

Campus parking expansions set to ‘build capacity’ for campus lots



Construction continues for the new Francis Center parking lot Aug. 23. The lot will be available for freshman students with Elon parking permits. Campus Safety and Police Chief Joe LeMire said the earliest he anticipates the lot opening is fall break.

Francis Center lot to create 500 new spaces; delayed after heavy summer rainfall

Charlotte Pfabe
Elon News Network

This year, freshmen are only allowed to park in designated lots marked with an “FY” sign matching their parking permits. Currently, freshman are temporarily parking in additional designated spaces as construction continues for the upcoming freshman lot.

Campus Safety and Police announced another delay in opening the freshmen parking lot earlier this month. The lot, located near the Francis Center, was supposed to open at the start of the 2025-26 academic year.

The decision to move freshman parking to separate lots was announced in November 2023, and the new Francis Center lot was initially expected to be completed at the start of the 2024-25 academic year. But, Campus Safety and Police Chief Joe LeMire said construction couldn’t be started until they completed a traffic study and addressed some environmental concerns, including taking into account a nearby stream.

However, even after construction began on the site earlier this year, crews hit another roadblock that paused summer construction: significant rainfall.

“The ground stayed saturated for periods of time, so it delayed the work that was going to get done,” LeMire said. “And then we thought we would still make the deadline, and another storm came through and delayed it again.”

The Francis Center lot is projected to have more than 500 parking spots. LeMire said he anticipates the earliest the lot will open is around fall break.

Although the lot near the Francis Center is not complete, students with the “FY” permit are still required to park in designated locations. These areas temporarily include a lot in the east part of Danieleley Center, a section of the Hunt B parking lot behind the Schar Center and marked areas on South Campus.

“You’re still kind of in the remote sides of campus, but we’re hopefully building capacity internally,” LeMire said.

Building capacity is one of the main reasons for moving freshmen parking according to LeMire. He said his department conducted a study researching parking

policies for freshmen at 33 schools. LeMire said the schools in the study included Elon’s peer institutions, schools in North Carolina and schools similar in size to Elon.

Of the 33 schools, LeMire said half did not allow freshmen to have cars and the other half allowed freshmen to have cars but required those students to park in remote lots. He said Elon was the only university that mixed freshman parking with other student parking.

Another reason to move freshmen to lots farther from the main buildings, LeMire said, is keeping freshman students on campus.

“Although it’s an inconvenience, maybe first-year students being parked in a remote lot also kind of forces them to integrate to campus and learn other transportation options,” LeMire said.

Once completed, LeMire said Elon Express shuttles and the E-ride program will be available for students to come and go from the Francis Center lot. He said since the Elon Express already has routes up and down Haggard Avenue, the Francis Center lot is a good location for the new parking lot.

“I think what we experience too is that a lot of students use Uber and don’t even tell us about it,” LeMire said. “We just don’t want to force them to use Uber unless we set up a program with Uber. But right now, we’re just doing actual shuttles, buses and after-hour E-Rides and then we’ll see where that capacity leads us to.”

The construction of the new HealthEU center removed around 120 parking spots in the Innovation Quad lot. However, with the added 500 spots from the future Francis Center lot, LeMire said there will be a gain of around 380 new parking spots. He also

pointed to the 110 spots for freshman in the Danieleley Center lot.

LeMire said that while parking in the Innovation Quad lot shouldn’t be a problem since first year students won’t be taking up spaces, the department will take this academic year to see if any adjustments need to be made.

“There may be some changes that happen in the future, but sometimes you just don’t understand what the human reaction is going to be,” LeMire said. “And where people will spread out to park. And we got to see where those crunch points are going to be.”

When changes to freshmen parking were first announced in 2023, Campus Safety and Police also increased the price for parking permits, from \$160 to \$225 for regular permits and \$50 to \$100 for Global Neighborhood lot permits.

According to LeMire, the department was hoping the timing of the increased prices and opening of the new lot would align. The department chose to continue with the price increase when the lot was delayed. Prior to the raise, it had been more than 15 years since the price for parking permits increased.

LeMire said parking rules are regularly enforced, including on the weekends. He said he hopes students can appreciate the benefits of this change and that freshmen can look forward to more parking options after their first year.

LeMire said students can find parking maps, shuttle schedules and E-Rides on the Rave Guardian app. Both the temporary parking map and 2025-26 parking map with the completed Francis Center lot are available on Campus Safety and Police’s website.



Construction for the new Francis Center parking lot was delayed over the summer after significant rainfall.

ABSS prepares for 2025-26 school year

ABSS begins cell phone restriction, new student information system, introduces new student programs

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

Western Alamance senior Lillie Margaret Wilson said she can’t wait to dive back into both her dance team and classes.

“I’m also excited to learn more about calculus,” Wilson said. “I’m not really a math person, but I’m excited to have my wonderful teacher who is gonna help me through it and help me learn more.”

The Alamance-Burlington School System welcomed students back Aug. 25 for the first day of school.

This year, ABSS implemented changes to comply with new state-level legislation and switch to a different student information system.

