

# Elon University faculty balance ChatGPT in classroom

As artificial intelligence poses sweeping changes to education, professors weigh opportunities, ethical considerations

**Alicia Clanton & Alexandra Schneider**  
Elon News Network

In a panel of about 30 Elon University faculty members in Belk Library, computer science professor Shannon Duvall displayed instructions for how to remove a peanut butter sandwich from a VCR, written as a biblical verse in the style of the King James Bible. But, it had all been written by a bot.

The bot in question is an artificial intelligence chatbot called ChatGPT, released in November 2022 by San Francisco-based research laboratory OpenAI. It is not the first of its kind — Siri, Grammarly and customer service bots are all examples of chatbot technology. But ChatGPT distinguishes itself with its ability to answer advanced, creative questions and remember the thread of dialogue.

The panel, which took place Feb. 7, provided a space for professors to describe how they might use AI functions in the classroom.

ChatGPT works by scraping massive amounts of text data from across the



Senior Caroline DiFrango studies how to properly use ChatGPT in Professor Byung Lee's classroom Feb. 15.

internet and stringing together words to create human-like responses. Users can ask it to explain what a wormhole is, then ask it to explain it again like it's talking to a 5-year-old. It can write a story about an epic car chase, then make that story more emotional, then cut it down to exactly 70 words. It can also debug code or write a detailed essay describing 1920s gender roles in "The Great Gatsby."

## Processing ramifications

With its ability to write 500-word essays in seconds and solve math questions with ease, educational institutions are taking steps to mitigate its use for academic dishonesty. Elon computer science professor Elizabeth von Briesen has already banned its use for assignments.

Von Briesen said her reasoning includes intellectual property concerns and the

program's inability to cite its sources. She said even if ChatGPT is used strictly as a knowledge consultant, there are ethical considerations to using a tool that rehashes text from original work it finds online.

"It may look original. ... It may look like something you haven't seen before. But it's not original. It can't come up with something completely original because it's only learning from the past," von Briesen said. "It's wrong to use other people's work and not give credit for it, because people put time and energy and ingenuity and creativity into that. So what does it mean when we have a tool that gives us a complete essay but never gives us a path back to where it came from?"

There are also concerns over the accuracy of ChatGPT's answers. A Princeton University computer science professor found that ChatGPT was able to fool humans with convincing responses that included fake information — particularly users who were not well-versed on the topic.

Von Briesen said she worries about false information because the internet is already flooded with inaccurate headlines and news, especially around highly-charged subjects. When students rely on this information, it can continue the echo chamber effect.

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# 'Luminosity' integrates LGBTQIA communities, theater

Three-day, student-led festival illuminated LGBTQIA stories, experiences on campus

**Sarah T. Moore**  
Elon News Network | @SarahTM27

Senior Jack Morrill first discovered the power in Elon's LGBTQIA communities as a freshman, after meeting three other LGBTQIA students at Lakeside Dining Hall.

Morrill said the group talked throughout the night, staying up until at least 2 a.m. exchanging stories about their lives and identities.

"That was one of the first times I felt that sense of joy, ... that breathe of fresh air," Morrill said. "I just remember that moment of, 'This is what I've been looking for,' and I've always searched for that since."

The joy and understanding they experienced that night encouraged them to continue seeking community and, eventually, creating "Luminosity" — the university's first LGBTQIA arts festival.

Over 50 Elon students across different majors came together to create, produce and perform original student pieces centered around LGBTQIA stories and communities as part of Morrill's Lumen research project. "Luminosity" is one of two products from Morrill's Lumen Prize research project.

The Lumen Prize is a competitive \$20,000 reward that helps students pursue research and other endeavors during their junior and senior years, according to the university

website.

Morrill's research project, "Queer Theory in Arts Administrative Practices: How a Queer Values Lens Could Change the Way Theatrical Organizations Operate," resulted in "Luminosity," as well as a guide book Morrill said to inspire future creators to utilize queer theory and LGBTQIA values to "use non-normative practices" that create spaces for people to be themselves and engage in community.

The festival ran from Feb. 17 to 19 and was a free, three-day arts festival showcasing nine original student projects centered around LGBTQIA communities and experiences. The events included dance pieces, slam poetry, a photo exhibit, play, short film, cabaret and a drag show.

Junior Tommy Pegan co-produced the festival's Friday night cabaret, "Beyond the Rainbow," with sophomore Summer Severin. The cabaret took traditionally straight songs from musical theater and put an LGBTQIA spin on them, such as Pegan's performance of "Somewhere That's Green" from "Little Shop of Horrors."

Pegan and Summer have been involved with Morrill's research before Morrill even had the idea to create an arts festival with the findings.

"On top of telling queer stories, a collaborative project that's student led in general is so absent from this campus," Pegan said. "Not only is this happening, but it's stories that Summer and I, and many people in the performing arts, can relate to and are eager to tell."



Jack Morrill closes the first night of "Luminosity" by leading a slam poetry event in Irazú and reading an excerpt from Ocean Vuong's book "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous."

Severin said that working on the cabaret helped her create the representation she hopes to see in musical theater. Her and Pegan agreed that the festival created a platform for students to share their often sidelined stories and connect with one another.

Morrill is still producing the guide book, but said they hope it can be accessible to the Elon community through Belk Library and the department of performing arts once it is finished.

"The queer community has always, always survived based on its people, on its values, on its principles of love, of connection,

of forming community," Morrill said. "What if we applied those values to theater?"

Morrill, who is double majoring in acting and arts administration, said that as a performer, being openly LGBTQIA can often feel confining.

"If you're queer, that's the role you're going to play," Morrill said. "You're just playing gay — and not human gay — stereotypical gay."

Morrill said that in theater, LGBTQIA representation tends to only portray stereotypes and is often centered around romance. In addition, they said that working in the performing arts

is often tense and unnecessarily stressful from both an acting and arts administration standpoint.

