTAND YOU.

CHRIS MURPHY  
ELON SENIOR

Ware met Chris Murphy, another Elon rapper, and asked him about the hip-hop scene on campus in fall 2022. There was no center of rap on campus. She remembers walking around Lake Mary Nell with him, mulling over her future as an artist.

“I remember asking him where hip-hop is on this campus and he said, ‘It’s not here Nailah,’” Ware said.

While she was disappointed in Limelight’s lack of artistic diversity, she couldn’t leave to find the hip-hop scene.

Ware attends Elon University on a full-ride scholarship. It didn’t take her long to dream up Limitless. She snaps her fingers while rooting through her memory.

“It took me like that to make up my



Limitless President Nailah “N Major” Ware watches her reflection March 8 and rehearses her stage presence for a show.

mind,” Ware said.

Ware resolved to work on starting an organization during her freshman year, going “all in.”

The organization has four divisions — the creative, marketing, finance and operations departments. Limitless works with stage managers for showcases through the operations department and expands the audience through marketing. The organization gets funding from Elon’s Student Government Association and is often sponsored by Late Night Elon.

Nailah said she had some strong doubts about the school providing funding to Limitless until she had her meeting, where she was surprised by how much SGA backed her.

Senior Chris Murphy, who performs as Khari LeVard, co-founded Limitless with Nailah Ware. He sets himself apart with broad, thematic ideas in his percussive flows. He is from Rose Hill, a North Carolina town of 1,300. He considers himself to be more reserved and likes to play with that idea to mix up the expectations of an emcee.

Murphy said he had never attended a predominantly white school before Elon. He said his friends from other schools and mentors suggest him to write about it.

“You understand the word minority when you are called a minority for real because you are a minority on this campus,” Murphy said.

Jamarion Davis, the lead producer and engineer for Limitless, has recalled some difficulties for the organization as well. In one case, someone who wasn’t Black used slurs while freestyling. The organization kicked him out.

Although Murphy said he wasn’t too big on thinking about race, he did notice things. Last week, he was competing to hand out the most flyers for the fashion show he was DJing. When it was getting dark, he went to hand a flyer to someone.

Murphy said she looked scared and started walking faster. She outstretched her arms out to keep him away.

“So imagine that but for multiple people in Limitless,” Murphy said.

“That’s the cool thing about rap. You can say what you want and tell about yourself. The more real you are, the more people will feel you, and like you and understand you,” Murphy said.

Murphy’s upcoming album, Trash Pack

3, focuses on telling the story of infidelity in a relationship, which Murphy admits to doing in the past. Murphy said he is using this album to help people understand and handle it.

“I want you to feel how I feel,” Murphy said.

Murphy lost his father last summer. He is starting to work through it. The memories that started a love of rap for Murphy were driving to school in fifth grade in the backseat of his mom’s Hyundai Sonata. He and his brother used to listen to the same Snoop Dogg track “Nuthin’ But A ‘G’ Thang” every day driving to school in Rose Hill.

Jamarion Davis is a freshman who found Limitless as his community. He is inspired by the producer and rapper GloRilla and has a fascination recently with making trap beats with a darker sound. He taught himself the basics of Pro Tools after basketball practice in high school. He said that he is constantly sending cold emails and learning new skills to corner his market as a producer.

“When I first got here, I didn’t like it at all. I’m living in an all-white dorm. It was just uncomfortable, I didn’t have my own space,” Davis said.

Davis said he was worried that he wasn’t going to get the best experience for college. Limitless gave Davis a space to be creative and express

## IF YOU GO

The Golden Age Limitless Hip Hop and R&B showcase  
8 p.m. to 10 p.m. April 4  
Taphouse

himself. He specifically remembers one of the moments at the concert where almost 200 attended.

“Like I got on stage and was lit. I’m shy, I’m very shy. I have never acted like that in any way,” Davis said. “It was because I had my friends around me, I didn’t feel any embarrassment, I just felt myself.”

Now comes the next showcase. It’s a Saturday night. Music resonates in an empty room. Just a wall of mirrors, an open hardwood floor, the artists and their personalities. They rehearse for a ’90s-themed showcase at the Taphouse on April 4.

Ware and Murphy brought in the guest rapper, YBC Retro. One of his songs started playing. It had a new jack swing feel. Ware and Murphy start dancing. YBC Retro shows some hesitation at first, but halfway through the song Ware and Murphy dragged him in the center of the floor.