The first change comes from the North Carolina Senate, which aims to restrict cellphone use in North Carolina classrooms, known as the Cell Phone-Free Education Bill. The bill was passed this July and eliminates or limits student access to cellphones in K-12 classrooms.

ABSS Board of Education Chair Sandy Ellington-Graves said this statewide change brings both opportunity and challenge.

“Young people have that fear of missing out, and with everybody having their phones put away, I think there’s less pressure, and they can really focus on what’s important during the school day,” Ellington-Graves said.

She said the biggest question she’s received from the cell phone restriction is related to safety. As a parent herself, she agrees that cellphones should still be available in an emergency.

“Making sure that we’ve got policies that protect everyone, I think that’s really our goal,” Ellington-Graves said.

Wilson said the restriction is a good policy that will help students with their grades and their attention spans by limiting their distractions.

“It’ll help bring more focus onto the teachers who are doing their job and trying to help us succeed and learn,” Wilson said. “These changes will help me in the next year to become less reliant on a device, learning things for myself and paying more attention, and maybe gaining some social skills while I’m at it, and I think that will help me when I go to college next year.”

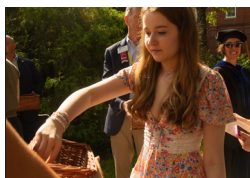
The Principal of Altamahaw-Ossipee Elementary School, Erin Millspaugh, was recently named ABSS Principal of the Year. She said she’s looking forward to a new program beginning this school year at Altamahaw-Ossipee called Capturing Kids’ Hearts.

“We’ve actually, as a staff, just gone through training together, and we can’t wait until our students come into the building in just a few days, so that we can strengthen those relationships with our families and our kids,” Millspaugh said.

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THE **PENDULUM**

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Elon News Network is a daily news organization that includes a newspaper, website, broadcasts and podcasts. Letters to the editor are welcome and should be typed, signed and emailed to enn@elon.edu as Word documents. ENN reserves the right to edit obscene and potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters may be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of ENN and will not be returned.

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ENN is committed to accurate coverage. When factual errors are made, we correct them promptly and in full, both online and in print. Online corrections state the error and the change at the top of the article. Corrections from the previous week's print edition appear on this page.

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CORRECTIONS

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

FROM THE DESK OF
Anjolina Fantaroni
Executive Director of Elon News Network

Hello, thank you for taking the time to pick up Elon News Network's The Pendulum and for supporting student media. If you're unfamiliar with Elon News Network, we are Elon University's student-run media organization, which includes our website, ElonNewsNetwork.com; our Monday night live broadcast, ENN Tonight; our digital news show, ENN On Air; and, of course, our newspaper, The Pendulum, which is published on Wednesdays.

My name is Anjolina Fantaroni, and I am honored to serve as the 2025-26 executive director of the organization. One of my biggest goals this year is to ensure our coverage doesn't stop at the boundaries of the "Elon bubble," but extends into the rest of Alamance County as well. You can't have a media organization without a strong commitment to community.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

I've known I wanted to pursue a career in news since I was eight years old. Still, coming to college as a first-generation student wasn't an easy transition. Joining Elon News Network in my first year turned out to be the best decision I've ever made. It wasn't always easy, but the challenges shaped me into the leader I am today. In the past, I've served as social media coordinator and broadcast news director – roles that gave me valuable experience, lifelong friendships, opportunities to attend conferences and workshops, and the chance to cover stories I'll never forget.

Mentorship is something I deeply value, and I'm committed to ensuring our staff receives the best training possible. Accurate, timely reporting will always remain our top priority. Over the summer and into this fall, I connected with more than 30 senior staff and administrators at Elon to discuss how ENN can continue improving. From strengthening our coverage to listening to feedback and expanding the kinds of stories we provide, these conversations have already inspired exciting plans: presentations, tabling at community events and unique opportunities for our reporters to gain hands-on experience.

That being said, if you have a story pitch, please don't hesitate to reach out to our staff members. We're here to work for you – and with you.

Have a great year and, to the class of 2029, welcome to Elon!

Sincerely,

Anjolina Fantaroni

DESIGN BY SARAH T. MOORE

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Elon's marching band, the Fire of the Carolinas, walks across East Haggard Avenue on Aug. 22 during move-in day. The band played throughout campus, visiting all the neighborhoods freshman students were moving into. LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Orientation leaders juniors Cassie Dornan, Ansley Massanelli, Ria Kolte, sophomore Kira Hancuff and senior Lauren Dolman perform Carrie Underwood's "Before He Cheats" during live-band karaoke in Irazú. Karaoke was one of many activities for students at Late Night Elon on Aug. 22, including painting and trivia. MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Senior Ashley Morales holds a "Honk if you love Elon" sign on new student move-in day Aug. 22 as she welcomes families to Schar Center alongside other members of the Fire of the Carolinas band. SARAH T. MOORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Orientation leaders and members of Elon's cheerleading team help students move in on Aug. 22 in Historic Neighborhood. KATRINA HOLTZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Two students who both called "bingo" exchange a handshake after a tiebreaking game of Rock, Paper, Scissors during Super Bingo on Aug. 23 in Alumni Gym. The winner of the tie-breaker decided to split the prize. "This is the first time something like this has happened in my four years at bingo," said Elon's regular bingo host, senior Sarah Carss. ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Elon admissions prepares for nationwide demographic cliff

2025 marks beginning of projected decline in high school graduates, college enrollment

Charlotte Pfabe
Elon News Network

Colleges and universities across the country are bracing for the impact of a ripple effect 18 years in the making — the demographic cliff.