These experiences inspired them to apply for the Lumen Prize and pursue research integrating queer theory and theater production.

Morrill's childhood friend, Kaelyn Kappas, flew to North Carolina from Salem, Oregon, to attend the festival. Kappas grew up with Morrill in San Diego and said it was important for her to show her support and see the culmination of Morrill's research and efforts.

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# THE PENDULUM

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ENN seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty, as well as serve as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

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## CORRECTIONS

In the last edition of The Pendulum, Longwood University's mascot, the Lancers, was incorrectly labeled.

In the last edition of The Pendulum, Aeiris Faloni's name was misspelled in "Prospective students discuss tuition increase, college expectations." Elon News Network regrets these errors.

**CHEAT SHEET**

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

# Planning for rail emergencies in Elon

Town of Elon Assistant Fire Chief Charles Walker discusses railroad emergency response plans, tracking hazardous cargoes

**Joseph Navin**

Elon News Network | [@josephanavin](https://twitter.com/josephanavin)

The sound of a train horn can be heard daily as trains cross Church Street, Williamson Avenue and Oak Street crossings in Elon. The town of Elon's history can be traced back to Mill Point and later the Elon College train depot, which was built in 1881 and closed in 1961. Frequent train traffic through the community does not come without its hazards, which has led local emergency departments to enact plans in case of an emergency.

A Norfolk Southern freight train carrying hazardous chemicals under the name 32N, traveling from Illinois to Pennsylvania derailed in East Palestine, Ohio, on Feb. 3. This resulted in a fire that later led to evacuations, which have since been lifted.

The track that runs through Elon is part of the "NC-Line" and is operated by Norfolk Southern and owned by the North Carolina Railroad Company.

The derailment in East Palestine released dangerous chemicals from the train cars into the community, including vinyl chloride — a colorless gas used to build plastic products that can also cause cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute.

While the environmental impact from this derailment is still being determined, dead wildlife was found in the area and caused concerns from the community in East Palestine regarding personal health effects. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced on Tuesday that Norfolk Southern has been ordered to clean up all "contaminated soil and water resources" and to reimburse the agency for cleanup services among other orders.

"Let me be clear: Norfolk Southern will pay for cleaning up the mess they created and for the trauma they've inflicted on this community," said EPA Administrator Michael Regan in a press release.

There has been an increase in the train accident rate for the railroad in the last four years, according to a Norfolk Southern presentation in 2022. The accident also comes as Norfolk Southern is transitioning into Precision Scheduled Railroading operations scheduling system, which has been leading to fewer, but longer, freight trains.

Charles Walker currently serves as the assistant fire chief for the town of Elon Fire Department. Walker has been working for the department for over 25 years. He discussed current emergency plans and local railway concerns with Elon News Network.

*This interview has been edited for clarity.*

## How does Norfolk Southern notify you when trains carrying hazardous cargo pass through town?

"We have as far as them notifying us when there's certain types of chemicals coming through our areas. It's kind of a broad

notification. ... It's sent out to the emergency services in the area that's going to be impacted by that."

## Have you ever had any concerns about freight trains moving through Elon with hazardous cargoes?

"Absolutely. We think about that a lot as a matter of fact, because not only does it affect campus, but it affects our whole town because we're a small town. Our fire stations are relatively close to the railroad tracks, our town halls, relatively close to the police department. A lot of our resources are close here. So if we have a large-scale event that's right here downtown. It's going to affect us on many different levels, as emergency management for the town here, but also for the community trying to provide ongoing services in our community."

## What types of cargoes cause concern from first responders?

"There's so many different kinds, but it really depends on the volume. It is because some of this in smaller volumes is very manageable. It's when it gets into larger volumes that it might not be as manageable. And there's different kinds. It could be a liquid, it could be a powder, or it could be a gas type product coming through. So when they [Norfolk Southern] notify that and they do very well with notifying us ahead of time, that they notify us 30 days in advance, and they'll let us know and our regional response team hazmat team, they're notified."

## Have you encountered any railroad-related issues in your tenure here in Elon?

"We have had some vehicles hit on the tracks here, we've had pedestrians struck on the tracks. So even though those aren't derailments, those are still potential incidents where the train has had to stop.

A boxcar came through here ... in the past four or five years, and dropped a white powder substance and it went down the length of the tracks, and so we weren't sure what that was. So we had to respond to that notifying Norfolk Southern. They were very quick to respond back to us. And basically that was a non-lethal substance that had leaked from a car that they were aware of. It was basically baking soda. So they were aware of it, but we were able to make notification to our local emergency management and state emergency management, then Norfolk Southern, and then they're emergency management people were quick to get back to us to get notification of it because again, if we weren't able to recognize that or be able to identify the product in a hurry, we were going to have to potentially shut down this area until we could make a determination of what it was."

## What types of training does the fire department take part in to prepare for emergencies?

"We usually participate in two different types: tabletop scenarios which we sit around and we go over, either a real scenario, or we'll come up with our own scenario and so, that'll usually be put on by the state or at a local emergency management level.

We also take a remote location and do a hazmat situation. A derailment, if that's what we want to do, and actually bring resources in and let everybody kind of go through their roles. We've also worked with Norfolk Southern on doing some train safety classes. We've gone to Raleigh and Durham, and they've got training set up there and we would actually go down and do some hands-on training with them with locomotive safety and identifying different types of rail cars, tank cars."



A Norfolk Southern train led by two locomotives snakes its way over Church Street and through Elon on May 11, 2022, as it headed east. The train was pulling tank cars with crude oil.

JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER





NYAH PHENGSIITHY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore Miray Konar (right), an international student from Izmir, Turkey, works with the Elon University Arabic Language Organization Feb. 17 inside Moseley Center to raise donations for Turkey and Syria earthquake relief. The organization and Konar connected with Turkish communities in North Carolina to find ways to support earthquake victims, including Sancar Turkish Cultural and Community Center in Chapel Hill.



JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Softball head coach Kathy Bocock shares a hug with junior pitcher Meredith Wells after becoming Elon softball's all-time winningest coach Feb. 19 at Hunt Park. Elon defeated James Madison University 8-2.



ANNE THYFAULT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The humanist chaplain at Tufts University and the Ripple Conference's keynote speaker, Anthony Cruz Pantojas, shares his experiences with humanism. Pantojas' speech, "Living in the Interstices: Spiritual Reflections from a Queer Afro Caribbean Humanist," helped kick off the conference on the evening of Feb. 17. Read more about the conference at [elonnewsnetwork.com](http://elonnewsnetwork.com).



ERIN HRONCICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students in Elon's School of Education participate in hands-on learning with Scott Morrison's gardening class. The class was held at Eastlawn Elementary on Feb. 21 in Burlington.



ANNE THYFAULT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ripple Conference participants create plastic yarn for Operation Bed Roll on Feb. 19. The plastic yarn was turned into bed rolls for local individuals without homes. Operation Bed Roll was the last event of the conference, helping wrap up the conference with a service project.



# COST OF COLLEGE: EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL

Students who pay their own tuition grapple with impact of tuition cost increase

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

Junior Jasmine Smith toured colleges knowing she might not be able to attend a four-year university without a scholarship. She had two choices in spring 2020 — the second semester of her senior year of high school — pay upward of \$62,000 per year for the University of the Arts in Philadelphia or pay what was \$51,062 per year at the time. Despite a scholarship, Smith is paying her tuition and fees out of pocket.

Smith was one of 1,584 freshmen who enrolled at Elon for the 2020-21 academic year — just one year before the university’s largest tuition increase to date. Now, Smith and other students paying full price are facing yet another challenge: a 5% increase on top of last year’s 9%. From the time Smith began at Elon, tuition and fees at Elon University have increased by \$7,952, or 15.6%.

“I’m always gonna have to work twice as hard as the next person to get where I want to be just because I am steps back from other people,” Smith said. “It’s disappointing on the university’s behalf, of a school that I literally advocate for.”

As a tour guide and a diversity ambassador, Smith spends her working hours talking to prospective students and families about Elon. But the tuition and fees increase made her feel discouraged. In her role, Smith gives families of color a more personalized tour of campus. Smith said if tuition keeps increasing, diversity on campus will decrease.

“If anything, the school will become more and more white, because if you look at just who’s able to afford all that, it’s not going to be the diverse population they want to achieve,” Smith said. “A lot of people on tour, they see the school and then they get discouraged and they don’t come back, or they leave halfway on tour. It’s like they know this place isn’t for them.”

Junior Maria Cerimile is in a similar situation to Smith. She said by the time she graduates next May, she will have to pay back roughly \$150,000 to \$200,000 in loans over eight years, which is based on both interest and Elon’s new tuition cost. This past July, an undergraduate loan interest rate increased from 3.73% to 4.99%, according to Business Insider. This increase results in higher monthly payments, something Cerimile said placed her in a position of stress.

“I was really upset. I’ve struggled with



Junior Maria Cerimile cheers during a media timeout at the Feb. 19 Elon women’s basketball Play4Kay game. Cerimile works three jobs in addition to being a cheerleader and in a sorority.

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**JASMINE SMITH**  
ELON JUNIOR

knowing that I have to pay for college for a long time. Hearing the increase, the numerical amount, it’s a lot. Loans, because of interest, they hike it up. So, it’s just really stressful knowing that I have to, in eight years, pay all of this off. With the increase, it was just like, like, I had a conversation with my dad as if it was worth it to even come back. Because that’s a lot of money. So, yeah, it was just a lot to hear.”

In a statement to Elon News Network, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives Jeff Stein wrote, “Elon takes the prospect of potential increases for Elon families extremely seriously, as can be seen from the increase for 2021-2022 being the lowest in nearly 40 years. The budget committee and board of trustees worked to create next year’s budget in a manner that would keep our costs about \$13,000 lower than peer universities but would also address inflation and most importantly support increases in financial aid, hiring of additional faculty and staff, efforts to retain staff and faculty, and more.”

Cerimile does not have a scholarship, works three jobs and is a member of a sorority. She said she does not have any free time because of how hard she has to work to pay for her education. She said an issue she has is that people who don’t pay their own tuition act judgmental when she can’t participate in social activities.

“I can’t do X, Y and Z because of tuition. I need to worry about getting that done at the end of the day. People are like, oh, like you’re paying your own tuition? Why are you paying your tuition? My parents are paying for mine,” she said. “I’m just like, Well, my parents aren’t and I can’t hate them for that. They paid for their own tuition, so it’s only fair that I pay for my own. But, it’s just it’s more so bothersome when people are just like oh, I’m debt free. I don’t have to worry about loans blah, blah, blah. And it’s just like, like I do.”

According to data from the U.S. News and World Report, 64% of college students in 2021 had to take on debt to afford college. But, according to Elon’s undergraduate tuition website, the cost of Elon is still “more than \$13,000 less than that of most peer private colleges and universities,” crediting this to why the university is rated a best value university by the U.S. News and World Report.

Elon’s peer institutions include Chapman University, Gonzaga University, Marquette University, Santa Clara University and University of Denver. Marquette’s cost of attendance for the 2023-24 academic school year is \$48,700, while Santa Clara’s is \$81,054. Elon’s sticker cost of attendance price for the 2023-24 school year is \$62,514.

If Cerimile could say one thing to the policy makers, she said she’d express her frustration.

“It kind of makes me feel a little bit like they don’t care about their students,” Cerimile said. “I hate saying that, but

that is in all honesty how it makes me feel because like, where is my money going?”

