

## EAST BURLINGTON COMES TOGETHER TO PROTECT EQUITY, PROVIDE A VOICE

Local board gathers with government officials to address ongoing projects

**Julia Donaghy**  
Elon News Network

For years, there have been local efforts to remediate the 22-acre property once called the Tarheel Army Missile Plant. From 1942 to 2004, it was owned by the U.S. Department of Defense and previously leased to Western Electric, an electrical engineering and manufacturing company, to produce Nike Ajax surface-to-air missiles. Now, it remains abandoned under private ownership, creating more than just an eye sore to East Burlington, according to the Rev. Donna Vanhook, an Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor.

“It’s a monstrosity,” Vanhook said. “It needs to be torn down.”

The plant has long had a multitude of environmental and public health risks associated with it as a result of the poor waste management during the Cold War, according to Vanhook. Despite being abandoned for more than 20 years, the plant’s past is still affecting the surrounding area, something that the West End Revitalization Association is trying to address.

To involve community voices, the U.S. Army Environmental Command established the Restoration Advisory Board late last year as a way to gain input on the remediation process. The RAB had its first meeting of the year April 17 to discuss the current progress of the cleanup. There were around 35 community members who attended the meeting at the Kernodle Senior Center in Burlington to hear the discussion. The RAB has 19 board members, including an army chairperson and community chairperson.

The plant’s complicated history includes accidental spills and poor regulation of the disposal of chemicals and contamination of the surrounding soil and groundwater.



ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Community members attend the April 17 meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board at the Kernodle Senior Center in Burlington. The RAB discussed the current progress of the cleanup of Tarheel Army Missile Plant. The plant’s complicated history includes accidental spills and poor regulation of the disposal of chemicals and contamination of the surrounding soil and groundwater.

Many of the surrounding homeowners have expressed concerns over the quality and safety of their own backyards and water. While it cannot be exclusively attributed to the plant’s potential harms, east Burlington has a lifespan expectancy 11 years shorter on average than the surrounding area, according to a 2018 Alamance County health assessment. Omega Wilson, a member of the board and co-founder of WERA, said this statistic was “shocking.”

“You cannot get those lives back that are already gone, but you can improve the lives of the ones who are still here and the ones that are moving into the area,” Wilson said.

Legal technicalities surrounding the cleanup responsibilities and ownership have complicated the remediation process so far. Legally, the Department of Defense is only responsible for all of the below-ground contamination on the site; the private owner is responsible for the buildings and structures above-ground.

Along with Wilson, his wife and co-founder of WERA Brenda, as well as their son Ayo, are also a part of the

RAB. They were appointed to serve and play key roles as representatives of the stakeholders involved in the plant’s cleanup along with other appointees, both apart and outside of the community. Although the official RAB meetings only began late last year, Omega insisted that the community’s involvement has been ongoing for years.

“We’ve been pushing this issue in a formal way, with community stakeholders leading the way, including our organization and Reverend Vanhook,” Omega said.

Omega expressed his concern over how WERA and other organizations had been looked over since the Army’s relatively recent active involvement in the cleanup process in 2016, when it began a remedial investigation. The meeting on April 17 discussed the DOD’s ongoing action, which is holding a feasibility study to assess how to move forward with the cleanup, specifically regarding the presence of Trichlorethylene, a chemical

classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as a human carcinogen, in the groundwater beneath the plant.

“They were writing it up as if they were the first ones who started this interchange,” Omega said. “We don’t want to use the term first related to this meeting. It’s not the first.”

WERA was formed with the intention of ensuring that basic amenities for people of color are protected. It has taken on many projects within central North Carolina, including advocating for the removal and remediation of the plant. In 2023, WERA facilitated a meeting with officials from the White House, the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Department of Health to discuss the issues surrounding the site, Omega said.

Omega was adamant about the language used to describe the cleanup process. According to him, the DOD keeps using the term “restoration,” while WERA uses “removal and remediation.” To him,

it doesn’t make sense to “restore” the plant when its previous state was even more polluted than it is now.

“It’s the Restoration Advisory Board. Our question is, shouldn’t it be torn down, above-ground and below-ground, and remediated instead of restored?” Omega said. “Remediated means you clean up the waste, you clean up the chemicals, you remove it and we repurpose the site.”