Triggered at the start of the Great Recession in 2007, the economic downturn Americans experienced caused a drop in birth rates, which never recovered. Now higher education is feeling the impact.

With fewer babies born after 2007, there are now less 18 year olds going to college. According to a 2024 report from the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the number of 18-year-old high school graduates will peak somewhere between 3.8 and 3.9 million in 2025 and will be followed by a 15-year decline. Nationwide, the report projected a decrease to below 3.4 million graduates by 2041, 13% lower than 2025.

But the cliff isn't as steep as its name would suggest. It's also not equal across the U.S. Most southern states, including North Carolina, are predicted to experience an increase in high school graduates of about 14%.

As North Carolina's rate of high school graduates increases, Elon University Vice President for Enrollment Greg Zaiser wrote in an email to Elon News Network that the university is noticing growth in enrollment of students from southern states. Zaiser wrote that Elon is specifically seeing growth from North Carolina, South Carolina and Florida, where the number of students graduating from high school is rising.

According to Zaiser, Elon has been researching ways to prepare for and combat the demographic cliff for a while and commissioned a market analysis study to pinpoint locations where the university should build a larger presence.

"While the number of students coming from these regional markets will take years to grow, we are seeing increased interest in the form of applications from greater numbers of students from each of these areas," Zaiser wrote.



CHARLOTTE PFABE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Inman Admissions Welcome Center on Aug. 24. This year, Elon's freshman class has 1,517 students, a 11.6% decrease from the class of 2028.

Zaiser also wrote that Elon's Office of Admissions is looking to hire another admissions counselor based in Texas to grow Elon's presence in the state.

Elon's class of 2029 enrollment saw an 11.6% decrease compared to last year's freshman class. There are a total of 1,517 freshmen for the 2025-26 academic year. Elon's Office of Admissions was expecting this drop in enrollment, according to Zaiser.

However, instead of changing requirements and standards to enroll more students into Elon's class of 2029, Zaiser wrote that Elon was "strategic in enrolling a smaller class this year by maintaining the most important things."

"We could have spent more on scholarships to recruit more students. But the most important thing was to make sure we are delivering on the promise of the exceptional education Elon offers to current and enrolling students," Zaiser wrote. "Many schools are using most of

their tuition revenue for scholarships just to attract students. Elon is using tuition to fund educational experiences and opportunities."

Elon University President Connie Book expanded on Zaiser's point in a recent interview with Elon News Network, explaining that the university decided to admit fewer students instead of changing its standards for admission into the university.

"We made the decision just to hold and so we're bringing in a really qualified, great class, a very Elon-like class and we don't think the competition is going to change," Book said in a previous interview with Elon News Network on Aug. 19.

While the number of new undergraduate students may be lower, Book highlighted a 25% growth in graduate student enrollment for fall 2025.

As colleges and universities across the nation continue to combat the demographic cliff, Zaiser wrote that Elon

is implementing new programs to draw in students that may not have previously looked in the university's direction. He pointed to growth in Elon's nursing program, accelerated programs in the Love School of Business, Elon Law, the School of Health Sciences, and new opportunities for transfer students.

"I also believe Neuroscience and Digital Content Management, both new majors this year, will be very helpful in attracting new students," Zaiser wrote.

The impacts of lower birth rates in the years following the Great Recession will span the next few decades; however, Book said young adults should still value a college education and the doors it can unlock.

"The reality is — I always say — if you can excel, go to college," Book said in a previous interview with Elon News Network. "Because the data is clear. It will benefit you and your family's future for the rest of your life."

ABSS creates evolving environment for students

ABSS | from cover

Millspough said Capturing Kids' Hearts is a program designed to strengthen school communities and build relationships. Millspough said this helps students build culture in the classroom, creating a comfortable and collaborative learning environment that can grow their academic success.

The nationwide program has already been implemented at other North Carolina schools, including Wake County Public School System. Teachers in the program may greet students at the door with a handshake, encourage them to share positive experiences and close the class with a meaningful message or activity.

ABSS Superintendent Aaron Fleming said he wants ABSS to have significant academic growth and reduce ABSS's low-performing schools by the end of the next school year — something he said Capturing Kids' Hearts can help with.

"We want to be able to ensure that students not only are doing well academically, but also that when they graduate from school and get into college or the world of work, they are able to be very good, productive citizens as well,"



ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Alamance-Burlington School System kicked off the first day of school Aug. 25.

Fleming said.

Alamance-Burlington Early College senior Shawn Means said his college application journey would not have been possible without the opportunities he's had as a student at the Alamance-Burlington School System.

"The characteristics that I've built, the qualities I've obtained, have just been of my

wildest dreams, and I never thought that I would be where I'm at," Means said.

