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ELON, NORTH CAROLINA

THE PENDULUM

COUNTRY IN

CRISIS

Venezuelan students reflect from afar as their home nation and families grapple with economic and political instability

ALEX HAGER | Elon News Network | @awhager

THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM Elon, a nation is in crisis. Millions of Venezuelans have left their country in a mass exodus, fleeing a plummeting quality of life. While thousands hike across land borders every day, seeking refuge from food and medicine shortages and street violence, others have departed for the United States, and some of them have ended up here in Elon University.

VENEZUELA TO ELON

The 2018–2019 Factbook said five Elon students list Venezuela as their country of citizenship.

“You go outside, and everywhere there’s people eating out of the trash and in very bad situations,” Lanz said. “Just suffering because they don’t have medicine.”

Government corruption and mismanagement have spurred economic catastrophe. Hyperinflation of the bolívar, Venezuela’s currency, has made it near impossible to buy even the most basic of items. A pack of toilet paper costs the equivalent of a month’s salary. Some have turned to crime out of desperation, making robbery and kidnapping a commonplace occurrence.

“It doesn’t matter what time of day,” Lanz said. “Doesn’t matter where you

are, there’s always a risk. You can’t be in your car on your phone because if someone sees you on your phone, they’re going to try to steal it from you, and they’re going to point a gun.”

It’s hard to find food, unsafe to go out on the streets and harder still to pursue a degree. Venezuelan students at Elon University say they came here for a level of education that’s absent in their home country, but most of them are leaving family behind.

Lanz is in constant contact with her parents, who are still down in Caracas — the nation’s capital — with her brother and other relatives. They send her updates about outrageous prices and the latest anti-government protests. She says it can be tough to keep her mind on schoolwork with her whole family facing such dire realities, but she’s staying hopeful.

Home country in the headlines

International headlines have lately been dominated by tales of suffering and escape in Venezuela, which sits on South America’s Caribbean coast. News outlets in the United States have been awash with bulletins describing the latest political going-ons and the daily hardships faced by those in their wake.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MEGHAN KIMBERLING | DESIGN CHIEF
Venezuelan security forces agents clash with protesters at Francisco de Paula’s Santander International Bridge in Cúcuta, Colombia, on the Venezuelan border on Feb. 24.

See **VENEZUELA** | pg. 4

President Book approaches a milestone

Spring semester presents new priorities as Book concludes her first year of presidency

Emmanuel Morgan

Executive Director | @emmanuelmorgan

Connie Book tried to not tear up. But her voice still cracked and her face reddened a little against her white and black patterned jacket.

March 1 will be her one-year anniversary as Elon University’s president — a year that definitely had its obstacles. Two hurricanes and a snowstorm blasted campus. Provost Steven House,

PRESIDENTIAL TENURE

The average Elon president serves for about 15 years. Book took office in March 2017 as Elon’s ninth president and made history as the first female with the title.

her second-in-command, announced his retirement. And an aggravated adjunct faculty grabbed signs and publicly protested their stance with the university, saying they seek higher pay and stabler jobs.

But when asked, “What was the hardest part of your year,” she didn’t list those things first. Instead, it was

something few knew about.

“We had a freshman who had a head injury over Thanksgiving, and his life was in the balance,” Book said. “So I called his parents and spoke to them because it’s important for those families and for our students and alumni to know that we’re thinking about them and that they’re a part of us.”

Book understands the job of a college president. She’s trained for it, having climbed Elon’s administrative ranks for 18 years. Her two years spent as The Citadel’s first female provost also prepared her. But speaking to grieving families, such as the families of that student and the two Aramark employees who died this year, truly showed her the scope of her responsibilities, she said.

“The work of president is about people — that community-building piece and how important that can be in times of distress,” Book said. “So that has been a surprise to me, but I’m grateful to be able to do that.”

As the spring semester starts, Book said she’s still learning. One year of experience won’t teach her everything she needs to know — the average Elon president serves for about 15 years. But she’ll use the lessons from the past 365 days to guide her as she makes decisions that will affect Elon for decades to come.

See **ONE YEAR** | pg. 5



NEWS • PAGE 7

Community ministries to offer new options for religious groups



LIFESTYLE • PAGE 9

Burlington mayor buys used bookstore Persnickety Books



SPORTS • PAGE 12

A look back at the four seniors’ four years

THE PENDULUM

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NEWS

No corrections were issued to Elon News Network for this section.

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No corrections were issued to Elon News Network for this section.

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No corrections were issued to Elon News Network for this section.

OPINIONS

No corrections were issued to Elon News Network for this section.

GAMES

How to Play: Guess the missing word in the five clues, then find them in the word search below. Words can be found backward, diagonal, etc.

1. President Connie Book was previously the first female provost at The ____ and spent two years there. *See Page 1 for answer.*
2. ____ is the capital of Venezuela. *See Page 1 for answer.*
3. A ____ leads all academic operations of a university, including hiring faculty and approving curriculum changes. *See Page 5 for answer.*
4. ____ is one of the religious organizations looking to become a community ministry. *See Page 7 for answer.*
5. Burlington Mayor Ian ____ and his wife recently bought used bookstore Persnickety Books. *See Page 9 for answer.*

C M Q Q U E Z J F Q N K O J T
E Y Q B W I L M I V K Q V Q S
Y N P R O V O S T P Y D A N U
H F P C V X D X X T G G U P Y
A T A U I N Y O U N G L I F E
R M M W B T N O U I J R V T K
O Z L R E A A D F O J O D Y V
Y J U C A K L D D A S Y I I V
X U Y A F B T T E D Z E K D Q
M A Y R L F J T U L L M K K V
F X V A W I V M X T J H O T S
K M E C L S F S P P I C C Y U
H G S A X M I I P A M S K M G
V B M S C O U P R T O Z O S X

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY - RUNOFF FOR SGA EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

APRIL 8, 1999. Following a general election, a runoff was needed to elect the new executive president of SGA. Following elections that were held earlier in the week, no clear winner was determined between Corvie Meadows and John Gardner.

"Seeing as no candidate received 50 percent of the vote plus one, we need to have a runoff election for the presidential candidates," said then-sitting SGA Executive President Mark Richter. Gardner was elected executive president following the runoff with Meadows.

Gardner, who was a sophomore at the time of his election, took his seat along with the rest of the newly-elected executive staff on April 8, 1999.

Gardner now works in University Advancement as Senior Director of Development.

CALENDAR: FEB. 27 - MARCH 5

SOFTBALL VS. LAFAYETTE 3 P.M. Hunt Softball Park 1	BASEBALL VS. WAGNER 4 P.M. Latham Park 1	WOMEN'S LACROSSE VS. DUKE 1 P.M. Rudd Field 3	FACTSET RESEARCH SYSTEMS INC. INFO SESSION 5:30 P.M. Moseley SPDC 4	ELON DAY ALL DAY Go to elon.edu/u/elon-day/events for regional alumni events 5
PERSONAL FINANCE SERIES 6 P.M. Station at Mill Point 5	HONDA AIRCRAFT CO. INFO SESSION 6:30 P.M. Moseley SPDC 5	MARDI GRAS CELEBRATION 6:30 P.M. McBride Gathering Space 5	SENIOR TOAST 7:30 P.M. Lakeside Meeting Rooms 5	ELON DAY MARDI PARTY 8 P.M. Iconic Plaza 5

Sophomore guard Saadia Munford tries to drive to the basket against Towson University freshman center Janeen Camp on Sunday, Feb. 24.



ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR



ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR

Senior cheerleader Colleen Crowley watches her teammates perform during the halftime show at the women's basketball game against Towson University on Sunday, Feb. 24.



ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR

Mark Eades, Elon counselor and group coordinator, speaks with his colleagues during College Coffee on Tuesday, Feb. 26, at Phi Beta Kappa Commons.