Elon News Network has continuously asked President Connie Book, Dean Jana Lynn Patterson and Provost Rebecca Kohn to comment on the rise in tuition cost. They declined multiple requests to comment.

Elon  
University’s  
2023-24 tuition  
compared to  
some of its peer  
institutions

**Marquette University**  
\$48,700

**Elon University**  
\$62,514

**Chapman University**  
\$62,784

**Gonzaga University**  
\$74,249

**University of Denver**  
\$80,614

**Santa Clara University**  
\$81,054



Junior Jasmine Smith leads a warmup for the freshman acting class that she is a teaching assistant for.



# Moving on but keeping connections

Jay Harper has served as university bursar since 2002, will take next step in his career

**Miranda Ferrante**  
Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com |  
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Jay Harper first stepped on Elon University's campus as an undergraduate student in 1990. Little did he know, being a Phoenix would become a decades-long endeavor. Harper returned in 2002 and spent more than 20 years working as the university bursar.

Harper is leaving his role of working with tuition, students and parents to head to Duke University Medical Center's Department of Pediatrics, where he will work in a primarily remote finance position with the Children's Clinical Research Unit. Harper said while he will be performing similar tasks in his new position, he's excited to become a piece of an entirely new puzzle.

The Elon alum who graduated in 1994 said he loves and has been committed to the university, but he wants to pursue something different — as this will only be his third job of his entire career. Ahead of his impending departure, Harper is reflecting on the last three decades at Elon — a time he looks back on proudly.

"It's one of those things where it's almost a gut feeling that you're at the

right place and in the right place," Harper said. "You can't really put your finger on exactly what it is — it just is."

Harper felt this way when he was a student too, and his feelings have carried on throughout his career. But now, with his oldest child out of college and youngest in college, Harper said he and his wife feel it is time to spread their own wings.

"I am fearfully excited. I'd lie if I said there was no trepidation or no fear," Harper said. "Even though I obviously love it here and have made a commitment and loyalty, I just don't want to look back when I'm 70 and say, 'Why didn't you try something different?'"

Elon is recognized nationally for its close professor-student relationships, but these connections stem past the classroom and into university offices too.

Though Harper is starting the next chapter of his professional career, he said the friendships he has made are ones he'll take with him. Julie White, ERP application developer and trainer, met Harper on her first day of work in June 2003.

"I don't know Elon without Jay," White said. "We're losing someone amazing. I'm very happy for him, but very sad for me and Elon in general."

In the decades since, this connection has become less of a bond between colleagues and one more like family. Together, Harper and White's families enjoy game nights.

"I count him as one of my closest



MIRANDA FERRANTE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

University Bursar Jay Harper has been in his role at Elon University for two decades, but he first stepped on campus in 1990 as an undergraduate student.

friends even outside of work," White said. "I know that when he leaves Elon, I'm not losing him forever. But he's my buddy on campus."

Elon is currently hiring to fill the bursar role and White hopes the candidate is someone who prioritizes students like Harper does.

"He's a great advocate for students and that's not something that's in the job description," White said. "He goes the extra mile, and I hope we get that in the next person."

Associate Bursar Alessandra

Gabriel was hired by Harper six years ago and she remembers feelings of excitement from just her first phone interview.

Over the years, they've developed both a professional and personal connection. Now, Gabriel said she and Harper can finish each other's sentences.

"It's been just so nice to have someone that you respect as the boss, but also you can relate to on such a personal level outside of work," Gabriel said.

Like White, Gabriel hopes the next person to take the role is someone who prioritizes relationships with students and their families.

From weekends to nights and late hours, Gabriel said Harper has been committed to the university.

"He's always the first one here in the morning and doesn't want recognition for it, but it's really because he cares," Gabriel said. "He's trying to not only do his job but help these students."

## North Carolina Senate passes 'Parents' Bill of Rights'

Bill prohibits instruction on gender identity, sexual activity and sexuality in public schools prior to fourth grade

**Madison Powers**  
Elon News Network

North Carolina Senate Republicans passed Senate Bill 49 — the "Parents' Bill of Rights" — which expands parental access to information about their children's lives at school Feb. 7.

The legislation was passed along party lines, with 29 Republican voting for and 18 Democrat voting against. The legislation contains provisions included in a similar bill, House Bill 755, proposed last May that was stalled because of a potential veto from Gov. Roy Cooper.

The "Parents' Bill of Rights"

outlines expanded rights for North Carolina parents to be notified if their child changes pronouns at school, creates policies for parents to review and challenge school material and prohibits instruction on "gender identity, sexual activity or sexuality" for students in kindergarten through fourth grade.

It was cosponsored by State Sen. Amy Galey, a Republican who represents District 25, which covers Alamance and Randolph Counties.

Luis Garay, director of the Gender & LGBTQIA Center at Elon, said this bill is harmful and causes fear for LGBTQIA youth. Garay said they were unsurprised when they heard about the bill's passage in the Senate.

"I really thought, 'Not again,'" Garay said. "This is labeled as 'the Parents' Bill of Rights.' But these bills often are introduced and serve a very specific subset of parents."

Garay said the bill does not serve parents and allies of LGBTQIA

youth.

"Part of what this bill seemingly says is there has to be a limit of education around gender identity and sexual orientation," Garay said. "But if you're an LGBTQIA youth who is out at home and now you're in the classroom, that just creates a discrepancy."

Though House Bill 755, which contains many of the same provisions outlined in Senate Bill 49, was shelved in the past and Gov. Cooper will likely veto this bill, Garay said the passage of a bill like this is always in the forefront of their mind.

"It still introduces fear, and can introduce fear and the possibility that something like this could be passed," Garay said.

They added that this bill could deteriorate students' relationships with their educators.

"This is saying something that is private now has to get disclosed," Garay said. "We say you can trust

them, but not on this."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 46.8% of lesbian, gay and bisexual high school students seriously considered attempting suicide in 2019, while the rate for heterosexual students was much lower at 14.5%.