Southeast Alamance High School visual arts teacher Windy Lampson was named the 2025 District Teacher of the Year.

Lampson said her budget for her visual arts classes went up this year — something she said was much needed for her students.

"I'm going to get a display space so they need to be able to show their artwork and show off what it is that they're doing in class," Lampson said. "That's going to be very helpful. I teach pottery, so giving them more options with glazes and things so that they can get really creative and learn how to incorporate those."

In addition to her teaching duties, she is also the Infinite Campus leader at Southeast Alamance — ABSS's new student information system for managing data and communication between students and parents. ABSS previously used PowerSchool.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction voted to move all North Carolina schools to Infinite Campus following a previous data breach in the PowerSchool system, and Lampson said she's the one getting all the questions and figuring everything out.

"There's going to be a little bit of a struggle as we figure stuff out, but I think it's going to work out fine in a few days," Lampson said.

The biggest question from teachers, according to Lampson, was how to receive the parent email list for their classes — which has since been resolved.

"One thing to another, but if that's our biggest problem, I mean, we have other ways of doing that," Lampson said.

North Carolina legislature overrides 8 vetoes, yet to pass state budget

‘Mini-budget’ passed to temporarily serve urgent needs; denounced as ‘band-aid bill’ by Gov. Josh Stein

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

Throughout the summer and the last several months, North Carolina legislators have enacted almost 70 bills, but have yet to pass a state budget despite the start of the new fiscal year on July 1.

The House and the Senate have struggled to agree on a version of the two-year, \$66 billion budget. Raises for state employees and teachers and discussions on future tax cuts were at the heart of some of the disagreements between chambers. The House’s version of the budget has higher raises for state employees and wants to slow future tax cuts. North Carolina is one of three states that have yet to enact a new budget for this fiscal year.

The state isn’t required to pass a new budget — spending remains at current levels until a new budget is enacted — but it still could have negative effects until a new one is passed. Sally Hodges-Copple, a public policy analyst at the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center, said the lack of a new budget prevents certain tax cuts from being paused. She said certain state income tax cuts have disproportionately benefited the “wealthy few” and haven’t met the needs of North Carolinians.

“IT MEANS THAT NEEDS THAT NORTH CAROLINIANS HAVE IDENTIFIED FOR A LONG TIME IN PUBLIC EDUCATION AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND CHILDCARE ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY WILL CONTINUE TO GO UNMET.”

SALLY HODGES-COPPLE
PUBLIC POLICY ANALYST

“Without a state budget that pauses those tax cuts and begins to invest again in North Carolinians’ well-being, legislators aren’t delivering for people in the way that they need to,” Hodges-Copple said.

Gov. Josh Stein also proposed a version of the budget, in which he called for a pause on scheduled income tax cuts and also addressed living costs concerns for North Carolinians.

Hodges-Copple said the failure to pass a new state budget is concerning.

“It means that needs that North Carolinians have identified for a long time in public education and housing affordability and childcare access and affordability will continue to go unmet,” Hodges-Copple said.

Michael Bitzer, a politics professor at Catawba College, said the disagreement between the House and Senate illustrates some of the differences between the chambers, despite both being controlled by Republicans.

“When you’ve got the House and the Senate controlled by the same party, but they’re not necessarily all unified, because they are two different chambers with two different priorities, that’s just kind of another wrinkle in this kind of legislative process,” Bitzer said.

North Carolina legislators managed to enact a “mini-budget” bill to fund urgent needs such as Medicaid, state construction projects and teacher pay raises. Stein signed the bill into law but called it a “band-aid” bill and said it fails North Carolina.



Gov. Josh Stein speaks at an election night watch party Nov. 5, 2024, in Raleigh. Since Stein’s been governor, the North Carolina General Assembly has overridden eight of his vetoes.

After a summer break, lawmakers reconvened on Aug. 26, which began the process of resuming discussions on the budget.

Over the last six months, lawmakers passed almost 70 bills including another Hurricane Helene relief bill as they neared their summer break. It placed \$700 million in a reserve fund and allocated \$500 million in funding that supports crop recovery and infrastructure grants.

Other bills passed include one that allows North Carolinians to use non-commercial expired driver’s licenses up to two years past the expiration date until 2027 in order to alleviate the backlog of appointments at the DMV. Lawmakers also passed a bill that bans students in K-12 schools from using cellphones during instructional time. Stein signed a bill into law that prevents the release of name, image and likeness contracts involving student-athletes at public schools.

Stein also vetoed several controversial bills that passed both chambers. These bills cover a wide range of issues, including allowing permitless, concealed carry of a handgun, eliminating DEI in school and state government agencies and increased cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

One of the vetoed bills could affect North Carolina colleges, as Senate Bill 558 prohibits public universities from maintaining offices or divisions “referred to as or named diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

Lawmakers haven’t voted to override the vetoes of these specific bills yet, but overrode eight other vetoed bills. The bills that were overridden and passed into law include the repeal of a carbon reduction mandate for Duke Energy, moving some power over charter school oversight from the State Board of Education to the Charter Schools Review Board, school library regulations, the official recognition of two sexes in North Carolina and allowing trained staff to carry concealed weapons in private schools.