LIAM O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

One year into her presidency at Elon University, Connie Book says she grows in the role every day while adjusting to a time of transition for the school.



ZACHARY OHMANN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior guard Sheldon Eberhardt dribbles past College of Charleston freshman guard Jaylen Richard on Saturday, Feb. 23.

venezuelan students watch TURMOIL FROM AFAR

VENEZUELA | from cover

In the past few weeks, those headlines have mainly been concerned with assaults on the stability of the sitting government. President Nicolás Maduro’s regime is teetering on the edge of collapse, as opposition leader Juan Guaidó proclaimed himself the country’s legitimate president and garnered widespread support from Venezuelans and foreign governments alike.

Maduro, who assumed power after the death of Hugo Chávez in 2013, is largely blamed for Venezuela’s economic tailspin. Just this week, he turned the eyes of the world to Venezuela by denying entrance to truckloads of foreign humanitarian aid — supplies desperately needed by those inside the border.

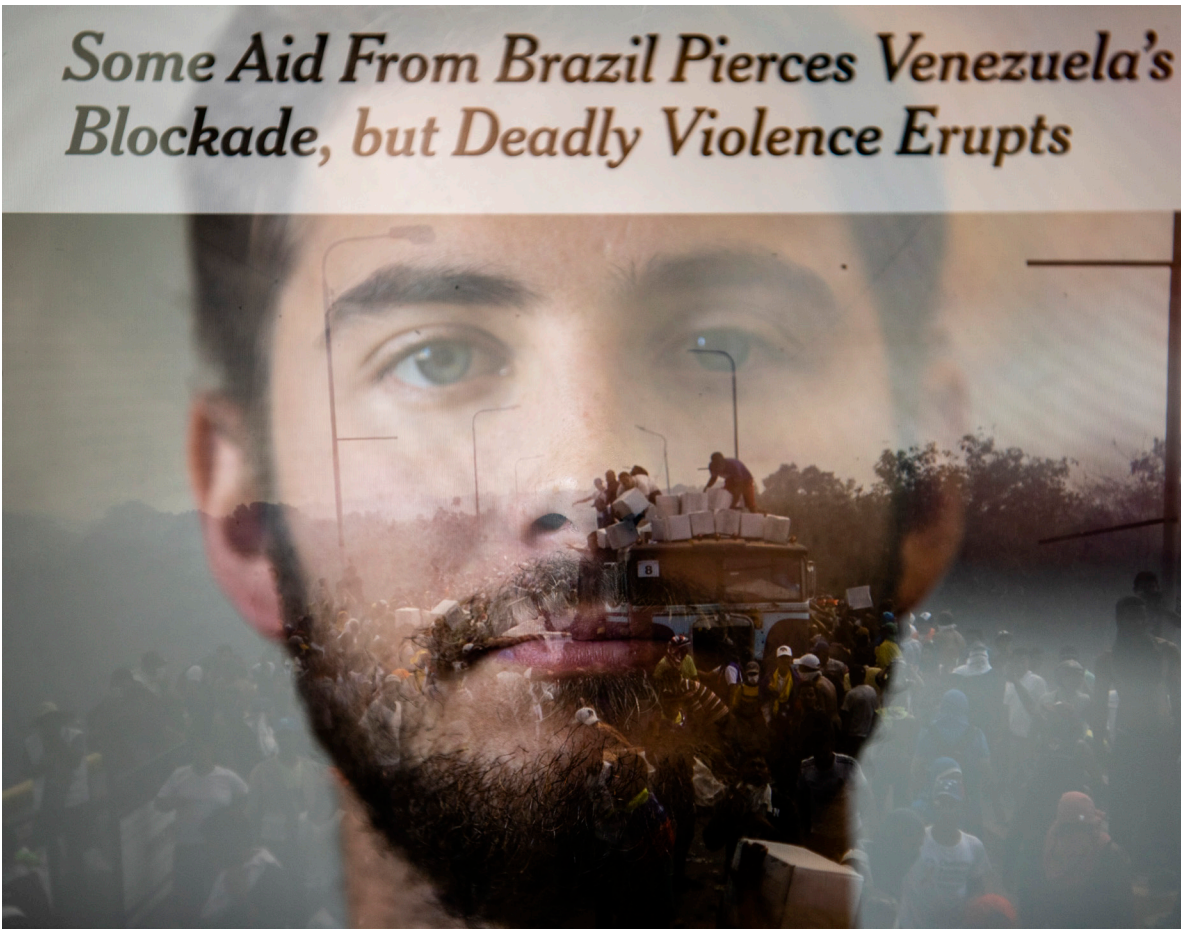
While the stories have ranged from analyses of the political situation to profiles of the hungry and desperate, they’ve been underscored by themes of poverty and misery. For Venezuelans abroad, they don’t paint a pretty picture of the place they call home.

“Everything that’s on the news is just, it’s just dark,” said junior Ricardo Blohm. “It’s all negative news. There’s nothing good about it. No one talks about Venezuela as a rich oil country, how we have one of the seven natural wonders of the world — no one says that anymore.”

Blohm, who came to the United States to start high school, says it’s sad to see the place he’s from painted in such a negative light. Others agree that it’s uncomfortable but say that those kinds of narratives are a necessary step on the path to making things better.

“I like that it’s been portrayed that way actually,” said sophomore Diana Marin. “I know that there’s some people that are like, ‘Oh no, but that’s not the Venezuela we are. People are going to have this bad impression.’ Well that’s reality. That’s what’s happening. The point is to show people what’s happening raw. You cannot sugarcoat it.”

That reality has been felt viscerally by Marin, who says clashes



A double exposure image shows junior Ricardo Blohm over an image from a New York Times article describing unfolding current events.

between protestors and police became so normal that she just got used to the smell of tear gas wafting through the streets.

Marin and other Venezuelan expats have been forced to come to terms with the fact that their memories of a more peaceful time are just that — memories. Their childhoods, free from tear gas and food shortages, are far different from the lives of Venezuelan children today.

“People are just very stuck in their homes,” Lanz said. “I think kids right now are probably growing up in a horrible situation, sadly, because they’re not getting what they should get. Like the experiences they should get as a kid, playing outside and doing all these fun things.”

Marin has been able to see that difference firsthand. Her brother and sister, both younger, are still in Caracas. Try as they might to go to school and live normal childhoods, Venezuela’s humanitarian

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THINKING ABOUT MY
SIBLINGS HAVING TO
GO THROUGH ALL OF
THAT EVERY SINGLE DAY
GROWING UP THERE. IT'S
HARD.

DIANA MARIN
SOPHOMORE

Bottom left: Senior Emiliana Lanz has pictures of her family and friends back home hanging on the wall of her apartment.

Bottom right: Sophomore Diana Marin wears a baseball hat adorned in her home nation’s flag.

crisis has gotten in the way.

“Just thinking about my siblings having to go through all of that every single day growing up there,” Marin said. “It’s hard.”

The return

When holiday breaks roll around, most Elon students head back home. Planes, trains and automobiles haul them en masse to homes across the country and across the world. But for some of the Venezuelan students, that’s not an option.

“It’s not safe for me to go back, which is terrible,” Blohm said. “Not many Americans can envision that, not being able to go to their own house and just hang out in their house. Even last time I went, I was there just for a week to renew my visa and all I could do was be in my house, get in a bulletproof car, go to the embassy and come back.”

Instead, Blohm visits his family

in Costa Rica, where they’ve relocated for safety and better work opportunities. He says stories of friends getting shot or kidnapped have kept him away from Venezuela for the time being.

In spite of the violence, though, others crave a return.