Many ideas have been suggested for the plant after its remediation, including a center for low-income housing, which Omega disagrees with due to the plant’s history of contamination. He thinks the site should be converted into a solar facility to provide clean energy to the area.

“A solar site would provide a positive use of the energy that comes off of the sun and could create a model for the city to do something positive like this in an urban area,” Omega said. “It would be an opportunity to encourage growth and development in that area.”

**22**  
Size of the TarHeel Missile Plant industrial complex in acres.

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## Internal candidate selected as next dean of students after confidential search

Current assistant dean of students, will begin new role June 1

**Avery Sloan**  
Elon News Network

Whitney Gregory will serve as Elon’s next dean of students following a confidential candidate

search. This was announced to faculty and staff in an email from Jon Dooley, vice president of student life, on April 17.

Gregory, the current assistant dean of students, will step into her new role this summer, after current dean of students, Jana Lynn Patterson, begins her new role as the associate vice president and dean of student health and well-being. Patterson has worked at Elon for 39

years and will retire in 2026, after serving in a new capacity.

During Gregory’s presentation to Elon faculty, staff and students before being selected for the role, she said some of her main priorities as the next dean of students would be to focus on relationships with students and making data-informed decisions.

“I’ll be sitting at new tables to understand more deeply about

senior level decisions occurring at Elon and contributing to those,” Gregory told Elon News Network. “I’m excited to listen to connect closely with student government and lead that group and advise that group.”

Gregory was one of three candidates and was the only internal candidate for this role. She has worked at Elon for 18 years. It is not uncommon for Elon to pick

an internal candidate for dean searches, Jon Dooley, vice president for student life, said. Two of the four most recent dean searches ended in internal candidates.

“It is certainly a testament to the things that are happening here at Elon that that search led back here to our own campus,” Dooley said.

**See DEAN | pg. 4**



Professor’s \$250,000 art grant is revoked

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Letter writing club shares love for handwritten notes

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New volleyball coach prepares for fall season

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# Sustainability takes center stage at Earth Week

Annual Earth Week community events aim to blend education, activism, celebration

Erin Martin

Elon News Network

As Earth Week approaches, Elon University is gearing up for a full slate of sustainability-focused programming, including bird walks, pop-up thrift shops and the debut of Elon's 2025 Sustainability Master Plan.

The weeklong celebration aims to highlight both the challenges and possibilities of sustainability and gives students, faculty and staff new ways to engage with the environment and each other, according to Kelly Harer, associate director of sustainability for education and outreach.

"This is really a time to explore how we support the Earth and each other," Harer said. "It's also a chance to showcase the great work already happening on campus and in the community."

While Earth Week often brings heightened visibility to the Office of Sustainability, Harer emphasized that the office's efforts extend year-round — with this week serving as a catalyst for broader conversations and collective action.

One of the week's biggest milestones is the release of Elon's 2025 Sustainability Master Plan. Unveiled on Earth Day — Tuesday, April 22 — the plan is the product

of a two-year process involving input from more than 300 people on campus.

The 2025 master plan outlines eight goals — spanning academics, dining, engagement, facilities, purchasing, technology, transportation and waste — that aim to reduce emissions and promote sustainable practices across campus. These goals are a part of the university's objective to achieve carbon neutrality by 2037.

"This isn't just a sustainability office plan — it's a university-wide plan," Harer said. "We'll be sharing goals and strategies that will guide us through the next 10 years."

Amid growing concerns about climate change, Harer said fostering hope is just as vital as raising awareness. She hopes students view Earth Week not only as a chance to learn, but as a source of community and inspiration.

"There's a lot of doom and gloom about the state of our climate," Harer said. "But there's a lot of great work being done on campus and in our local community. I hope people get a taste of that."

On Wednesday, environmentalist and author Bill McKibben will give the keynote address and will discuss the climate crisis, clean energy and the power of individual action.