Several House Democrats crossing party lines and voting to override the vetoes proved crucial as the GOP is one House seat short of a veto-proof supermajority. Bitzer said party unity will be very important to the possibility of the more controversial vetoed bills being overridden.

“As you’re dealing with fairly

controversial issues, the question is, does party unity really hold tight or are there some Democrats that are willing to buck against their party, and particularly the governor, to override the veto,” Bitzer said.

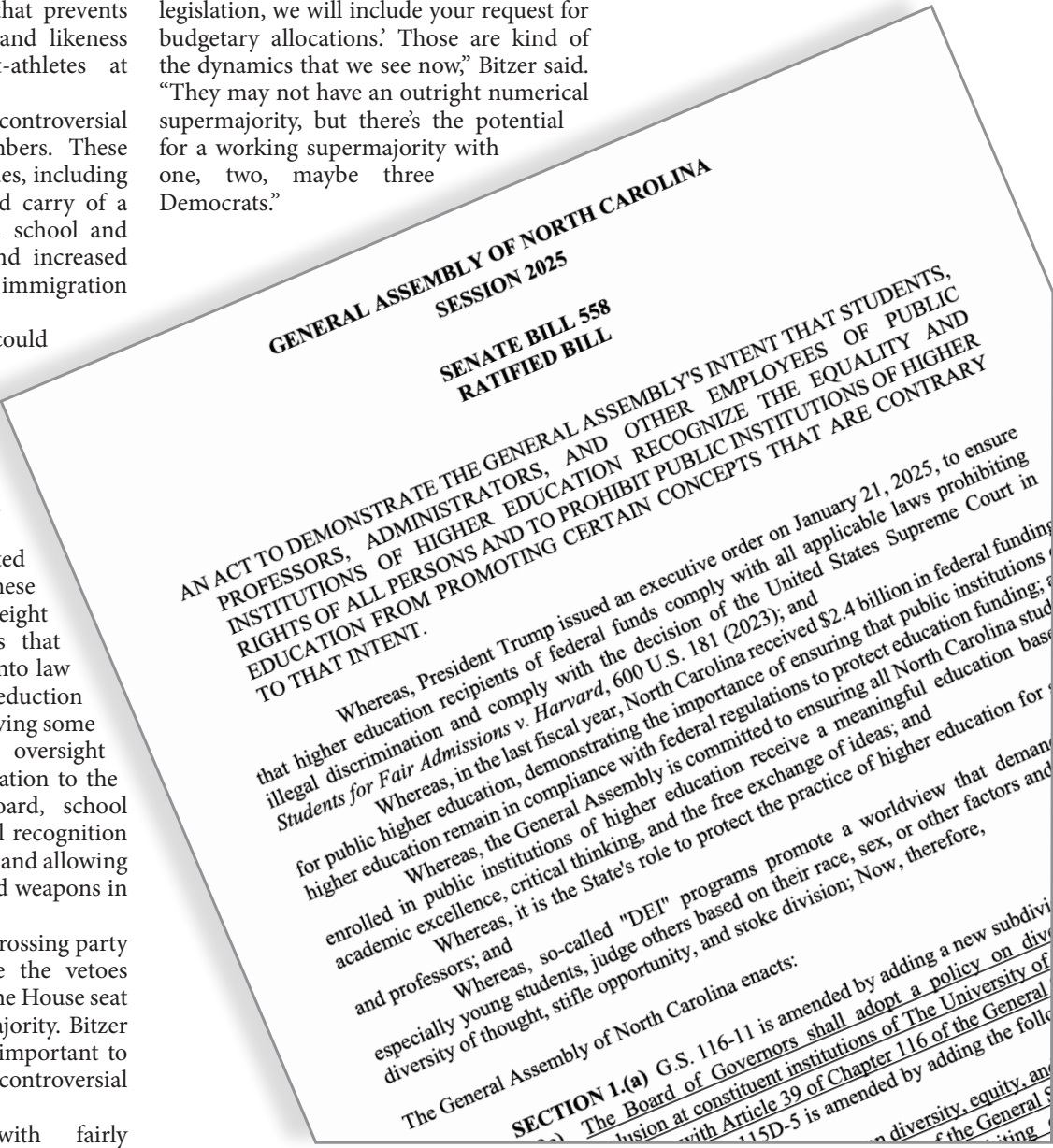
With a Republican-dominated legislature and a Democratic governor, Stein is already on pace to match former Gov. Roy Cooper’s 29 vetoes in the 2023-24 legislative session. Bitzer thinks this pattern of vetoes and overriding them is the new norm of North Carolina politics.

“With them being one vote short in the House, that puts a lot of pressure on potential moderate, maybe slightly conservative Democrats to feel the pressure of casting a vote that some of their voters back home want. Or there are deals cut through the budget to say, ‘You vote for this piece of legislation, we will include your request for budgetary allocations.’ Those are kind of the dynamics that we see now,” Bitzer said.

“They may not have an outright numerical supermajority, but there’s the potential for a working supermajority with one, two, maybe three Democrats.”