“I want to make a change,” Marin said. “I want to be there. I want to make history. I don’t want to be here chilling in Sankey [Hall], you know. I want to be there.”

Marin goes home for the summer and some holidays, but recent political developments have made her wish she was there for the latest protests. Since Guaidó claimed he was the country’s rightful president, he’s called for Venezuelans to take to the streets — and they’ve turned out in force.

Guaidó’s ambitious announcement has sent a surge of hope through the resistance movement, instilling optimism that the country is on the doorstep of change. That same sense of hope that has pushed thousands onto the streets of Caracas has been felt all the way up here in Elon.

Blohm remembers when he and a Venezuelan friend were at MaGerks Pub and Grill right after the news of Guaidó’s proclamation broke.

“We were at the bar just hugging each other, almost crying, because we thought after 20 years, 22 years of this government, that we were finally done,” Blohm said.

The end of Maduro’s government could pave the way for wholesale change in Venezuela — change that could help restore a sense of normalcy. Though it could take years to re-stabilize the economy and lure the diaspora back to its homeland, the ousting of Maduro would be the beginning of a long-awaited transformation.

Lanz and a Venezuelan friend joke about what’ll happen when that change comes, and they’re already hatching plans for the day it does.

“Whenever Maduro gets taken out of power, we’re going to go back home and fly there the next day,” Lanz said. “Whenever that happens, we’re going to go the next day. Because it would be awesome.”



ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR



ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR



LIAM O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

One year into being president of Elon University, Connie Book says she grows into the role every day while adjusting to a time of transition for the school.

ONE YEAR | from cover

Book's No. 1 priority is to stay ready.

Once news broke of Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's blackface controversy, she called the Elon archivists from her cab in New York City and asked them to inspect the university's old yearbooks. Additionally, because of the severe weather last fall, Book suggested squeezing more buffer class days in the semester calendar. When the unexpected happens, Book wants to be prepared.

But sometimes, you can't prevent being caught off guard.

On Nov. 29, 2018, adjunct faculty filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board to form a union. With choreographed chants, costumes and signs, faculty members marched to the president's office, asking Book and House to remain neutral. Five days later, Book sent an internal email claiming a union wouldn't be in Elon's best interest.

Book said she can't remember a time when Elon's faculty felt so "disgruntled." She also said they never addressed their claims through Academic Council, a faculty committee tasked to formulate policies regarding different issues for approval or disapproval of the general faculty.

The timing of the union "absolutely" intentionally coincided with Book becoming president, she said. The Service Employees International Union, the outside party helping Elon's adjuncts organize the vote, did the same with Duke University shortly after its new president took office in 2017. It's disappointing, Book said, that she couldn't answer these issues herself.

"To me, it's unfortunate that the university didn't have a chance to address these concerns," Book said. "That's what I've asked — that first I would have an opportunity to address these concerns before electing to have a third party."

"In a lot of ways I feel like, 'You're paying me to be the president, at least give me a shot to do it.' That's my job."

The NLRB will announce vote results March 12 when the ballots have been counted. Then, she'll as-

sess how to handle the issue moving forward, she said.

"One thing I said to the faculty is that one thing I share in common with the union is that I want the best working environment or our adjuncts," Book said.

The key player to all faculty is the provost, and Elon is currently on the hunt for one.

House announced in December he's stepping down as provost at the end of 2019, but he will still serve in his executive vice president role. Provosts lead all academic operations of a university, including hiring faculty and approving curriculum changes, among other things.

In the NFL, "Black Monday"

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THE WORK OF
PRESIDENT IS ABOUT
PEOPLE — THAT
COMMUNITY-BUILDING
PIECE AND HOW
IMPORTANT THAT
CAN BE IN TIMES OF
DISTRESS.

CONNIE BOOK
PRESIDENT OF ELON UNIVERSITY

refers to when owners fire underperforming head coaches after the regular season. In higher education, Book said there's something similar called "Massacre Monday" when new university presidents take office and implement their new staff members.

Book kept continuity with her team to avoid such a harsh transition at first. But a change in leadership naturally presented opportunities for senior staff to shuffle over time.

House, who's served as provost for 19 years, told her he'd stay on board for her first year to help ease her transition before retiring. Brooke Barnett, associate provost for academic and inclusive community, unexpectedly accepted a position as dean of the College of Communication at Butler Univer-

sity. Book also hired a new chief of staff, Patrick Noltemeyer, while promoting Jeff Stein to vice president for strategic initiatives. Now settled in her role, Book said she's excited to add different faces to her administration.

"New people bring in different energy," Book said. "Our culture has a lot of longevity, and I think that allows the university to have a long vision and take steps consistently."

Book recently announced the search committee for the new provost, and listening sessions are ongoing. After the search committee vets and interviews candidates, Book said she hopes to invite three to four finalists to campus in May for presentations. A decision, she said, should happen by early June. Book said a job description will be posted after the listening sessions. But she wants someone who aligns with Elon's mission.

"One quality I want is for them to embrace our model," Book said. "Somebody who really values the experiential and the engaged learning and how we've built a deep infrastructure at the university for that."

"So I want a leader that can bring a great learning asset and a provost who values that and is going to be a great champion for that."

As many changes as Book has faced throughout the past year, her morning routine has been one thing that has remained constant.

Before sending any emails, answering any calls or reading any news, she spends 30 minutes praying and having spiritual reflection. Praying reminds her that "she's not alone in this," and it gets her ready for whatever the day has in store. As she starts year two, she knows things will get stressful. But as long as she remembers her job is about the people, she says she'll get through it.

"I think about a moment of success is when our whole community is coming together," Book said. "One thing that's really clear to me in the work it is about people — about the development of people, about relationships. I'm most proud of that kind of moment when our community is operating together and really reflecting the Elon values and the hope that we have for the future."

From top to bottom:

FILE PHOTO BY ALEC MANDELL

The Elon community greets President Connie Book after her presidential appointment was announced on Oct. 9, 2017.

ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR

President Connie Book poses with students for a photograph on her first day as president on March 1, 2018, in Global Commons.

JESS RAPFOGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

President Connie Book, accompanied by Vice President Emerita Jo Watts Williams '55, plants her oak sapling on her first day as president on March 1, 2018.

FILE PHOTO BY CAROLINE BREHMAN

Joe D'Antonio, commissioner of the Colonial Athletic Association, hands President Connie Book one of the 2018 Women's Basketball CAA Championship trophies after Elon defeated Drexel University in the finals on March 10, 2018.

LIAM O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

President Connie Book foreshadows her upcoming inauguration speech with an anecdote about her 1978 Library Card at College Coffee on Oct. 10, 2018.

JESS RAPFOGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Connie Book is sworn in as the ninth president of Elon University on Oct. 18, 2018.



Warren to Book: Stop partnership with Wells Fargo

The senator condemns the bank's steep student account fees

Mackenzie Wilkes
Elon News Network | @macwilkes

“Dear President Book” reads the letter that Sen. Elizabeth Warren sent to Elon University. Warren, a congresswoman from Massachusetts and Democratic presidential candidate, wrote a letter to President Connie Book and 31 other university presidents in January addressing one common theme: Wells Fargo.

WELLS FARGO ON CAMPUSES

Wells Fargo is the second largest bank account provider for universities, with 304,227 active accounts across the United States.

At Elon, students can link a Wells Fargo account to their Phoenix Card, and there are currently 3,235 active accounts. The university's partnership with Wells Fargo started in 1999 with Wachovia National Bank and continued after Wachovia merged with Wells Fargo in 2008.

The report released by CFPB found that Wells Fargo charged the largest account fee to students

Wells Fargo is the second largest bank account provider for universities, with 304,227 active accounts across the United States, according to a report released by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.