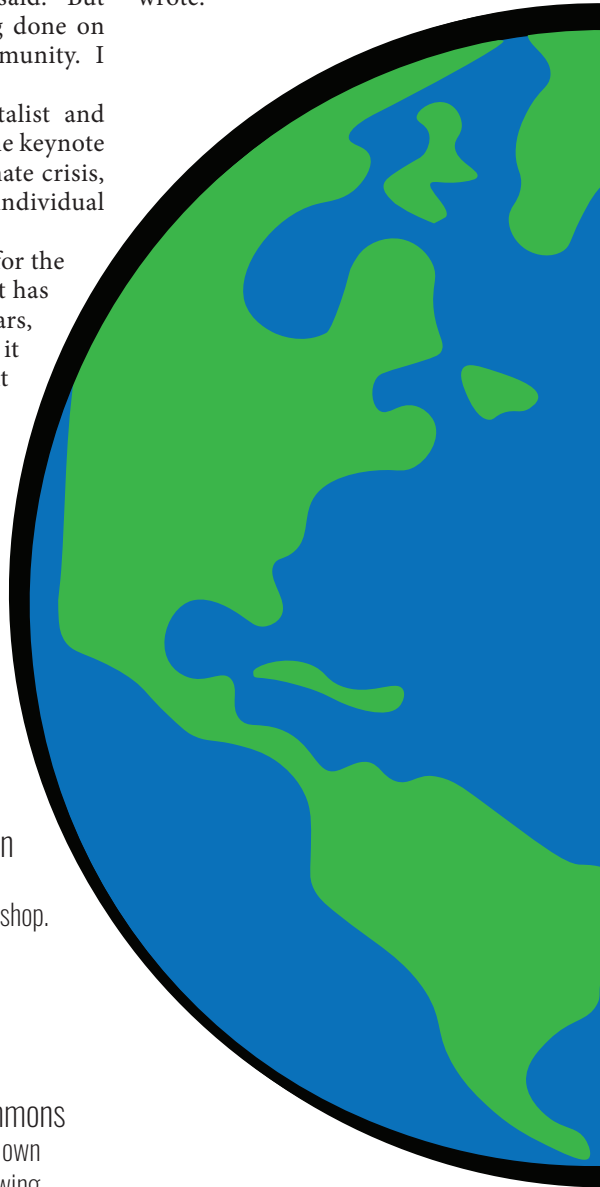
Another major event is Party for the Planet, a student-run festival that has nearly tripled in size in recent years, according to Harer. Harer said it has grown from about 10 student organizations to about 30. Hosted in partnership with Elon

Dining's Earth Fest, the event features local food vendors and sustainability education.

"It's grown a lot in recent years," Harer said. "I think that shows how more groups on campus are seeing sustainability as part of their mission."

This year's Earth Fest will once again feature cows from Ran-Lew Dairy — a popular attraction in recent years. Last year, its placement next to a burger booth raised concerns among students. But according to Elon Dining Sustainability Coordinator Leslie Bosse, that won't be an issue this time. Bosse declined an in-person interview, but wrote a statement to Elon News Network.

"For Earth Fest this year, our friends from Ran-Lew Dairy will be in the same spot, and there is no beef on the menu, which was a decision made to reflect our commitments to lowering our carbon footprint through food," Bosse wrote.



## EARTH WEEK CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23

#### Scrappy Smoothie Popsicles

1:30 p.m. | Clohan Dining Hall  
Try a smoothie popsicle made from fruit scraps that would otherwise go to waste.

#### Food for Thought

5:30 to 7 p.m. | CREDE, Moseley Center  
Explore Pacific Islander culture with Hawaiian food. The event will also feature environmental issues in the Pacific Islands.

#### Earth Week Keynote: Bill McKibben

7 to 8 p.m. | Alumni Gym, Koury Athletic Center  
Environmental activist and author Bill McKibben will deliver the Earth Week keynote address. McKibben will share insights on the climate crisis, clean energy and the role individuals play in building a sustainable future.

#### S'mores with Outdoors

9 to 10 p.m. | Beck Pool Patio  
Join Elon Outdoors and the Eco-Reps for a special Earth Week S'mores with Outdoors. You can also make your own sustainable bug spray.

### THURSDAY, APRIL 24

#### Earth Fest

5 to 7:30 p.m. | Lake Mary Nell  
Celebrate local food at one of Elon Dining's biggest events of the year with food and drinks from 11 local vendors.

#### Party for the Planet

5 to 7 p.m. | Moseley West Lawn  
Celebrate Earth Week with games, entertainment and a sustainable thrift shop.

### FRIDAY, APRIL 25

#### Paint 'n Plant

3:30 to 5:30 p.m. | Young Commons  
Decorate reusable pots and plant your own greenery. Learn about sustainable growing practices with Loy Farm.