Garay said that this bill will be harmful to LGBTQIA students' mental health, who have few places where they can fully express themselves.

"You have to constantly monitor and be aware of what you can't say in one space but you can say in another," Garay said. "There are only so many spaces in an environment where queer and trans people — let alone queer and trans youth — can be safe."

Ryan Lockwood, president of the College Republicans at Elon University, said he was unsurprised by the passage of Bill 49 and generally supports it, which he said seems to be modeled after Florida's Parental Rights in Education Act, better known as the "Don't Say Gay" bill.

"Everybody should have a right to know what's going on with their kids' education," Lockwood said.

He said the bill has been somewhat controversial, but he does not think it should be.

"Everybody should agree that the kind of transparency between schools and public education to parents should be a good thing," Lockwood said.

He added that the majority of Republicans would be in favor of this bill.

"When public schools are not providing transparency between public education, it just creates a divide between the people in the government," Lockwood said. "That's something that the Republican Party really takes to heart."

Lockwood, who grew up in Charlotte, said he did not have any sex education until he was in sixth grade.

He said topics such as sexuality and gender identity should be taught in grade school, but only to adolescent students.

"I generally supported the bill, but I do think that health education should be improved," Lockwood said. "It's not necessarily great in the state, but you do have to take into consideration the child's age and development."

Lockwood said that Galey well-represents her constituents in Alamance County, and both the North Carolina House and Senate have Republican majorities.

However, Garay said Galey does not adequately represent Alamance County.

"There have been people who have spoken out against the bill last year and this year," Garay said. "If part of your constituency at the local and state level are saying, 'This is harmful, we do not support this,' and you still move forward, my question is, who are you really there to serve?"

Galey did not respond to Elon News Network's repeated requests for an interview.

Because the legislation was passed in the Senate, it has been sent to the North Carolina House for a vote. If it passes, it could get vetoed by Gov. Cooper.

House and Senate Democrats, led by Rep. Vernetta Alston, have also introduced alternative legislation, called the "Parents and Students' Bill of Rights" that addresses school safety and the mental health of students. If Senate Bill 49 does not pass, Democrats will try to pass this bill instead.

*Erin Martin contributed to the reporting of this story.*

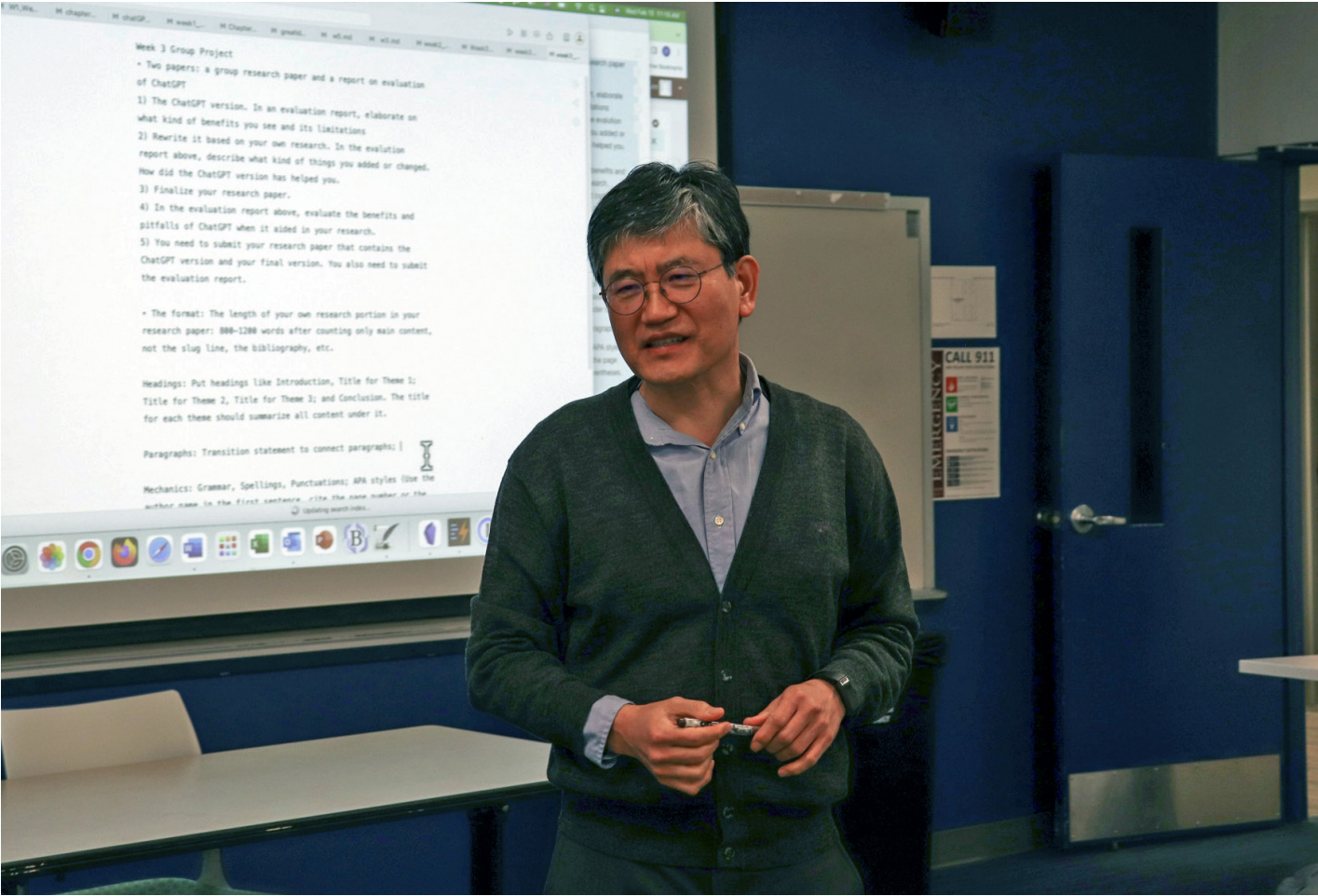


CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

One provision of Senate Bill 49 requires public schools to alert parents if their child requests a name or pronoun change, and has been criticized for unfairly targeting LGBTQIA students.