Sen. Elizabeth Warren wrote and sent a letter asking university presidents to end partnerships with Wells Fargo due to high account fees.

over a 12-month period out of 14 different account providers. The average fee Wells Fargo charged students in the 2016-2017 academic period was \$46.99, according to the report. At Elon, students were charged an average of \$35.19 between July 2017 and June 2018. BankMobile is the largest provider for universities, but the account fee is \$34.87 less than that of Wells Fargo.

Sen. Warren condemned the fees in a letter to CEO and President of Wells Fargo Timothy Sloan, saying the fees are “exorbitant” and that the “shameful culture” of the company has “disastrous ef-

STUDENT ACCOUNTS AND FEES

3,235

active Wells Fargo accounts are linked to Phoenix Cards.

\$35.19

was the average charge for Elon students' account fees between July 2017 and June 2018. The average fee Wells Fargo charged students nationwide in the 2016-2017 academic period was \$46.99.

fects on college students.” While Wells Fargo and Elon are profiting off this partnership, Warren claims the fees are a disservice to students.

Elon received \$2,000 in royalties between July 2017 and June 2018, along with \$15,000 for marketing materials, such as the colorful silicone card holders seen on the backs of students' phones.

Amid the criticism Wells Fargo is facing for its fees, according to Bob Shea, associate vice president for business, finance and technology at Elon, Wells Fargo has waived some of the fees students receive when they open their account.

“Elon will continue partnering with Wells Fargo on the campus card program, and the university is taking steps to further ensure that students who have accounts are aware of the fees that will be charged related to ATM usage, overdrafts and other fee-generating events,” Shea said in a statement. “Wells Fargo has continued to review its campus card program and, following recent criticism of its fees, has updated the program to waive fees some students may incur as they begin using their bank accounts.”

The university does not provide information “regarding their account status and any account fees that are incurred,” according to the Phoenix Card Office. The university only provides a fee schedule.

There is currently no Wells Fargo representative on campus. The Phoenix Card Office said a representative is only available during fall and spring orientation and Rising Phoenix Weekends. Other than those times listed, students would have to go to a local Wells Fargo branch regarding matters with their account.

Sen. Warren says the disparity in fees between Wells Fargo and other banking institutions is not in the best interest of students, and she hopes the CFPB report will help Elon in future decisions on financial providers for students. Elon will continue to review its relationship with Wells Fargo, and according to Shea, as of the last review session, no other banking institution responded to Elon's proposal for a card program.

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GRACE MORRIS
JUNIOR

“JOINING ENN WAS THE GREATEST DECISION I HAVE MADE AT ELON. NOT ONLY DID I MAKE AMAZING FRIENDS, BUT I LEARNED ABOUT MYSELF AND MY FUTURE IN JOURNALISM.”

ALEX ROAT
JUNIOR

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AGREEING TO DISAGREE

New initiative will allow religious organizations to follow own principles

Hannah Massen

Elon News Network | @massenhannah

In June 2019, Elon University's religious student organizations will have the option to convert to community ministry status, trading SGA funding for the freedom to enforce their own criteria — regardless of university policy.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY MINISTRY STATUS?

Organizations have the option to trade SGA funding for the freedom to enforce their own criteria — regardless of university policy.

Elon's Truitt Center is already home to recognized student organizations and university programs that abide by a set of core principles, said Joel Harter, associate university chaplain and director of the Truitt Center, in a town hall meeting on Feb. 19. These principles include behavioral standards, required student-led meetings and leadership selection, acceptance of all students in good standing with the university and a non-discrimination policy.

The list of organizations looking to become community ministries includes Campus Outreach, YoungLife, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, InterVarsity and Chabad — a Jewish organization that is currently not recognized by the university.

“By calling it a community ministry, we’re saying this community group isn’t exactly an Elon group,” Harter said. “We’re giving them permission to work with students, but we’re not exactly funding them.”

University Chaplain Jan Fuller and her coworkers drafted the plans for community ministries years ago, but they were laid to rest until recently.

“We’ve been playing a little fast and loose with those core principles,” Fuller said.

Though community ministries would no longer be eligible for university funding, they would have the same access to campus as recognized student organizations. These ministries would also be able to implement their own beliefs on the condition of transparency.

“We’ve created this third category to help groups who can’t fully comply with the core principles and the non-discrimination policies of the university, to permit them to

stay on campus with us,” Fuller said. “We did it to preserve our relationship with some of our Christian groups.”

One of these groups is Elon’s chapter of InterVarsity.

Elon junior Caroline Enright held a leadership position in InterVarsity until the discussion of becoming a community ministry came about in October 2018. It was brought to her attention that InterVarsity maintained a statement on homosexuality, which defied her personal beliefs.

In a meeting between student leaders and the group’s staff affiliate, Enright learned that keeping her leadership position would require compliance with the organization’s views.

“In that meeting, it was made clear to the student leaders that if we disagreed with that statement, we were not allowed to be leaders anymore, which is in direct contention with student organization requirements and nondiscrimination policies for Elon University,” Enright said. “At that moment, it was no longer a student organization because not only were students being removed because of their personal beliefs, but staff were making a decision that should have been from student leaders, if not the whole community.”

Enright, as well as several other student leaders, stepped down from their positions that day.

In the past two months, InterVarsity’s presence on campus has declined. The organization still holds small

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THIS CHANGE WILL MAKE EVERYTHING MORE TRANSPARENT SO THAT PEOPLE AREN’T TRICKED INTO GOING TO AN ORGANIZATION, THEN COME TO FIND OUT THAT THEY HAVE SECRET BELIEFS.

CAROLINE ENRIGHT
JUNIOR

group sessions throughout the week, but no longer holds large group sessions due to a lack of student leaders.

InterVarsity’s national website reads, “As good citizens on campus, we assert that Christian organizations should have the right to require their leaders to believe and follow the traditional Christian principles and goals of their organization based, in part, on the free exercise clause in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and, in part, on simple logic — it upholds the integrity of the organization.”

Representatives from Elon’s chapter of InterVarsity were contacted and declined comment.

In the town hall meeting, Harter said that community ministries could require student leaders to sign agreements of assent.



ABBY GIBBS | PHOTO EDITOR

Jan Fuller, university chaplain, and her coworkers will permit religious organizations to become community ministries. She said there are pros and cons about creating this status.

“Some groups are not asking you to sign it so much as they are asking you to say that you don’t disagree with it,” Harter said. “I believe that our groups don’t intend to hate or hurt anyone. They might have beliefs that some people don’t like, and we’re asking them to be transparent with those beliefs.”

Fuller said the creation of community ministries would come with benefits and drawbacks.

“I think the advantage is that it gives some of our Christian groups more freedom to really articulate who they are, what they believe, what their standards are and what their practices are,” Fuller said. “The clear disadvantage is that community ministries are not going to get money from SGA that comes from student fees.”

Some students at the town hall meeting raised concerns about having to pay separate student activity fees for their organization, but Enright believes community ministries should not receive SGA funding.

“I don’t think it’s fair for students belonging to the LGBTQ population — their student money — to go toward groups who see them as not equal or, as IV would say, ‘sexually broken,’” Enright said.

She wishes community ministries had been created sooner as her organization’s views would have been made clearer.

“I think that if this change had been in place, it would have protected the members of the IV community who either felt forced out of their position like I did or felt lied to or betrayed,” Enright said. “This change will make everything more transparent so that people aren’t tricked into going to an organization, then come to find out that they have secret beliefs.”

 InterVarsity


younglife


ELON


Chabad
ELON & BURLINGTON


FELLOWSHIP OF
CHRISTIAN ATHLETES

CAMPUS VOICES

Students can play a vital role in support for faculty union



Lindsey Jordan
Columnist

On Nov. 29, 2018, students proudly stood with adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty to kick off the campaign to establish a union at Elon University. At the end of the demonstration, as the faculty delivered their request to the president’s office asking the administration to remain neutral, students accompanied them in delivering a petition of solidarity that was signed by 270 students and alumni. These students from all across campus are uniting with faculty because we are inspired by their commitment to making Elon better by standing up for the rights of faculty, who for far too long have been hurt by the university’s policies.