#### Bloom with Pride

4 to 5:30 p.m. | Elon Community Garden  
Celebrate Lesbian Visibility Day with bouquet making and decorating flower vases. Hosted by the Gender and LGBTQIA Center.

#### Bike to Burlington

4 to 6 p.m. | Meet at Koury Athletic Center  
Ride to Burlington with Elon Outdoors and the Office of Sustainability for local ice cream and a lesson in sustainable businesses. Bikes provided or bring your own. Registration is required.

### SATURDAY, APRIL 26

#### Lake Mackintosh Kayak Clean Up

9 to 11 a.m. & 1 to 3 p.m. | Lake Mackintosh  
Clean up the lake with provided kayaks, gloves and supplies. Registration is required.

#### Peacehaven Farm Garden Workday

9 to 11 a.m. | Peacehaven Community Farm  
Help with garden tasks and enjoy time outdoors. Registration is required.

#### Women's Resource Center Herb Festival Clean Up

12:30 to 3:30 p.m. | Women's Resource Center in Alamance County  
Assist with light cleanup tasks following the festival. Registration is required.

### SUNDAY, APRIL 27

#### Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Farm Tour

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. | Meet at Center for the Arts  
Tour three local farms, learn about sustainable food production and sample local fare. Transportation is provided. Registration is required.

### CORRECTIONS

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





Freshman Mackenzie Tammara is lifted during a performance of “The Drowsy Chaperone” on April 17 in the Center for Arts Blackbox Theatre. Renegade Productions, Elon University’s student-run theater group, put on the performance April 17 through 19. Tammara played Janet van de Graff and worked to balance the comedic and serious aspects of the musical. “I needed to find the balance between committing to being crazy and having fun and finding depth within Janet because it’s a big day, it’s her wedding, and she goes through it a little bit,” Tammara said.

KATRINA HOLTZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Members of Lambda Upsilon Lambda Fraternity (in yellow) and Omega Phi Beta Sorority (in green) perform a stroll together on April 17 at Medallion Plaza. This was part of the first-ever Elon University Multicultural Greek Council meet-and-greet since its establishment this year. The Multicultural Greek Council is the governing body for culturally-based fraternities and sororities aimed at promoting diversity and unity.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR



Thistle Ridge member and senior Lucas McKeown, performs his original song, “I Saw A Dog Today,” on April 17 during his first stand-up comedy performance with The Haha in Oak House. McKeown was encouraged by friends to commit to a comedy show and write an original song.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR



Sophomore Simone Bergeron hits a backhand winner against William & Mary on April 19 at the Jimmy Powell Tennis Center. Elon won 4-3 in its last regular season match. Elon will host the Coastal Athletic Association Tournament starting April 25.

KATHAN GANDHI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# Whitney Gregory to begin in new role June 1

## DEAN | from cover

This search differed from all four previous dean searches, as this was the only one that was confidential. However, Dooley said that this is not uncommon to do in candidate searches.

“You want to be able to try to attract somebody, if you can, who is in a job that they really love and that they enjoy, and that they are able to be a part of a search and to explore the possibility without negatively affecting their current work on their current campus,” Dooley said.

An example Gregory gave of how she has previously used student feedback to create change was in 2016 regarding medical withdrawals. In 2016, Gregory said if students took a medical withdrawal for any reason, their email address was then deactivated, their classes for the next semester if they had registered were dropped and their housing.

“They were coming back from an already difficult experience then to a difficult experience on campus,” Gregory said during her presentation. “Now I want to share this was not intentional. When we talk about these experiences, it took students speaking up and sharing.”

The search for the dean was chaired by Randy Williams, vice president for inclusive excellence, and Jason Husser, assistant provost for academic excellence and integrity. Williams said while the committee worked to facilitate the process of candidates visiting campus, the committee did not decide who would be the next dean of students, their role was to give feedback and thoughts on the candidates to Dooley.

Even though Williams did not make the

decision on who would be the next dean of students, he said the pool of candidates was highly qualified and she was a strong candidate amongst the group.

“She has the historical knowledge, she has experience, she has the expertise to be in such a role,” Williams said. “So I’m looking forward to seeing what she’s going to do in that role and supporting her success, because it’s an important role, and I think that her success will be student success as well.”

Dooley said following feedback provided from the committee, Gregory was the strongest candidate.

“It was clear that her institutional knowledge, her compassionate response to student concerns when they arise, that her advocacy for students were differentiators for her candidacy,” Dooley said.