Overridden vetoes

- Senate Bill 266: Carbon reduction mandate
- House Bill 805: LGBTQ+ restrictions and library regulations
- Senate Bill 254: Charter school oversight
- House Bil 193: Guns in private schools
- House Bill 549: Expanding state auditor’s powers
- House Bill 318: ICE cooperation with sheriffs
- House Bill 402: Increased legislative power over government rules
- Senate Bill 416: Increased privacy for nonprofit donors





New Elon students and their families eat and converse at the Family Send-off Picnic on Aug. 23 by Medallion Plaza.

VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Families leave campus as new students settle in

Families share food, advice with students during picnic Aug. 23

Sarah T. Moore
Elon News Network

Every time Mike Paznokas visits Elon, he said he learns something that makes him appreciate the university even more. This is his third trip to the campus and everything he’s learned about Elon, he said, makes him think it’s a great fit for his daughter.

Rose Paznokas is entering her freshman year with enthusiasm. She said she is excited to be a part of Elon’s community and continue exploring campus.

“We went into McEwen for dinner last night and then there was soft serve ice cream,” Rose said as her parents, Mike and Toni, laughed along with her. “I was like, ‘I can get down with this. This seems like something I

can live with.”

While Rose looks forward to fall semester, her parents prepare to go back to New Jersey. The Family Send-off Picnic Aug. 23 marks the trio’s last shared meal until Thanksgiving break — Rose said she isn’t sure yet if she plans to go home for fall break. The three of them sat at a table by the Martin Alumni Center, enjoying the food Elon Dining provided for the event.

The picnic was spread across campus with tables near the alumni center, Koury Athletic Center and Medallion Plaza.

At one table, Tyler Schutt used the family picnic to give advice to his younger sister, Carissa, as she starts her college experience.

“Keep the sleep schedule that you have now,” Tyler said. “The second you mess it up, you’re literally screwed for any 8 a.m. that you take. It’s true.”

When Carissa said she was excited to get to know her new classmates and neighbors,

Tyler had advice for that too.

“If you don’t like your friend group, get out of it,” Tyler said as his parents nodded along.

Like Tyler, family members across campus were sharing advice with their new Elon students. Another common topic of conversation across the tables was the streamlined process of Elon’s move-in day.

Susie Elster-Sarachek, who helped her son Max move into his dorm, said she was impressed by how organized move-in day was.

“It took the stress out of it,” Susie said. “It was just a well-oiled machine.”

The Elster-Sarachek family is from California and flew across the country to drop Max off for his first year of college. While Max said he is confident Elon is a good fit for him, this will be the longest he’s been away from his home and family.

Max said he was drawn to Elon because of its support networks, such as the office of

Academic Accommodations and Accessibility, formerly known as Disabilities Resources.

“As a parent having a child across the country, knowing that there is so much support available is very comforting,” Susie said.

The small class size and tight-knit campus community were some of the other reasons Max chose Elon.

“I didn’t just want to be a face in a classroom,” Max said.

Max’s parents and sister were preparing to get on their flight back home, and the group had slowly been saying goodbye throughout the day. Max’s sister bought him a crochet snake from an Oaks Original booth at Young Commons. His family also got him a gallon of milk — his favorite drink — for his dorm’s MicroFridge.

“I’m just excited to see everything he does and learns and to hear about his experience,” Susie said.

New shop opens its doors in downtown Elon

Small business owner creates ‘full circle’ moment opening Brown

Fiona McAllister
Elon News Network

A new clothing store has set up shop in downtown Elon. The store, named Brown, is expected to be fully operational in the next two weeks, according to store owner Justin Duszlak.

Brown is located on West Lebanon Avenue, in the store previously used by the boutique Simply Oak before its closing March 31.

Duszlak said renovations started July 4 and finished updating the storefront in around a month. Duszlak said her goal was to have her store up and running by September for the new school year. But Brown opened earlier than expected on Aug. 22 for Elon’s new student move-in day. Though not fully set up, Brown is welcome to customers stopping in and browsing the store. Duszlak said that

Brown is expected to be fully operational in the next two weeks.

Duszlak said she is excited for the Elon community to see her new store since there is something for everyone.

“I love the energy of the students walking by, going to class, on the weekends,” Duszlak said. “I just wanted to bring some cool fashion and things you wouldn’t see, and bring people back to shopping in person.”

Duszlak grew up near the Elon area, and her parents and sister all owned stores in downtown Elon at one point. The name of the store, Brown, is dedicated to her parents, who Duszlak said she wanted to honor as she is following in their footsteps by being a small business owner. Duszlak said that her parents are proud that she is living her dream 30 years after she told them she wanted to start a business.

“It’s kind of full circle,” Duszlak said. “I said I was going to do this when I was 12 and then again in high school. Elon’s been such a huge part of my family.”

Duszlak said the merchandise in Brown



FIONA MCALLISTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Downtown Elon’s newest shop, Brown, is located on West Lebanon Avenue in the store previously used by Simply Oak.

is inspired by different places all over the country and globe. She said she is very particular about what she sells and where it comes from.