Since then, student support for the union has only grown. Student advocates attended and engaged in the Dec. 6 SGA meeting; students and alumni participated in a call-in day to the university administration to voice their concerns; an alumni petition with 153 signatures was delivered to the administration and students have continued to add their names to the petition. But growing student recognition of the deplorable conditions our adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty face is being accompanied by a stream of misinformation and denouncement from university administration.

A particular concern for students is the dissemination of a narrative that says being “pro-union” means being “anti-student.” In a Dec. 4 email to faculty, Provost Steven House wrote that “without hesitation,” he believes “a union is not in the best interest of faculty, our students or the future of our university.” In her video response to the formation of a faculty union, President Connie Book heavily implied that any system other than Academic Council does not place students “at the center of [Elon’s] mission.” This could not be further from the truth.

From the onset of the campaign,

faculty have made it clear that the well-being of students is at the center of this fight. In a column written for Elon News Network, the Organizing Committee characterized its desire to form a union as stemming from the aspiration to be “the teachers, mentors and scholars that our students deserve.”

There is strong evidence of the benefits of faculty unions for the entire university community. In their seminal book “What Do Unions Do?” Harvard University economists Richard Freeman and James Medoff explain that unions play a vital role in improving the workplace for workers by reducing inequality, increasing productivity, improving retention, reducing discrimination and providing workers with a happy workplace.

As the Organizing Committee poignantly captured, the working conditions of the faculty are also student learning conditions. The system as it stands bars many adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty from obtaining research grants, engaging in departmental service, formally mentoring student research and participating in professional development activities. Apart from the quantifiable benefits of unionization, it is imperative for students and faculty alike that all faculty be allowed to engage fully with these pinnacles of higher education.

We students must take seriously the grievances that drove faculty to pursue the formation of a union. At the November demonstration, faculty — faculty we know, love and respect — described working multiple jobs, struggling to pay medical bills and living in fear of losing their jobs and being unable to care for themselves and their families.

Elon states in its mission that it is committed to “preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common

good.” We know the questions being raised are bigger than Elon. Nationally, the trend toward the commodification of higher education threatens faculty and students alike. Recent articles published by ENN have brought to light that Elon has sued three former students over unpaid loans. Unlike national trends that show student loan recovery civil suits are at their lowest levels in years, Elon has continued to weaponize the legal system in ways that unfairly affects low-income students (“Student Loan Default Recovery Continues to Drop in FY 2018,” Syracuse University). If we are truly to become “global citizens and informed leaders,” we must be willing to not only discuss or confront national or global issues but also recognize when injustice threatens our own community.

Elon students have demonstrated they are willing to have difficult conversations about where our university falls short. On Martin Luther King Jr. Day this year, students came together to assert that all students deserve dignity, respect and inclusion in their “Privilege Check” action. We must extend the same concern for justice to all members of the Elon community, including our faculty. Adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty deserve fair working conditions and a say in their workplace, including the decision to unionize.

As students, we have immense power to demand that Elon ensure the fair treatment and compensation of all their employees. We can work to build a campus community that lives up to the high standards we set for ourselves, but only if we as students remain engaged and hold the university administration accountable for their actions. By supporting the faculty in forming a union, we show we really do care about all members of the Elon family — both in our words and in our actions.

STUDENT ACTION

1. Engage in the discussion with professors, parents and peers
2. Call the Elon University administration to demand the anti-union campaign be dropped and to allow for a democratic election free of university interference. Voice concerns for the treatment of adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty (see contact information below).
3. Sign the student petition of solidarity to let adjunct and non-tenure-track faculty know we stand with them and to let Elon’s administration know we are paying close attention.

NAMES AND NUMBERS

President Connie Book:
(336) 278-7900
Provost Steven House:
(336) 278-6647

If you cannot reach Provost House or President Book, ask their assistants to deliver the message to them. Include your name and number so they can call you back.

Count your blessings: Appreciate the time you have



Hannah Benson
Columnist

If you know anything about me, you may know me for my comedic demeanor and dislike of taking myself too seriously. I walk with a spring in my step, and I am usually the chattiest kid in class spreading good vibes around campus. But the past few weeks have brought hardship into my life, and it’s a little difficult to keep up my bubbly persona.

On Tuesday, Feb. 12, I lost a dear childhood friend to cancer. She was 22 and had been fighting intermittently for three years. Her college experience was characterized by hospital visits, experimental surgeries and ceaseless pain — both emotional and physical. Being far from home, I often let slip from my mind what my friend was going through because I felt distant from the hardship of problems back in New Hampshire. I’d receive updates from my mother every week detailing her condition and latest struggle, and I often

found myself pushing away my concerns as the severity of her condition seemed less real when I was several states and hundreds of miles away.

I had the privilege of tuning in and out of my friend’s sickness because it didn’t directly affect me. I’d hear from my mother, grieve for a bit and then turn off my feelings and head to work or class as I had the priceless luxury of not having been directly touched by terminal illness.

And still, despite my condition of pristine health, I’d hear myself whine about things — my professors asked too much of me, senior year was flying by or it was too cold out that week — all trivial factors in my day to day life that pointed at my privileged position.

I do a lot of preaching — do what you love, challenge the status quo, don’t live behind your screen — and I encourage my peers and professors to better their lives with my anecdotal rants and

sobering statistics. And more often than not, I practice what I preach. But my whole nature of “Be thankful! Stop whining!” is something I could be carrying out a lot better.

I hear myself complain every day despite my fortunate status in the world, and it was time I got some perspective. The sudden passing of my friend, while atrocious and heartbreaking, threw me that hardball quickly and with little notice. And the reflection I’ve had since is challenging me to be better. Here are some of the things I’ve learned.

According to the American Cancer Society, one in every 100 college students has or once had cancer. About 9,000 young adults die from cancer each year. Cancer is the fourth leading cause of death in this age group, behind only accidents, suicide and homicide. It’s the leading cause of death from disease among females in this age group and is second

only to heart disease among males.

You never know what someone is going through, and you never know when you can be struck by tragedy. I’m sure my friend would’ve done anything to be able to get in a car and drive to class today, but because of cancer and the cards she was dealt, she can’t. She’d be thrilled at the prospect of having a paid internship, but she isn’t here to do so.

My friend, a beautiful soul, a charming jokester and a vessel for strength in the face of cancer, didn’t get the life she deserved, and I now feel like my duty to make sure her zeal and graciousness touched the lives of others after she’s gone.

My health, my wealth and my positive attitude are such a blessing, and I’ve been slapped hard in the face to come to terms with the fact that I need to be more thankful for them. You never know when everything you’ve taken

for granted can be ripped from your grasp.

So take a minute, a moment of your life, and thank the stars aligned that made you alive and able to read this today. Call your mom, tell her you love her. Let a stranger merge into your lane on the highway. Take time to indulge in the things you love, and appreciate the health you have. Do it for a girl who got hers taken away too soon.

I know this story may not change you overnight, or even mine, and the ignorance that it will is the kind of pill we swallow when we read preachy editorials in the first place — the idea that the two minutes you spent reading this were going to change the course of your behavior. What I hope for in my publicized rantings is to sow a seed, always a seed, in the mind of a reader that can either be nurtured or forgotten later.

Whether it grows is up to you, and I hope, for her sake, it does.

LIFESTYLE



Located in downtown Burlington at 117 W. Davis St., Persnickety Books was recently bought by Burlington Mayor Ian Baltutis.