Gregory said after listening to what students in this position were saying, she was able to partner with the dean of students and with the academic affairs department and change the process.

“Let’s change this process,” Gregory said during her presentation. “Let’s make this better. Because when a student has had a personal and family emergency, the last thing we want to do is create another barrier for them.”

Gregory also emphasized that when she makes data-informed decisions, this is slightly different from data-driven decisions as data does not always provide the full picture of what Elon’s students need. An example Gregory gave of this is the idea of putting a food pantry on Elon’s campus to help combat food insecurity. There has been success at other universities, yet Gregory said when specifically looking at what Elon needs are, a food pantry might not be the best solution.

“What I’ve heard from students on this campus, at least undergraduate students, is one, I have dietary needs that maybe can’t be met by a food pantry — whether it’s cultural, whether it’s religious, whether it’s health related needs,” Gregory said during her presentation. “Also I feel shame and



EVERY SLOAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Dean of students candidate Whitney Gregory presents to a group of faculty, staff and students March 31 during the candidate selection process.

embarrassment going into a food pantry.”

During Gregory’s presentation, she was also asked questions from Elon faculty, staff and students, including from a member of Elon’s Student Government Association who asked her about any past experiences advising or working with student organizations similar to SGA.

As part of the job description for the modified position of dean of students includes advising SGA. Gregory said while she has not previously advised SGA, she has worked with other student organizations, including a fraternity, and she said the mentorship of working with student organizations is something she values — and she sees this relationship as a two-way street.

“I think our students have maybe more power than they know, and stronger voices than maybe they’ve used in the past,” Gregory told Elon News Network. “I look forward to helping them elevate those voices and think

about ways that they can communicate their interests and their priorities, so that we can push forward their goals, quickly and effectively and connecting with the different people around Elon who can make change happen in very streamlined ways.”

Gregory said beyond SGA, she is looking to get to know different students and student organizations across campus as she prepares to step into her new role.

“I’ve found over the years that the more we know one another on a human level, the deeper the trust is to be able to share those experiences that people may feel embarrassed about or feel ashamed about or just wonder if their experience was normal or was a typical experience,” Gregory told Elon News Network. “It’s through those conversations that I found in my experience, we identify sometimes gaps in systems and gaps in processes where it didn’t work well for students, and we have an opportunity to make it work so much better.”

## Elon Community Church to host Denim Day fashion show fundraiser to support survivors of sexual violence

Fashion show plans to raise awareness, funds, community support for survivors of sexual violence

Liya Rike  
Elon News Network

CrossRoads Sexual Assault Response and Resource Center is partnering with Elon Community Church to host the nonprofit’s first-ever Denim Day Dinner and Fashion Show — a new fundraising event that combines fashion, food and advocacy to raise awareness about sexual violence and victim blaming.

Set to take place April 30 in the church’s Community Life Center, the event will honor Denim Day — a global observance rooted in protest against a 1998 Italian court ruling that overturned a rape conviction because the survivor had been wearing tight jeans.

Meredith Peffley, executive director of CrossRoads, said the organization’s mission is to support survivors and hold offenders accountable through advocacy, prevention education and trauma-informed care.

“We wanted to do a fashion show for a couple of years around Denim Day,” Peffley said. “Then we had the idea of turning it into a dinner and awareness event, where we could also raise funds for the organization.”

The event aims to raise money for

CrossRoads’ services, which include victim advocacy, education, prevention and a lasting community tradition.

“Ultimately, the vision was to create a flagship fundraiser that will happen year after year,” Peffley said. “But we wanted to make sure it always ties back to our mission: supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable.”

Denim Day goes back to public outrage over the court’s decision, which implied the survivor must have helped remove her jeans and therefore had consented. Since then, wearing denim on the last Wednesday in April has become a symbol of protest against rape myths and victim blaming.

The Rev. Randy Orwig, senior pastor at Elon Community Church, said the church’s long-standing advocacy for gender equity and inclusive theology makes it a natural partner for the event.

“The concept of Denim Day, being that a woman was blamed for her assault because she was wearing denim, is so repugnant,” Orwig said. “It’s just incredible that we still have to make these kinds of statements — but we do, and it’s very important to us to stand with survivors.”

Orwig said hosting the event aligns with the church’s long-standing commitment to social justice, gender equality and inclusive theology.