# Faculty debate AI’s involvement in educational settings



Professor Byung Lee instructs students on how to utilize Chat GPT in the classroom Feb. 15.

ERIN HRONCICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

## AI | from cover

ChatGPT is trained on large amounts of data. As a result, it may generate biased responses, which can be especially dangerous when students do not fact-check or question them. These can include gender, racial and data biases. Because of this, von Briesen is concerned about students not recognizing the limitations and flaws of ChatGPT in their excitement to use it.

### Integrating into education

Despite these implications, Duvall said adapting to ChatGPT may still be the most logical approach. To professors who feel inclined to ban it, she warned that the use of AI could become increasingly difficult to detect as it becomes more advanced and more integrated into the technology we use. In fact, she said this could mark a new era where professors stop wasting effort to monitor cheating and let the consequences of relying on shortcuts catch up to students in their careers.

“I for one am tired of thinking about students cheating. Maybe this is a watershed moment for assessment that says, ‘We’re not going to do it anymore, we’re going to let the workplace do it,’” Duvall said.

More than one Elon professor said they see ChatGPT as a technological advancement they can embrace.

“Writing has never existed outside of technology because it is a technology. And if it’s a technology, it has been evolving,” Director of the Writing Across the University Program Paula Rosinski said in the Feb. 7 panel. “We’ve been here before. This is not new. Writing has changed and we’ve changed with it.”

Rosinski and Duvall argued professors should adapt to ChatGPT rather than ban it, and they offered ideas for integrating it into assignments. The panel was also led by Julia Bleakney, English professor and director of the Writing Center; Amanda Sturgill, a journalism professor; and Jen Uno, associate director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning.

Duvall, Rosinski, Bleakney, Sturgill and Uno suggested students could use ChatGPT for help outlining papers, fixing code, writing citations and generating practice quizzes. Rosinski also proposed it could be used as a tool in the early stages of research, like how one might use Wikipedia — not as a scholarly source, but as a way to gather general information. Duvall encouraged professors to pay attention to how ChatGPT is being used

in their industries so they can prepare students for future jobs.

In her presentation, Rosinski compared the apprehension over ChatGPT to the reaction some teachers had to computers and the internet when they were introduced to classrooms decades ago.

“There was a lot of talk, ‘Students’ minds are going to turn to mush because they’re just going to copy and paste and use everybody else’s words,” Rosinki said. “But we adjusted. We have journals, we have entire pedagogies, we have computer classrooms. We adjusted.”

Uno said professors can also find personal uses for it, such as drafting emails, writing test questions, refining essay prompts and developing rubrics.

Byung Lee, professor of communication design, has already designed a research assignment centered around ChatGPT for his COM 4970 course, Great Ideas and Research. Lee said ChatGPT may replace the need for students to organize, take notes on and synthesize documents on their own. But, they will need to understand how to refine their requests to get the most accurate results, which he aims to teach in his class.

“Students have to learn how to guide ChatGPT by tweaking requests until they can obtain satisfactory results. Furthermore, students should be able to determine whether the results are satisfactory,” Lee said. “Making a request once or twice and accepting the results and submitting them would not be acceptable.”

In a group assignment this semester, his students are feeding their research questions to ChatGPT, evaluating the responses, editing their questions based on shortcomings of that response and then repeating this process until they are satisfied with the answer. Then they will conduct their own research using the question ChatGPT helped them make and write a paper that fills in the gaps of the chatbot’s final response. In an evaluation report, they will describe their experience working with ChatGPT, detailing how they refined their research question, what they added to the chatbot’s response and how ChatGPT helped and hindered their research process.

### The future is AI

Although not in Lee’s class this

semester, senior computer science major Hunter Copeland echoed the idea that students can learn to work with ChatGPT as a tool, rather than let it take over their assignments completely.

“I see it sort of how a calculator would be used for a math class,” Copeland said.

Copeland also said he thinks the use of ChatGPT is going to lead to more in-class assignments and essays, and less take-home work.

As Copeland looks toward the job market, he said he anticipates that ChatGPT or similar AI programs changes the career landscape.

Uno said she sees this as a turning point in which professors may be encouraged to better scaffold their assignments so that students can better manage their workloads without the help of ChatGPT. It could also prompt professors to create more engaging assignments so students

will feel motivated to do the work on their own.

“Students are going to go to AI when they don’t like the topic they’re writing about, so how can I engage them in topics, even in topics they may not be interested in?” Uno said.

Von Briesen agreed that rather than trying to catch students using ChatGPT, professors should adjust their assignments in a way that makes it difficult for students to use ChatGPT on them.

“Maybe we need to rethink how we’re evaluating our students. Maybe in a more unique way, like through oral exams,” von Briesen said. “We have to find creative ways to assess whether or not our students have acquired the skills and knowledge that we want them to acquire.”

According to OpenAI’s website, ChatGPT is in a research preview phase, which means the company is offering it free to the public to gather feedback and better identify the program’s strengths and weaknesses. For now, all users need to do to try the program is create an account with their email and phone number. But, users will likely have to pay for access in the future.

ChatGPT and other advanced AI technologies could pose sweeping changes to education, but Duvall is optimistic.

“It might seem scary now,” Duvall said. “But we’ll adjust.”

### WRITTEN BY AI

The following article was written by ChatGPT when given the following prompts:

1. Write a 400-450 word article on using AI in and educational setting.
2. Write a short headline to describe your article.
3. Write a short, one sentence journalism deck to describe your article. Include that the article was written using ChatGPT.