CORY WELLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TURNING TO A NEW PAGE

Burlington mayor becomes new owner of Persnickety Books

Lilly Blomquist
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

BURLINGTON MAYOR IAN BALTUTIS and his wife, Dr. Kristina Baltutis, purchased Persnickety Books on Feb. 12 in hopes of fostering a sense of community within the walls of the used bookstore and in the wider Burlington community.

SPECIAL PROGRAM

Baltutis hopes to offer employment opportunities for former felons reacquainting back into the community.

of books or the adventures of exploring the shelves.”

Persnickety Books has been part of the Historic Downtown Burlington area at 117 W. Davis St. since 2017 when the previous owners, Shawna Dron-Gentert and Herb Gentert, opened it. Once the Genterts put the bookstore up for sale, the Baltutises saw it as an opportunity to preserve the space as a safe and welcoming area for community members to explore, learn and socialize.

One way in which the Baltutises aim to improve the community as the new owners is by offering part-time employment opportunities for

former felons. By partnering with Benevolence Farms and Sustainable Alamance, Persnickety Books strives to help former felons transition back into the community and feel more invested in the area so they are less likely to end up back in prison.

“When folks come out of prison, they’ve got a criminal record,” Baltutis said. “It can be really hard for them to find employment, which makes it particularly hard to pay their rent, pay child support and be able to support their families.”

With the bookstore’s new program, Baltutis said he wants to reduce possible challenges for former felons as they strive to improve their lives by providing a source of income and helping them take ownership of their lives.

Former felons will begin their professional journey by working at the store’s off-site book processing location so that the bookstore maintains its safe environment. Baltutis said if the workers prove to be viable contributors to the business, they might progress to the bookstore as sales associates.

The new program to employ former felons aligns with the bookstore’s new motto, “Giving books and people a second chance.” Just like the bookstore reuses books so other visitors can enjoy the materials, it also strives to give former felons a clean slate to begin their path toward a more promising future.

Kaitlin Zuleta, a Gibsonville resident born and raised in Burlington, said the bookstore’s new initiative to help former felons restore their reputations augments the

bookstore’s appeal and its contribution to the community.

“I think it’s wonderful to have a way to try to help people have a second chance,” Zuleta said. “I think as long as people want to do better for themselves and change the path of their lives, people should support that.”

Zuleta said the mayor’s trust and guidance reminds the community members that people’s past decisions do not define them and that they are capable of change. She said the



EVERYBODY HAS A DIFFERENT REASON WHY THEY LOVE COMING TO THE BOOKSTORE, WHETHER IT IS THE GENRES OF BOOKS OR THE ADVENTURES OF EXPLORING THE SHELVES.

IAN BALTUTIS
BURLINGTON MAYOR

bookstore creates a welcoming and inclusive environment that encourages everyone to treat one another with utmost respect, despite their past.

Baltutis said the off-site book processing operation is another one of the bookstore’s future initiatives that aims to improve the community by offering books a second home.

Baltutis said this location will give the bookstore extra room to identify books that are too obscure or damaged for the shelves. Instead of finding their home at Persnickety Books, they will end up in libraries, barber shop waiting rooms and other local areas so more community members can form connections to the books.

“It all feeds into wanting to find a second home, a second chance, for every book we touch,” Baltutis said.

Baltutis said the bookstore’s processing site is currently located in Greensboro, but he said he hopes to open a space in Alamance County in the near future.

As for the current location in Burlington, Baltutis said Persnickety Books will continue to offer visitors 30,000 books of various genres and topics to expand their book collection and to develop their intellects and imaginations. Baltutis said he will add new books, such as foreign language novels, to expand the selection.

Burlington resident Amanda Parker said she visits the bookstore once a month with her daughter because the store offers endless possibilities and multiple opportunities to get lost in the pages.

“They have everything you could possibly imagine and then stuff you didn’t even know you needed,” Parker said.

Baltutis said he is also considering extending the bookstore’s hours into the evening to prolong the time that community members join together to read or explore the shelves.

Baltutis said he also wants

IF YOU GO

What: Persnickety Books
Where: 117 W. Davis St., Burlington, NC 27215
Hours: Monday – Friday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.; closed Sundays

Persnickety Books to serve as a comfortable and enjoyable place for all ages, so he said he will add a play space for children to occupy themselves while parents shop. Baltutis said he also plans on expanding the bookstore’s lounge space by partnering with local businesses to add a coffee shop or cafe, which he said will enhance the store’s ambiance.

Though Baltutis is coordinating future plans for the bookstore, he said he will maintain many of the store’s current initiatives. Persnickety Books will continue its trade-in program, which is an opportunity for people to bring in used books for store credit, and its volunteer program.

Zuleta said she is excited about the bookstore’s improvements and its future as a place that further develops the Burlington community.

“I truly want to see the bookstore continue to thrive,” Zuleta said. “We don’t have a lot of used bookstores in the area that have the type of selection that Persnickety has, and I know a lot of children, teens and young adults who have really enjoyed being able to get new reading material at affordable prices. In an age that is all about technology, nothing beats getting a book in your hands and losing yourself in a different world, page after page.”

ELON EATS

Sandwich shop offers simple menu and inviting atmosphere

Family owned shop rings in its 23rd year of business

Cassidy Beal
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

Harrison's is a modest sandwich shop nestled in a strip off of South Church Street in New Market Square, an easy eight-minute drive from Elon's campus.

Walking in, customers are greeted by a warm and cozy interior with small, intimate seating. A giant chalkboard menu on the wall catches the eye before the cheery staff calls out a welcome. The comforting scent of freshly made pita wafts from the kitchen, intertwined with the salty-sweet tang of teriyaki sauce and cooking chicken.

"It's got a good, clean vibe," said customer Henry Grice. "Everyone is very social."

Named after owner Paul Clayton's family name, Clayton started working at Harrison's when he was 14 years old. His father, Fred, started the restaurant in 1995 after his previous restaurant, Kamal's, closed down.

Nowadays, the food at Harrison's is considered simplistic, but Clayton said when Harrison's first opened, the food was "borderline exotic." No one really knew "what the hell pita bread and that stuff was," Clayton said.



NINA FLECK | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Besides being known for their special teriyaki chicken served on pita and shish kebab platters, Harrison's also caters. "We do some weddings, we do some private stuff, but it's mainly Alamance Community College, Kernodle Clinic, the hospital and LabCorp and some of the schools," Clayton said. He added that though they typically cater to businesses, they have done a few private parties as well. "If you call and you pay for it, we'll show up," Clayton said.

Desserts line the front table leading to the cash register — most notably the ever-popular baklava, enshrined in a glass

“WE’RE STILL HERE AFTER ALL THIS TIME, SO A LOT OF RESTAURANTS DON’T MAKE IT VERY LONG. YOU JUST NEVER KNOW. SO YEAH, WE GOT A GOOD THING GOING.”

PAUL CLAYTON
OWNER

case. The pastries are made by local town of Elon baker Meredith Wilkerson. Wilkerson started working at Harrison's in 2014 and helped to "fill a void" the restaurant had. Her festive-themed desserts are especially popular during the holiday season, baking evil Santa heads and other decorative cookies. Clayton said she "can barely keep up with the demand" when she comes in two or three times a day to replenish her product. Clayton himself believes strongly in introducing Grinch cookies for the holidays. "They would sell. They would," Clayton said. "I'm going to make it happen."

Harrison's sits in New Market Square along with Harris Teeter and Pet Supermarket along with other community favorites.

IF YOU GO...