“I spent a lot of time looking at the brands and thinking about their state, their mission and how it’s gonna fit within Burlington and the Elon students,” Duszlak said.

Class of 2029 students begin their journey on campus

New students prepare to start classes after moving in, completing orientation

Megan Walsh
Elon News Network

With fall classes beginning and new student orientation complete, the class of 2029 is beginning to settle into life at Elon University.

Freshman Abigail Siegal, from Boston, said the first few days have gone well. While she is nervous to start classes, she is also excited. Siegal said being put into a small group for orientation helped make her transition to college easier.

“I am really, really enjoying it,” Siegal said. “It really got us mingling with people that we didn’t know, and we were all weird on the first day, but it just felt really good.”

Freshman Angela Davis is a member of the first class of neuroscience majors, a new program beginning this academic year. She said the new major swayed her into choosing Elon.

“I really loved Elon and I was debating on it, and then I heard that there was a new major and I was like, ‘Oh my gosh I have to go,’” Davis said.

Freshman Reese Kimball, a Nursing Fellow, said she has already felt welcomed by the community at Elon and is excited to get started with her nursing classes.

“I’ve been wanting to start nursing school for four years, and I get to do stuff with nursing students earlier than I was expecting to,” Kimball said.

Freshman Isabelle Drake said while she was nervous about meeting new people, she is excited to start her college experience.

“I’m excited to just get a college experience, just to see what everything’s about, meet new people and just make good memories,” Drake said.

Freshman Jacques Bassat, from Maryland, said he is enjoying Elon so far. Bassat said the hardest thing for him is being far away from home.

Another freshman from Maryland, Graham Rogers, said he was finding it

tough to move to a new place and find a new routine. Still, he said he felt ready for classes to start.

Rogers said going into college and starting classes, he was reminding himself that it might take time to find his place on campus and that’s okay.

“I’ve just got to take things slow and just find my group when it comes to me,” Rogers said. “Waiting for class to start, that way I actually have a better chance to interact with people.”

Evan Cooper, Miles Hayford, Charlotte Pfabe, Trista Panagakos and Kate Gray contributed to the reporting of this story.



Freshmen Olivia Lankster and Priyal Sanathara get their acorns, an Elon tradition, as they depart from New Student Convocation on Aug. 23 Under the Oaks.

VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Living–Learning Communities host kickoff event to welcome new students

27 LLCs gathered in McKinnon Hall to celebrate the new academic year

Trista Panagakos
Elon News Network

One of the last events of orientation is the LLC Kickoff for members of Elon’s Living–Learning Communities, hosted in McKinnon Hall. During the kickoff, all 27 of Elon’s LLCs gathered to play trivia, learn about upcoming events and engage in breakout groups.

McKinnon Hall was filled with new and returning students along with LLC faculty advisors and Resident Assistants. The event was led by Associate Director of Residence Life for Residential Education and Community Development Sarah Ann Chapman, who supervised trivia about Elon University and shared introductions to the different LLCs.

An LLC is a group of students living in the same residential area — typically the same floor of a dorm building — who share similar interests.

In addition to Chapman, Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships and assistant professor of education Jennifer Stephens also spoke during the kickoff. Stephens reminded students to take advantage of the opportunities that come with living in an LLC, such as attending events with guest speakers, volunteer opportunities and courses they can take with their cohort. Stephens also advised students to show up, step up and lift each other up.

“This allows us to share that message

with them about what the living-learning communities are,” Stephens said in an interview with Elon News Network. “But, as you saw, kind of a pep rally, get them excited for what’s ahead and give them time to get oriented to their individual LLC.”

According to Stephens, who began overseeing Elon’s LLCs three years ago, the number of students living in an LLC has grown exponentially throughout her time as director, which led to the introduction of new LLCs focused on serving students of different majors, programs and identities.

Stephens said students, faculty and staff are able to recommend and propose new LLCs annually.

The LLC Kickoff is one of the only times during the year when all the LLCs are together at one event. Stephens said different LLCs may collaborate on different programs or initiatives, but besides the kickoff, the end-of-year LLC awards is one of the only times members from every cohort are together.

Stephens said LLCs provide students with the ability to meet others with similar interests and to find a group of people they can relate to. This was one of the reasons why freshman Emma Luckman chose to be part of the Communications LLC.

“The community at Elon played a huge part in me coming here,” Luckman said. “The learning living community was kind of an addition to that, in knowing that I was obviously going to have a community and a strong family.”

Freshmen Phoebe Lewis and Katina Gakis joined the Service Learning LLC



Students from each LLC present their posters on Aug. 25 at the LLC kickoff in McKinnon Hall.

LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

because of volunteer experiences they had during high school. They said they both believe volunteering in college will lead them to experience new things and contribute to their community.

“I thought that would be a nice way that would bring me into the community and help out with my new one,” Gakis said.

The Service Learning LLC will be taking part in multiple events and off-campus retreats, such as visiting Burlington Animal Services and Special Olympics games.

Stephens said the kickoff event helps

students understand the role they play within Elon and how they can benefit and add to the community. She also said being part of an LLC can help bring people together with common interests.