This story was not edited for grammar or style.

## AI Technology Transforming Education

ChatGPT, an AI-powered language model, wrote this article on AI in education

As technology continues to advance, more and more industries are turning to artificial intelligence (AI) to streamline their processes and improve their efficiency. One area where AI is making a big impact is in education, where it is being used to enhance learning experiences and help teachers better engage with their students.

One way that AI is being used in education is through personalized learning. With AI algorithms, educators can track individual student progress and create customized lesson plans based on each student’s unique strengths and weaknesses. This means that students can learn at their own pace and focus on areas where they need more support, rather than being held back or feeling lost in a one-size-fits-all curriculum.

AI is also being used to improve assessment and feedback processes. Traditional assessment methods often rely on multiple choice or short answer questions, which can be time-consuming to grade and may not fully capture a student’s understanding of a subject. With AI, assessments can be designed to incorporate more open-ended questions and even essay responses, which can be quickly and accurately scored using natural language processing technology. This allows teachers to provide more detailed feedback to their students and identify areas where they may need additional support.

Another area where AI is having an impact is in improving accessibility for students with disabilities. AI-powered tools such as speech recognition software and text-to-speech technology can help students who may have difficulty reading or writing to participate more fully in classroom discussions and complete assignments on their own. These tools can also be used to transcribe lectures or create closed captions for videos, making educational content more accessible to all students.

Of course, there are also concerns about the use of AI in education. One worry is that AI could replace human teachers, leading to a loss of jobs and a lack of personal interaction between teachers and students. However, most experts agree that AI is best used as a tool to support teachers, rather than a replacement for them. By automating certain tasks and providing teachers with data-driven insights, AI can free up time for teachers to focus on building relationships with their students and providing individualized support where needed.

Overall, the use of AI in education has the potential to revolutionize the way we teach and learn. By providing personalized learning experiences, improving assessment processes, and making education more accessible to all students, AI can help ensure that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential. However, it is important to approach the use of AI in education with caution, and to prioritize the needs and well-being of students and teachers above all else.



# LIFESTYLE

## First university LGBTQIA arts festival brings students together

### LUMINOSITY | from cover

Kappas also said that throughout the festival she felt surrounded by joy, love and community.

“All of the performers and the creators bringing their pieces together and then of course, Jack organizing this, have done a beautiful job at bringing so many wonderful perspectives into this space, and giving them the space to breathe and shine,” Kappas said.

Pegan said he hoped the festival would challenge the audience to rethink their perception of LGBTQIA stories and stereotypes in art. He said that he and Severin specifically wanted to represent LGBTQIA stories and characters as “three dimensional” and portray narratives beyond common tropes of romance, heartbreak and loss.

Pegan said he was excited to see the impact the festival will have in the department of performing arts and on campus. He hoped the representation would help humanize LGBTQIA stories and experiences, encourage other students to share their own stories and embrace Elon’s LGBTQIA communities.

“This is gonna do so much good for this campus that I don’t think anyone participating in this festival can wrap their heads around,” Pegan said. “I know it’s going to be an incredible and important part of Elon history.”

Morrill hopes that “Luminosity” will inspire other students to continue showing up for one another, leaning into community values and creating spaces where people can be themselves. Additionally, they hope the department uses their guide book to implement better practices for Elon’s performing arts programs.

As Morrill prepares to graduate, they said that this project was one of their most impactful experiences at Elon.

“This project really made my time here feel full,” Morrill said. “I’m leaving this university with no regrets, with no what ifs, and I think that’s because I was given this opportunity to create this piece of work.”



As a part of “Luminosity,” attendees wrote on sticky notes to answer question prompts on the wall of Center for the Arts’ Isabella Cannon room, such as “When do you feel most seen?” and “What does queer mean to you?”



“Luminosity” stickers and pins were being distributed throughout the three days of events. Attendees could also grab the merchandise in Center for the Arts’ Isabella Cannon Room.



At the “Luminosity” reception Feb. 17, two students look through Anna Gullion’s “I Could Never...” photo exhibit, which was still being set up.

## Black Solidarity Day Conference to educate, inspire

Ninth annual conference will host keynote speaker Alex Bohannon ’17

**Abigail Hobbs**  
Associate Managing Editor | @abigailhobbs

The ninth annual Black Solidarity Day Conference theme is “The Black Renaissance: Revive, Reclaim, Rejoice,” which student chair and President of the Black Student Union Christina Carr said revolves around students’ originality.

“We’re thinking a lot about creativity, innovation, being yourself, confidence,” Carr said. “There’s always a theme around anti-racism in the Black Solidarity Conference, so we’re keeping that as well.”

According to Carr, students will attend speeches, education sessions led by faculty and entertainment, including a New Orleans line band and a Black history dance concert. Students will also lead roundtable discussions with other students, guiding the conversation.

Keynote Speaker Alex Bohannon

’17 was the founding president of the university’s Black Student Union. He said he catered his speech to the theme and the needs of the attendees.

“I will be discussing what it means to be a advocate, a person committed to making the world a better place, while balancing those efforts with being true to yourself and embracing all the things that come with being a human,” Bohannon said. “The original purpose was just to provide students with an opportunity for all attendees, natural students with an opportunity to really be lifted and to be validated.”

The conference, hosted by the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education, focuses on anti-racism, specifically for non-Black participants who want to learn more about power, privilege and how to be better allies, according to the event website.

“We’re making space for Black students and educating allies, as well,” Carr said. “In thinking about privilege, I think that a conference like this tackles all those different things and does it in a really fun way that’s really encouraging for people

who may not be taking courses about this.”

Bohannon said conferences like these are important for marginalized identities to feel seen, especially as college students.