What: Harrison's
Location: 2773 S. Church St., Burlington, NC 27215
Hours: Monday – Sunday 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The inviting atmosphere of Harrison's is enhanced by charming artwork of flowers and roosters hanging on the walls with price tags swinging from the corners. Local artist Jill Troutman previously created some of the art adorning Harrison's walls and has made a name for herself. She now teaches art classes and takes commissions. The Burlington Arts Council works with Harrison's to showcase new artists, changing out the paintings every six weeks or so.

Harrison's struggled the first few years after opening but took off in its fourth year. "Been around ever since," Clayton said. He took over the restaurant after his father passed away in 2009 but didn't fully take ownership until around 2015.

"We're still here after all this time, so a lot of restaurants don't make it very long. You just never know. So yeah, we got a good thing going," Clayton said with a smile.

Considering the local ties Harrison's has established over the last 20 years, the sandwich shop is likely not going anywhere anytime soon.

ELON WATCHES

Award-winning films to be screened this weekend

Turner Theatre packs weekend with films designed to toy with audiences' every emotion

Maria Barreto
Elon News Network | @maria_abarreto

If Beale Street Could Talk

The process of adapting a book into a film can be a delicate one. Depending on how the original source material is handled and interpreted, adaptations can either go tremendously well or disastrously bad. And Barry Jenkins' "If Beale Street Could Talk" could not be a better example of an adaptation gone right. The story surrounds the romance between Tish Rivers (Kiki Layne) and Fonny Hunt (Stephen James), a couple ready to start a new life together with a baby on the way until Fonny is accused of a crime he didn't commit. It's then up to Tish, with the help of her family, to prove Fonny's innocence and reunite their family.

This is a film told in a series of vignettes, warming the audience's heart with the palpable connection between Fonny and Tish in one scene and shattering it with the matter-of-fact realism of injustice that accompanies the African American experience in the United States. Jenkins pulls zero punches in the adaptation of James Baldwin's book of the same

name in that the film will more often than not leave audiences feeling angry and frustrated as the characters fleshed out by breathtaking performances are faced with a less than happy ending.

"If Beale Street Could Talk" confronts audiences with the truth of the systematic oppression African Americans currently face, especially considering how much the film mirrors today's society despite the source material having been written in 1974. With an award-winning performance by Regina King, who plays Tish's mother, "If Beale Street Could Talk" is definitely a film audiences won't want to miss.

Searching

"Searching," directed by Aneesh Chaganty, stars John Cho as a father desperate to find his missing 16-year-old daughter. The story is told entirely from the perspective of the daughter's laptop after Cho breaks in to find any sort of clue, very similar in fashion to the misguided experiment that was "Unfriended." But the innovative method of telling the story solely from digital devices is about where the comparison to "Unfriended" ends.

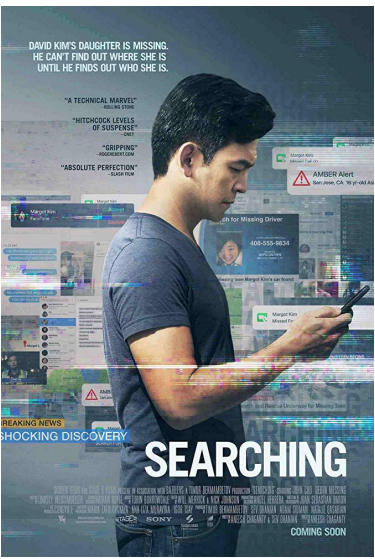
Chaganty's film succeeded in every aspect "Unfriended" failed. The characters were surprisingly compelling and well-developed throughout the film, particularly Cho as he carries the audience through the intimate and emo-



tional search for his daughter. How the story was told was innovative and drew attention to how dependent today's society is on technology and how it can turn people into mindless, screen-obsessed drones. At the end of the day, "Searching" was sincerely better than it probably had any business being and was an adventure in screenwriting as Chaganty continually found new ways to incorporate the laptop into how the investigation for Cho's daughter unfolded.

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse

The Academy Award for Best Animated Feature couldn't have gone to a better film. "Spider-Man:



Into the Spider-Verse" focuses on Miles Morales (Shameik Moore), an Afro-Latino kid from Brooklyn, New York, who is accidentally bitten by a radioactive spider and is given similar abilities to those of Spider-Man.

Directed by Peter Ramsey, Bob Persichetti and Rodney Rothman (with the screenplay by Phil Lord, half the team behind "The LEGO Movie"), "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" throws audiences into a vibrant, eclectic world alive with culture and color that exemplifies what it's like to read a comic book. The story slowly introduces the audiences to other Spider-characters of parallel universes, brought to life thanks to the brilliant voice acting of Jake Johnson, Hailee Steinfeld,



MOVIE POSTERS COURTESY OF IMDB

John Mulaney, Kimiko Glenn and Nicolas Cage.

For those who love Spider-Man but are tired of hearing the tired and repeated origin story, this film reinvigorates the tale. From the second the audience is introduced to Miles and his multi-cultural family, we're shown a new kind of Spider-Man — one that a wider and more diverse range of audiences will be able to relate to. "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" is a landmark in animation dripping with style and color. The film is absolutely stunning to watch and backed by a talented cast and excellently fitting soundtrack that together leaves audiences excited and desperately waiting for the next time they can see it.

LLC FACILITATES EXPLORATION

New Living Learning Community provides comfort and familiarity

Emery Eisner

Elon News Network | @eisneremery

The lights in Irazu Coffee are low. An empty microphone stand waits patiently beside a speaker as a tangle of cords lay across the stage.

LIVING LEARNING COMMUNITY

The African Diaspora LLC is located on the fourth floor of Jackson Hall.

There are no more than 13 people in the room. Soon, low-key background music exits the speaker and fills the air, and students begin to mess around on stage, lip-syncing to the songs they like and joking around about what they should perform in the show.

After what is determined to be enough time has passed, the show begins: It is open mic night for the Black Solidarity Day Conference. One girl performs an a cappella ballad; another sings to music. Others perform a comical rap duet. All the while, people are happily clapping along, laughing and enjoying each other's company.

Then a student stands up to read two of her poems, and the room falls respectfully still. Throughout the night, she has been talking to other students, dancing along to the songs and laughing with everyone else. She has a powerfully comforting presence, nearly maternal. She reads haunting compositions about the pain her father left her and the trauma of racism in the South. Her name is Victoria Gordon, and she is more than a poet, more than a friend, more than a student: she is a leader.

As one of the founding members of the African Diaspora Living Learning Community (LLC), located on the fourth floor of Jackson Hall in the Global Neighborhood, Gordon, a sophomore, currently serves as the resident assistant of the floor. As a queer woman of color, she is intimately acquainted with the experiences some of her residents have on Elon's campus.

The LLC was created this year to give students a space to discuss African culture as well as issues faced within the African diaspora — the collection of worldwide communities descended from African people. It is a space that Gordon feels is essential because of her residents' experiences.

Freshman A'Shaela Chaires,

a resident of the LLC, values her time surrounded by other students of color.

"It's a great place where you can be your authentic self," Chaires said. "It's a place you can't find elsewhere on campus. There's lots of people that share the same experiences you do that other people on campus just won't understand. So it's just where I'm most comfortable."

Chaires said finding a community made up of people with similar backgrounds can have a huge impact on the personal and professional lives of students. "It definitely makes you willing to try harder and push yourself in the classroom, making yourself known on campus, so that we're not just a number but we actually contribute to the community as well," Chaires said.

Other students agree. "It's just a great place to come to after a long day because in classrooms you're only one or two black people, but when you come on this floor, there's 15 of us," said sophomore resident Ciani Foy.

Gordon sees a lot of camaraderie on her floor. "Whether it's talking about how your day goes, talking about that newest episode of 'Grownish' ... a lot of people just share their own experience, and I'm glad there's that openness on the floor, and just the way that the

residents move, you can tell a lot of them are like family, and that's really great ... I'm just really proud," Gordon said.