He looked at his reflection, balled his fist as if to pretend he was holding a microphone. He began to sing.



Guest rapper YBC Retro rehearses his unreleased track “Just Sayin” with Limitless artists behind him.



# Elon Milk Club milks meanings of humor, philosophy



Freshman Zaid Arida pets Pearl and Persimmon as they graze on cow feed March 9 during the milk club's field trip to Ran-Lew Dairy.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

The club intends to bring together community over a common love of milk

**Megan Walsh**  
Elon News Network

Milk is known to help strengthen bones and muscles, but for Elon sophomore Jacob Bradshaw, it has also helped him build a strong humor-filled bond with his classmates.

It all started at Elon's 2024 fall organization fair where Bradshaw jokingly walked around with a piece of notebook paper asking people if they wanted to join a then-nonexistent milk club. He walked away with 70 signatures.

From those 70 signatures, milk club has grown from its joke state to a legitimate organization. The Milk Soirée held Feb. 7, a recent gala-type event hosted by the club, featured food, games and trivia had nearly 300 attendees, Bradshaw said.

Founded on philosophy and humor, milk club came about when Bradshaw noticed he and his friends were all drinking milk during lunch one day in his first week of freshman year.

"I was thinking, 'Why are we all drinking milk together?'" Bradshaw said. "I don't think this happens very often, but it's funny."

In the more philosophical sense, Bradshaw said he saw the idea of milk club as a way to bring people together when the world is divided.

"It's a way to bridge a gap between a divided people that can't seem to agree on anything, but at least if we start talking about our differences, and we practice talking about our differences through the lens of milk," Bradshaw said. "We can all talk seriously about it, and we can also laugh about it."

After having people sign up on his paper at the fall organization fair, Bradshaw said he realized he had to make his joke into reality.

Professor of education Marna Winter was one of Bradshaw's professors that semester, and said that when she asked her class of freshmen what they thought of the

organization fair, she said she remembers Bradshaw bringing up that Elon did not have a milk club. Bradshaw later asked her to be the faculty adviser for the club.

"If you had told me that I was going to get interviewed about this because of the power of one of the leaders, I would have not quite foreseen that," Winter said. "I think it's a great, awesome thing, and I think it's important for students to have a space and have that community and that sense of belonging."

“ I WAS THINKING, ‘WHY ARE WE ALL DRINKING MILK TOGETHER?’ I DON’T THINK THIS HAPPENS VERY OFTEN, BUT IT’S FUNNY.

**JACOB BRADSHAW**  
MILK CLUB PRESIDENT

After securing his faculty adviser, Bradshaw went through the steps needed to get a new club approved, including writing a proposal and the club's constitution and bylaws, as well as getting approval from Vice President for Student Life Jon Dooley. The milk club debuted at the spring organization fair of 2024 with Bradshaw as the first president, becoming one of around 318 clubs and organizations found on Elon's Phoenix Connect organization platform.

From the beginning, Bradshaw had his freshman year roommate and friend, Jonathan Loeb, who currently serves as the club's treasurer, alongside him. Loeb said he has been a backbone supporter of the club since Bradshaw explained it to him.

"Nobody wants to be boring and just do normal things. Why not make a milk club?" Loeb said. "It's fun and it's creative, and people will enjoy it because it's like, 'I'm going to the milk club.' That sounds like fun, right?"

Last spring, in the club's first semester, it held a trivia night, a milk-themed scavenger hunt and a trip to Ran-Lew Dairy, the farm that supplies the milk served in Elon's dining halls. Bradshaw said trips to the dairy farm will happen each semester with the club's close connection to farm owner Randy Lewis.

"He really loves the club," Bradshaw said. "He appreciates having us, and he shows us cool stuff on the farm."

This school year, the club has hosted many more events including repeating favorites such as the trips to farm and trivia, while incorporating new events such as movie nights and a milk-themed mindfulness event hosted by Winter during finals in December. The most recent events hosted by the club were the Milk Soirée on Feb. 7 and a trip to Ran-Lew Dairy on March 9.

The Milk Soirée, hosted in collaboration with Late Night Elon, was a chance for people to dress up in formal clothing, drink milk and participate in themed games, activities and trivia. The event was a major moment for Bradshaw.