“Undergrad is a place where you really become who you will be, and you learn sort of the foundational pieces, not just in terms of from a curricular place, not just in terms of your major or minor or whatever. But in terms of just, you learn the person who you want to be, you learn who you really are, you are challenged in a way that should facilitate growth for you. And conferences like these only aid in that development,” Bohannon said.

The Black Solidarity Day Conference will be held from noon to 6 p.m. Feb. 24 and registration is free for all university students, staff and faculty.

### IF YOU GO

**Where:**  
McKinnon Hall  
**When:**  
Feb. 24 noon to 6 p.m.



Senior Christina Carr is the president of the Black Student Union, the central governing body and root organization for Black students on campus.



**SCAN TO REGISTER  
OR VISIT**  
[HTTPS://WWW.ELON.EDU/U/CREDE/BLACK-SOLIDARITY-DAY/REGISTRATION/](https://www.elon.edu/u/crede/black-solidarity-day/registration/)

1. Open your phone camera
2. Focus on the QR code
3. Click the pop-up link



# SPORTS

## Track and field fights to first CAA indoor championship

Meghan Wilcox, team continues to improve in transition between indoor, outdoor seasons

**Sydney Spencer**  
Sports Editor | @SydneyASpencer

Of all of the athletes within the Elon University track and field team, one name has continued to stand out: sophomore sprinter and jumper Meghan Wilcox.

In 2022, she was the Colonial Athletic Association champion in the 4x400 meter relay, all-CAA in the 100-meters and all-CAA in the 4x100 meter relay. Her success has only continued throughout the start of the 2023 season, similar to the success the team as a whole has achieved.

“The first month there has been fantastic progression from so many of the girls,” Wilcox said. “They started off super strong this season and everyone’s just been improving so much. There’s been so many personal records, school records and just so much improvement and just talent in this team.”

In the Bob Pollock Invitational Jan. 27 to 28, Wilcox soared — achieving a personal-best and breaking the school record for the 60 meter in 7.61 seconds. Head coach Mark Elliston said he is proud of the accomplishments that Wilcox has achieved throughout this season, suchl as improving her sprint technique, form coming out of the blocks and staying aggressive and relaxed through the



ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore sprinter Meghan Wilcox fist bumps head track and field coach Mark Elliston at practice Feb. 20.

finish line.

“Meghan has really come full circle this year,” Elliston said. “It’s really paying off, her focus and her desire to get better and to get faster.”

Wilcox said she was excited to break those records and has been proud of her individual

improvement this season.

“The 60 has been one that I’ve actually struggled with getting my time down before, so to see it being pretty consistent has been really exciting,” Wilcox said.

Feb. 18, Wilcox’s record was broken by freshman sprinter Reese Webster with 7.60 seconds at the JDL DMR Invitational in Winston-Salem, proving that the team is constantly getting better and improving its times. The team won five events and saw many athletes set their personal best records. Wilcox said she enjoys watching everyone continue to push each other to perform their best.

“It’s just been really exciting to see everyone that hit these all time highs, just show out as the strongest performance we’ve had for certain events in school history,” Wilcox said.

On top of Wilcox and Webster, junior sprinter Piper Jons broke her own school record in the 300 meter running it in 39.34 seconds and redshirt junior thrower Lauryn Carlton broke the school record in the 60-8 weight throw, throwing 18.94 meters. Both records were broken at Darius Dixon Memorial Invitational Feb. 10 to 11.

Elliston said these consistent record breaking accomplishments are a testament to two things: the athletes themselves and the coaching staff at Elon.

“The athletes have great work ethic and they’re really wanting to do their best, so they’re pushing themselves in the weight room, in practice,” Elliston said. “It’s just really nice to know that the coaches are preparing the athletes, getting them ready for their competition.”

The final day for Elon University’s track and field team’s indoor season will be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia, Feb. 22 to 23 for the CAA indoor championship. This meet will be

the first that the CAA has held; the Phoenix previously traveled to participate in the Eastern College Athletic Conference championship.

For the first time in Elliston’s 17 seasons coaching at Elon, the team will compete in a meet within the CAA conference, something Elliston said he is looking forward to.

“It’s gonna be very tough,” Elliston said. “There’s some very strong teams that just entered, but we hope that we can be a top three team. We’d love to go for the win and we hope everything works out for that.”

After the CAA indoor championships, the Phoenix will shift gears, turning their attention to the upcoming outdoor season in which the team is two-time CAA champions. Elliston said he is excited to compete in the indoor championship and sees it as a stepping stone for continued success in the outdoor season.

“We are continuing to really set our sights on outdoor,” Elliston said. “It’s that same old adage of working hard, trying to perfect what you do in practice so that when you do get to those meets, and especially the championship, your efforts will pay off. The CAA is tough, but I think that’s also what helps motivate them to do their best because they know the competition is very strong.”

Wilcox said she is looking forward to transitioning to outdoor and to watch the continued success from her teammates and herself.

“It’s definitely a possibility to hit some big personal records, but I’m wanting to come into practice every day giving it my all, and lifting up my teammates to where they can be giving it their all every time,” Wilcox said. “I want to just give my best performance that I can to help my teammates.”

### BY THE NUMBERS - MEGAN WILCOX

## 2022

**4x400m, 100m, 4x100m**

In 2022, Wilcox was the CAA champion in the 4x400 meter relay, all-CAA in the 100-meters and all-CAA in the 4x100 meter relay.

## 7.61

Wilcox broke her personal-best and breaking the school record for the 60 meter in 7.61 seconds during the Bob Pollock Invitational Jan. 27 to 28.

### SEASON UPDATES

## 7.60

Reese Webster breaks school record, running 60 meters in 7.60 seconds.

## 39.34

Piper Jons breaks school record, running 300 meters in 39.34 seconds.

## 18.49

Lauryn Carton breaks school record in 60-8, throwing 18.49 meters.



ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore Meghan Wilcox practices sprints ahead of the CAA indoor championships.