But the LLC is more than just half of a floor where students of color can congregate and talk to each other — there are efforts being made to include other parts of campus in the dialogue around the African diaspora.

"I feel like having a space like the African Diaspora LLC definitely helps to improve the support that we get from different students across campus," Gordon said. "I think that this is a good step in the right direction. I think there's a lot more to be done. This weekend, we had our Black Solidarity Day Conference, which was really cool."

Students on the LLC "are expected to aid in the programming and develop-

“

IT'S A PLACE YOU CAN'T FIND ELSEWHERE ON CAMPUS. THERE'S LOTS OF PEOPLE THAT SHARE THE SAME EXPERIENCES YOU DO THAT OTHER PEOPLE ON CAMPUS JUST WON'T UNDERSTAND. SO IT'S JUST WHERE I'M MOST COMFORTABLE.

A'SHAELA CHAIRES
FRESHMAN

ment" of MLK Jr. commemorative events, Black History Month, and Black Solidarity Day, according to Residence Life. These and other events, Gordon hopes, will help get



EMERY EISNER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

more students involved and encourage more voices to be part of the dialogue.

But scheduling conflicts have been a major obstacle in getting some of the events off the ground. The floor was supposed to take a trip to Washington D.C., during which they would visit the historically black Howard University, go to the African American museum and "find some really good soul food places," according to Gordon. "It was supposed to be a very dynamic trip that [Brandon Bell, advisor of the LLC] and I had planned, but because of the Hurricane [Florence],

it didn't end up happening. It's the way that Elon culture goes: it's so busy that it was just hard to find another weekend that worked."

Going forward, Gordon and other students are excited about what the future of the LLC will bring. The program is expected to expand onto the entire floor by next year, at which time the sitting president of the freshman class, Lauryn Adams, will take over as resident assistant.

Under Gordon's leadership and guidance, the African Diaspora LLC tenaciously drives the progress of Elon's social landscape, forging sometimes difficult conversations and giving students of color the visibility they need, in order to dispel ignorance and so that other students at Elon can see them for what they truly are, Gordon said. "At the end of the day, we're people."



Freshman A'Shaela Chaires and sophomore Victoria Gordon spend time in the common room on the fourth floor of Jackson Hall.

EMERY EISNER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



SPORTS

ONE LAST RIDE

Senior forward Karolis Kundrotas takes the tip-off for Elon in the first game at Schar Center on Nov. 9, 2018, against UNC at Chapel Hill.

ZACH OHMANN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Men’s basketball seniors celebrate four years of commitment

Jack Haley
Sports Director | @jackhaley17

In front of a crowd of 3,623 fans, four senior men’s basketball players walked out to center court of Schar Center with loved ones in tow to be honored for their commitment to the program. Greeted with flowers, plaques and an embrace from head coach Matt Matheny, forward Tyler Seibring, guard Steven Santa Ana, forward Karolis Kundrotas and guard Sheldon Eberhardt got set for their last home game of their Elon University careers.

Matheny noted the crowd’s size — the second largest in Schar Center history — saying how happy he was to see so many people at the game to “celebrate a senior class that enjoyed the celebration of their last game.”

The four seniors have contributed nearly 4,000 points, 700 assists and 1,700 rebounds over the course of their careers. While those numbers have been the backbone of the Phoenix teams they have played on, things have not always come easy these past four years.

What about Dainan Swoope? Since the guard had his season cut short by a nagging right ankle injury after six games, he hasn’t been able to be a force on the floor like Elon expected him to be this year. Swoope will be back next year to compete hopefully at full health for his fifth year of eligibility. This time

next year, Swoope will get a full page commemorating his five years Under The Oaks. But for now, the focus is on the four still playing.

When this group came to Elon, the Phoenix was in its second year of Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) competition. Growing pains are unavoidable for a team moving conferences, and for Elon, this was no exception. But this core group has helped keep the team afloat during these tough years.

This tough mentality has earned the respect of many in the conference. Earl Grant, head coach of the College of Charleston, said he almost got emotional in the handshake line following the battle against Elon on Senior Night.

“It was a nice moment, and we appreciate what he has done,” Seibring said of Grant.

With 15 to 20 family members in attendance, Seibring capped off his last home game with 24 points and six rebounds. Though he took some time to reflect on his Schar Center finale, in true Tyler Seibring fashion, his mind was already on to the next game.

Despite Seibring’s efforts, the seniors could not be sent off on a high note, dropping their last home game 84-74. Matheny, always wanting to win, especially wanted to be able to send his seniors out the right way.

“It’s disappointing. They want to enjoy it, and we want them to enjoy it,” Matheny said. “You think back to a year ago: it was a disappointing senior night then too, but this one is different because our team just hasn’t put it all together yet.”

No one may have been more disappointed than Santa Ana, who — after a season-high 31 points in



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MATT MATHENY
HEAD COACH

ZACH OHMANN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Left: Senior guard Sheldon Eberhardt lines up next to UNC at Chapel Hill’s Luke May during the first game at Schar Center on Nov. 9, 2018.

Center left: Senior guard Steven Santa Ana shoves senior forward Tyler Seibring in celebration.

Center right: Senior guard Steven Santa Ana flexes after scoring a clutch basket.

Right: Senior forward Karolis Kundrotas heads off the court following the home opening loss to UNC at Chapel Hill on Nov. 9, 2018.

his last game — could only play eight minutes after coming down with the flu.

“He tried,” Matheny said. “He just couldn’t go.”

If Seibring has been the backbone of this group, Santa Ana has been the heart. The fiery North Carolina native has never been afraid to play physically and to try and get under the skin of opposing players. Santa Ana flies up and down the court, snatching rebounds, hitting threes and getting in the face of the other team.

Santa Ana put Elon into the national spotlight for 48 hours during his sophomore year after he infamously got tangled up with Grayson Allen, then-star guard of Duke University.

So maybe the flu may not have been the worst thing after all. Santa Ana got to go out with one of his best games to date for the Phoenix — and a win. If men’s basketball Sports Information Director Josh Gresh happens to drop those eight minutes of play against the Cougars from the game ledger and Santa Ana gets to call the win Thursday night over UNCW his last home game, we won’t tell anybody.

Eberhardt has been an interesting case in his senior year. Eberhardt seemed like the natural successor to Dmitri Thompson after he graduated. That seemed like it was going to be the case early in the year as Eberhardt started the first 12 games of the year, including every non-conference game and the conference opener against Towson University in late December.

But since then, Eberhardt has gotten only one other start — on

Senior Night. It doesn’t seem Eberhardt’s production has been impacted as his points per game average has not changed since coming off the bench.

Kundrotas has had one of the most unfortunate ends to his Phoenix career. After playing in over 30 games his sophomore and junior years, he has played in just 18 this year. Averaging just eight minutes a game, both his points and rebounds have dropped to less than three per game.

Life is unfair sometimes, and the 6-foot-11-inch forward found that out the hard way. A few more rolls or bounces his way, and possibly he doesn’t get benched.

But that’s life, isn’t it? Matheny decided to go with freshman forward Chuck Hannah for the rest of the year, trying to grow youth in hopes of creating someone that can fill in at the forward position.

Matheny said he is proud of all the trials and tribulations the team has gone through and overcome. One thing he wanted to focus on this year was how the team worked.

“We needed to elevate [our work ethic]. Not that it was bad, but we wanted to do better. We wanted to really solidify our chemistry from player-to-player and player-to-coach, and now we want to finish strong,” Matheny said.

The Phoenix will have two games left to try and get in the right mindset before making a run to the Tournament. If the team wants to advance out of the first round of the CAA Tournament for the first time since the 2014-2015 season, they may have to count on all four seniors to advance.