“We have a history here, and continue to have a history of not only speaking about women’s rights from a political or community lens, but also from a theological one,” Orwig said. “We feel

it’s important to be involved in something like this.”

Elon Community Church and CrossRoads have collaborated in the past, with the church regularly providing financial donations and volunteer support, according to Orwig. For this event, their partnership has extended into planning logistics, space coordination and community outreach.

“The church has been amazing,” Peffley said. “They jumped right on it when we asked. They’ve helped us secure volunteers, models and even sponsors. It’s been incredible.”

More than 15 sponsors have signed on to support the event, including Labcorp and Replacements Ltd., according to Peffley. Members of the Alamance Chamber of Commerce’s Leadership group have also taken a leading role in organizing the show and recruiting participants.

The fashion show will feature community members modeling outfits that challenge societal norms, incorporate denim and reflect survivor empowerment. Orwig said he hopes the event will bring together people of all backgrounds — faith groups, businesses and local leaders — for a common cause.

“This is not just a women’s issue, or a church issue,” Orwig said. “This is a human rights issue. You can’t come here on a Sunday, talk about loving Jesus, and then walk out and close your eyes to violence against women. The church has to speak out. The church has to be involved.”

CrossRoads, which works in Alamance and surrounding counties, provides a 24/7

crisis line, hospital accompaniment, counseling referrals and prevention programming. Still, Peffley said, societal stigma around sexual violence remains a major challenge.

“We still have a notion in this country that victims are lying,” Peffley said. “Every day, we fight for the belief that survivors deserve to be believed and that offenders should be held accountable.”

Though the event is ticketed and designed as a fundraiser, both Orwig and Peffley emphasized that the greater purpose is visibility and connection.

“Whoever attends, I hope they feel like they’ve been able to help— whether by donating, listening, or simply showing up,” Orwig said.

Looking ahead, Peffley hopes the event becomes standard in the community.

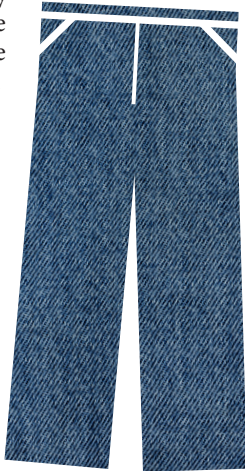
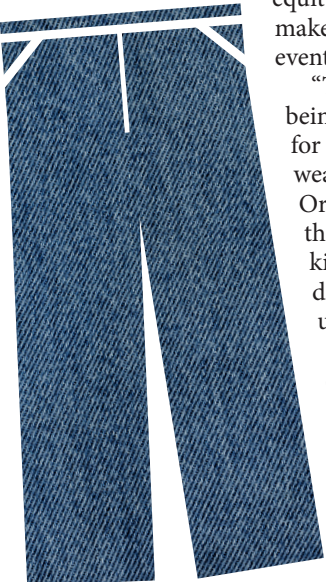
“For the next 365 days until we have our next one,” Peffley said, “I want people to think about how they can support survivors in big and small ways. This isn’t a one-night issue. It’s an everyday issue.”

### INFO BOX

Elon’s Gender and LGBTQIA Center is also hosting the Consent Carnival, an educational event about healthy relationships, consent and bystander intervention, on April 30 noon to 4 p.m. in Young Commons. In partnership with Elon Feminists for Equality, Change and Transformation, the GLC will share results from its HEDS Sexual Assault Campus Climate Survey. The presentation will cover student experiences with consent, bystander actions, sexual violence and knowledge of campus resources.

### IF YOU GO

For tickets and more information on this event go to <https://Xrdsdenimday2025.eventbrite.com>





# PROFESSORS, STUDENTS FEEL RAMIFICATIONS OF FEDERAL GRANT TERMINATIONS

Art history professor loses \$250,000 in research funding from NEH grant

**Avery Sloan**  
Elon News Network

Many researchers, including Elon professor of art history Evan Gatti, had to find out through an email that went to their junk mail that their federal grant — which many were relying on to support their dreams — had been revoked.

Gatti received her own email in her junk mail letting her know that the \$250,000 grant she received from the National Endowment for the Humanities would be revoked effective April 2.

The NEH terminated over 1,000 grants, and the NEH sent termination notices to 65% of its employees, both of which came about a month after President Donald Trump forced out the head of the NEH. The NEH firings and cuts are in line with Trump’s executive order from Feb. 11, which directed the Department of Government Efficiency to eliminate “waste, bloat and insularity” in the federal government.