"Just the fact that I could look around

and my idea of having a community that just enjoyed milk had sort of come into fruition at that point in time," Bradshaw said. "There were up to maybe 150 people at one specific time or another in the same room, just drinking milk and just hanging out and doing milk-related activities."

As for the rest of this semester, Bradshaw said the milk club plans to host another movie night and another scavenger hunt. He also plans to have t-shirts made for the club.

In the long term, Bradshaw said he hopes milk club continues to be an "udder success" beyond his years at Elon, milking every opportunity to potentially grow large enough for the club to take residence in one of the seven student organizations on the first floor of the Moseley Center.

While this is a big goal for him, he said his lifelong goal is to see two people find love through the club.

"If one couple meets at the milk club, and then they get married and they can still remember how they met when they got married, I would love to be invited to your wedding for stuff, and I will die a happy man if I created something that got you two married," Bradshaw said.



Freshman Gabriel Almario bottle feeds a baby cow March 9 during the milk club's field trip to Ran-Lew Dairy.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR





Sophomore TJ Simpkins drive in the paint against Drexel in the second round of the CAA Tournament on March 8.

MONIKA JUREVICIUS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

# THIS PAST WEEK IN SPORTS

## Men’s Basketball

March 8 - Elon 74 Drexel 91

Despite one of its best regular seasons in years, Elon men’s basketball lost to Drexel in the second round of the CAA Championships. Elon struggled to shoot efficiently in the first half, going 29% from the field and were outrebounded 22 to 12. Drexel dominated from beyond the arc, shooting 50% from the 3-point line in the first half. Head coach Billy Taylor said Drexel’s ability to set up corner 3-pointers allowed this to happen. “It was drive and kick 3s, and it really just continued to hurt us, whether it was man or zone,” Taylor said in the postgame press conference. “They really made an emphasis of driving the ball to the paint, and that allowed them to get some 3s.”

Drexel went into the half up 23 points and it proved to be too much to overcome. Junior TK Simpkins and Sam Sherry exploded in the second half, each finishing with 23 points as they shaved the lead down to 5 points. Amid this comeback, Elon shot 75% from the field. Taylor was proud of how the team responded after halftime but wished it came sooner. “They played with a tremendous sense of urgency in the second half, offensively and defensively,” Taylor said. “When we’re up and we’re active, it really gets us going and keeps us engaged.”

Drexel then proceeded to go on an 11-0 run and closed the game out, ending Elon’s season.

## Women’s Basketball

March 6 - Elon 43 Northeastern 49

March 8 - Elon 70 Monmouth 54

Elon women’s basketball struggled in its penultimate regular season game and fell to 3-win Northeastern, who is at the bottom of the CAA rankings. The Phoenix went into halftime leading 27-20. However, Northeastern had a late 8-2 run to tie the game up at

41-41 and then went on a 5-0 run soon after to capture a 46-43 lead, clinching the game. Elon couldn’t find the basket with some of its best scorers this season struggling to shoot. Junior Laila Anderson went 0-5 from the field, redshirt sophomore Raven Preston only made two shots and freshman Jayda Angel went 2-7. The Phoenix then went on to beat Monmouth in its final regular season game. Preston led the offensive effort and secured her third 20-point game this season and added 12 rebounds. Monmouth started strong and ended the first half on a 12-1 run, giving it a 10 point lead at halftime. Preston and redshirt junior Kamryn Doty hit some clutch shots in the third quarter and got Elon back into the game and were up 48-47 going into the fourth quarter. The Phoenix capped the game off with a 13-0 run, toppling Monmouth in the final game of the season.

## Lacrosse:

March 8 - Elon 15 Coastal Carolina 14

Elon Lacrosse secured a thrilling overtime victory over Coastal Carolina after scoring 5 goals in the final 11 minutes of regulation to comeback from a 14-9 deficit. Ana Lee Vandiver scored four of Elon’s five goals in the final 10 and half minutes of the game. She scored a last second goal with 14 seconds left to push the game to overtime. A minute into overtime, senior Sammy Fisher scored, winning the game for the Phoenix.

## Women’s Tennis

March 7 - Elon 3 Wofford 4

March 8 - Elon 7 Gardner-Webb 0

Elon women’s tennis started the week off with a matchup against then 7-1 Wofford. Elon put up a good fight, almost securing the doubles point and winning three of the six singles matches thanks to the efforts of freshman Lisa Kranec, sophomore Simone Bergeron and sophomore Mariana Reding. The team then got an impressive win

against Gardner-Webb, its first conference match of the season. They didn’t drop a set throughout the entire day and moved to a 9-4 record.