“It’s just a natural, organic, authentic way to find people that share similar interests as you,” Stephens said. “You know you have that thing in common with those students who are on your floor, and so that makes it easier for them to also connect across difference, because they know there is that common thread that pulls them all together.”

Club sport presidents plan to recruit new members at Fall Organization Fair



A member of the Elon Men's Ultimate Frisbee team showcases his jump height during the organization fair on Aug. 29, 2024, at Young Commons. Senior Brady Jackson, the club's president, said returning members plan to wear their jerseys during the Fall Organization Fair on Sept. 4 as a way of showing the existing team camaraderie.

Presidents of club sport teams hope to maintain registered players, welcome new members

Benjamin Berfield
Elon News Network

For most of the club sports teams at Elon University, the beginning of fall semester is an ideal time to recruit new freshmen. This includes the club baseball and frisbee teams, who eye events such as the Fall Organization Fair on Sept. 4 as an opportunity to get students to join their team.

Club Baseball President and senior Case Marino described the organization fair as the team's biggest outlet for recruiting new members.

"That's normally where we get the majority of our guys on the email list," Marino said. "Once they're on the email list, we can send updates about practice times and future games."

Both baseball and frisbee, in particular, have experienced success in recent years. Club baseball made their first playoff appearance in 2024, while the frisbee team made nationals this past May. Frisbee's President and senior Brady Jackson described nationals as the highlight of last season.

Although baseball failed to replicate its playoffs success in 2025, Marino said he was still happy the team got to play a full season.

Marino and Jackson each said the organization fair has always been helpful when it comes to registering new members. They explained how there's often a high number of players early in the season.

"Registration is steady every year," Jackson said. "There are always a large amount of freshmen that are interested in playing."

While both teams see high numbers immediately after the organization fair, keeping the newest members can be challenging.

Marino said although many people sign up early on, not all of them will stay in the club over the course of the year.

"As the year goes on, people do find other interests," Marino said. "We typically see our numbers go down a little as the year goes on."

Jackson voiced a similar statement, explaining that although it's great to see lots of interest in the beginning of the season, they would love to keep the majority of those freshmen.

"The biggest thing is retaining members," Jackson said. "At the first couple of practices, we'll get 70 members showing up. I think the interest is definitely there."

To appeal to freshmen in the beginning, Jackson and Marino explained how they want to give everyone in the respective club sport a chance to connect with other members.

"We try to make everybody feel included," Marino said. "We pride ourselves on being a family and being able to actively convey that is important for us."

For frisbee, Jackson said in order to make freshmen feel welcomed at the club fair, current players will wear jerseys from past years as a way of showing their existing team camaraderie.

"We always want to chat with people before they sign up," Jackson said. "I think the biggest thing is just emphasizing that community because I think that's what gets people to show up and not just sign up on the sheet."

Prior to Elon, Jackson said he had never played frisbee before. However, he liked the idea of the sport, and now he is club president. He added that some of his best friends are teammates.

“

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BRADY JACKSON
ELON CLUB FRISBEE PRESIDENT

"I had no experience with frisbee before, but it just sounded cool to me," Jackson said. "I met some of my closest friends that I still have going into my senior year."

Sports such as frisbee and baseball are only a couple of the many club sports throughout the organization fair. Both club presidents recognize that there are plenty of other organizations looking to recruit freshman students.

Marino said one thing he'd want freshmen to specifically know about club baseball is that they do compete against some of the other best club baseball teams in the region.

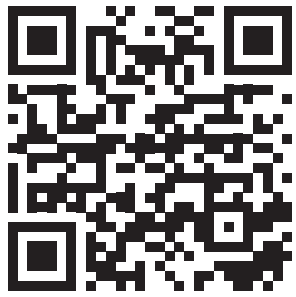
"It's important for freshmen to know that it is a legit baseball team and that we play competitive baseball," Marino said.

Perhaps just as important as winning, is establishing a fun environment for freshmen. Jackson said the frisbee team always looks to convey a sense of togetherness that the newcomers can appreciate.

Asked about any advice for students who are considering signing up, Jackson said he believes it's beneficial to give club sports, such as frisbee, a chance.

"Just give it a shot," Jackson said. "That's what I'd say to a freshman or sophomore that's interested, and I think they'll have a good experience."

JOIN CLUBS ON
PHOENIXCONNECT



IF YOU GO

Fall Organization Fair
6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sept. 4
at Young Commons



Club Baseball members leave the field together as practice concludes April 4, 2024, at the Recreation Fields.

ELON CLUB SPORTS

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Baseball | Martial Arts |
| Men's Basketball | Men's Rugby |
| Women's Basketball | Women's Rugby |
| Climbing | Tennis |
| Equestrian | Men's Soccer |
| Esports | Women's Soccer |
| Fencing | Softball |
| Field Hockey | Swim |
| Ice Hockey | Men's Volleyball |
| Golf | Women's Volleyball |
| Men's Lacrosse | Men's Ultimate Frisbee |
| Women's Lacrosse | Women's Ultimate Frisbee |
| Pickeball | |
| Racquetball | |