The NEH is not the only government department affected by cuts from DOGE — federal agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Education and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau have all seen mass layoffs.

Elon’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors hosted a Day of Action on April 17 with the goal of bringing attention to executive orders targeting education. Universities across the U.S. held similar events, and Elon was just one of five universities with programming in North Carolina. The AAUP’s mission is to give professors a voice and the ability to organize.

Elon’s Day of Action included 14 half-hour sessions on different topics, including one led by Gatti focused on attacks on NEH grants. Roughly 100 students, faculty and staff attended the session, with some professors bringing their classes for the lesson while some students and faculty came on their own.

Gatti’s research was a collaboration with six other researchers at different universities looking at restoring medieval manuscripts and using multispectral imaging to see writings and drawings that were previously lost, according to her research’s website. Gatti was not available for an interview.

Junior Ash Crouse, an art history major, said she has been in several classes that have talked about Gatti’s research, and it is something she has gained inspiration from for her own research.

Crouse is doing research on the connection between magic and disabilities and said that looking at old manuscripts that are about magic and its connection to medicine could



ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Professor of art history Evan Gatti speaks during Elon University’s chapter of the American Association of University Professors’ Day of Action on April 17. Gatti is among several researchers whose National Endowment for the Humanities grants were recently revoked.

help with her own research.

“It’s an amazing thing,” Crouse said. “It’s a newer technology, and I think we would be able to do a lot with that.”

The email from the NEH said this was effective as of April 2, meaning not only would they not be able to spend money and continue their research, but there were people who had already been doing work who would not be getting paid.

“There was money in the pipeline, lost money,” Gatti said in her AAUP presentation. “We didn’t just not get money — we lost money. People aren’t going to get paid.”

Loss of grant money has also affected local museums, including the Pauli Murray Center in Durham. The center, which officially opened in September 2024, is a renovated version of Murray’s childhood home in Durham. Murray was a civil rights lawyer and an activist for people of color and members of the LGBTQ+ communities.

Earlier this month, the Pauli Murray Center received notice that a \$330,800 federal grant from 2024 was terminated. The termination notice said the grant is no longer consistent with the Institute for Museum and Library Services’ priorities and does not serve the interest of the U.S.

The grant was slated to make up close to 16% of the 2025 fiscal year and roughly 20% of its 2026 fiscal year budget. This funding went toward partnering with artists, faith

leaders, educators and other members of the community to create new programming for the center, Angela Thorpe Mason, executive director of the Pauli Murray Center, said.

“Without access to the funding, we are no longer in a position to design, fabricate and install a new exhibition in Pauli Murray’s home, childhood home that was supposed to center their humanity, their community and their spirituality,” Thorpe Mason said. “Those are some of the broad programmatic impacts and ripple effects from an internal organizational capacity.”

Thorpe Mason said the intentional erasure of a figure such as Murray is highly concerning.

“I was really struck by the language in the termination notice ... ‘Our grant project no longer serves the interests of the United States,’” Thorpe Mason said. “To me, that comment is infuriating when you consider the very person who Pauli Murray was. They saw so much promise in America that they literally dedicated their life to shaping an America where everyone could live whole, free and unoppressed, equitable lives, regardless of race, class, sexuality or gender. And to me, there’s nothing more American than that.”

Down the line, loss of federal grant money could impact what people feel are important fields, such as civil rights history and art history, sophomore Justin Huemmer said.

Huemmer is an art history major and said this field is already something many people don’t view as important. According to Elon’s spring registrar’s report, there are 20 students majoring in art history.

“It is very common for people to kind of look at our classes, look at our major and say it’s kind of like a useless major, and it’s dehumanizing at first,” Huemmer said. “But another thing is that art history in general is very underappreciated.”

Huemmer said as someone looking to go into building design and architecture, it is concerning not to know what careers will be funded in the future.

“It’s a direction that I’m really scared about,” Huemmer said. “People are starting to get their federal funding removed because somebody doesn’t like what they’re doing or doesn’t see it as important. It really raises an ethical question of, ‘What is important? What should we focus on and why should we focus on it?’”

As of right now, Crouse said Gatti has tried to reach out to NEH but has not gotten any response. Crouse said with Gatti’s research, and with her own research down the line, she doesn’t know yet what the future will look like.