## Men’s Tennis

March 9 - Elon 4 Campbell 3

Elon men’s tennis captured a hard-fought win against Campbell, securing the doubles point and won three singles matches. Freshman Rafael Ymer clinched the victory with a 6-7, 7-5, 6-2 victory. Under new head coach Maciek Sykut, it was starting to find its rhythm and get hot, having won two in a row and three of its last four.

## Baseball

March 5 - Elon 12 UNCG 2

March 7 - Elon 2 Charleston Southern 7

March 8 - Elon 4 Charleston Southern 13

March 9 - Elon 5 Charleston Southern 7

Elon Baseball had a busy week, winning one against the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and got swept by Charleston Southern. The top of the lineup performed well against UNCG as four batters got multiple hits. Junior Ryan Sprock led the way with 3 hits and 3 runs, and senior Alex Duffey tied his career high with 4 RBIs in the comfortable 12-2 victory. Junior pitcher Justin Mitrovich and the Phoenix started the series against Charleston off strong with six early strikeouts.

“Justin’s pitching is a bright spot,” head coach Mike Kennedy said. “He just keeps going out there and getting those deep in games and throw the ball really, really well.”

However, a number of fielding mistakes in the seventh inning led to three runs by Charleston Southern and it ended up winning by 5. The second game of the series got away from the Phoenix early as the Buccaneers took a 6-0 lead only three innings in. Elon put up a

fight in the final game of the series as transfer Jackson Alford went 3-5. But Charleston Southern’s offense proved to be too much for Elon’s pitcher graduate student Declan Lavelle.

## Softball

March 7- Elon 9 Hofstra 5

March 8- Elon 8 Hofstra 7

March 9- Elon 4 Hofstra 1

Elon began CAA play with a series against Hofstra and played well throughout. In the opening game of the series, it had 10 hits thanks to Greta Hessenthaler going 3-4. Relief pitcher Taylor Cherry was clutch as she recorded her first save of the season and struck out two. The Phoenix then got a walk-off victory in the second game of the series. Hofstra started by jumping to a 6-2 lead through the top of the fifth inning. Elon responded with five runs in the bottom of the sixth and took the lead 7-6. Hofstra tied it up in the final inning but an RBI single from sophomore Peyton Fitzpatrick walked it off, giving the team the series win. Elon finished the series sweep with a 4-1 victory thanks to four scoreless innings from Cherry.

## NEXT WEEK:

### Women’s Basketball

March 13 - Second Round of the CAA Women’s Basketball Championship: Elon (15-14) vs. Towson/Northeastern 8:30 p.m.

### Lacrosse

March 12 - Elon (3-3) at High Point (1-4) 5 p.m.

March 15 - Elon (3-3) at Monmouth (3-5) 12 p.m.

### Women’s Tennis

March 12 - Elon (9-4) vs. Long Island University (1-7) 2 p.m.

March 15 - Elon (9-4) at Campbell (5-5) 1 p.m.

March 18 - Elon (9-4) at Coastal Carolina (7-3) 10 a.m.

### Men’s Tennis

March 17 - Elon (3-5) vs. Gardner-Webb (14-3) 1 p.m.

### Baseball

March 14 - Elon (6-8) vs. Wofford (12-4) 4 p.m.

March 15 - Elon (6-8) vs. Wofford (12-4) 2 p.m.

March 16 - Elon (6-8) at Wofford (12-4) 1 p.m.

March 18 - Elon (6-8) vs. High Point (12-4) 4 p.m.

### Softball

March 14 - Elon (10-11) at Hampton (7-13) 1 p.m.

March 15 - Elon (10-11) at Hampton (7-13) 2 p.m.

March 16 - Elon (10-11) at Hampton (7-13) 12 p.m.

March 18 - Elon (10-11) at NC Central (1-20) 5 p.m.

### Men’s Golf

March 16-18 - Linger Longer Invitational at Kennesaw State University

### Track & Field

March 14 - Phoenix Invitational at Elon



PAUL BARRETTO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Starting pitcher Justin Mitrovich racked up 6 strikeouts on the mound during Elon’s game against Charleston Southern on March 7 at Latham Park.