“It was, like, a huge ‘Oh my gosh,’ situation. I can’t believe this is real. Next steps, really, is just waiting to see what happens,” Crouse said. “It is truly just a waiting and seeing type of situation.”

## Distrust between community, leadership brings concerns

**TARHEEL | from cover**

But, none of this can be achieved until the site’s cleanup is complete.

The DOD’s formal active involvement in the remediation process began early last year with a remedial investigation of the site in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality.

Nathan Edwards, project lead at the DOD, said this included examining the underlying geology of the site as well as the nature of the local hydrology. The investigation was then reviewed by the state of North Carolina in order to move forward with treatment plans based on the data collected. In order to gather data, the DOD installed a network of monitoring wells to measure the ongoing contamination. In an attempt to remove a large portion of the source, much of the contaminated soil was extracted and tested.

Removing the soil was considered interim remediation, which are temporary measures done to address risks and concerns at a site before a final remediation plan is finalized.

“It’s more like we expedited the process versus we did something that we didn’t have to,” Edwards said. “I think it’s the best management practice to try and get this process moved quicker.”

Morgan Lasater, the community engagement director for the city of Burlington, reiterated how uncommon interim remediation is in these kinds of situations.

“I think that’s an important piece of this puzzle because they really took swift action to go in and cut the head off. To, you know, just pull it out of the ground,” Lasater said. “That was a long time coming, so that was really a success, I believe, and I don’t know that our community understands how good that was for us.”

A primary goal of the NCDEQ and the

DOD is to dismantle the misinformation surrounding the plant, particularly about the quality of the drinking water at the site. Many people believe the tap water, specifically from those houses immediately adjacent to the plant, is contaminated with PFAS compounds, also known as forever chemicals, and TCE from the groundwater. Lasater insisted that this wasn’t true because there are no water reservoirs at the Western Electric site. This was also echoed by Ethan Dinwiddie, an employee for Terracon, the company contracted to clean up the area, at the April 17 meeting.

“Folks are fearful and they don’t always trust information sometimes,” Dinwiddie said. “That’s something that, as a communicator sitting in those meetings, has been very clear to me. We’ve got some work to do to dispel any fear that might be in the community.”

A big concern among community members was the perceived lack of transparency in

the restoration process. Ayo Wilson spoke similarly of trust between the government and the community at the RAB meeting.

“Through this community with elected officials and powers that be and the people that live in the community, they don’t trust you,” Ayo said. “I’m just saying that to this process, you got to be focused on building trust with the people who live in this community and the people in this county.”

The common concern has repeatedly come back to the community and those affected by the plant. On both sides, the bottom line has been the well-being and representation of east Burlington, something that is meant to be protected by the formation of the RAB.

“The RAB is about keeping the community informed and also with a voice,” Vanhook said. “The more voices we have, the more impact we can create.”

*Avery Sloan contributed to the reporting of this story.*





# Alamance Letter Writers Society keeps tradition alive through handwritten notes

ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Denise Schweiss writes a letter during the April 8 meeting of the Alamance Letter Writers Society.

The club meets to write to different organizations once a month, builds friendship, community

**Abigail Hobbs**  
Elon News Network

Four months ago, Denise Schweiss sent a letter to a friend in the hospital to express her gratitude to him. He helped her buy music equipment and start her music career — which lasted for 25 years.

“If he wouldn’t have given me that more support, I never would have done it, and I did it for 25 years. I sang because of his influence,” Schweiss said.

Recently, Schweiss’ friend passed away. “People forget what they do for you, and you have to remind them,” Schweiss said. “Then when they’re down, they can remember, ‘Well, I have a purpose in life.’”

Schweiss became interested in letter writing as a child, when her grandmother would send her letters at 3 years old. Her mother would collect each of them and keep them in scrapbooks, and now at 68 years old, Schweiss still has the scrapbook today.

“My mom told me this years ago — before she passed — that if you really care about somebody, you ought to write them a letter one time in your adult life and tell them how you really feel about them, or

tell them how they’ve helped you and the meaning it had,” Schweiss said.

Schweiss has maintained this value throughout her life and continues this practice with the Alamance Letter Writers Society.

The Alamance Letter Writers Society was founded in November 2022 by Anna Neill and Becca Chavis to share the love and tradition of letter writing.

“

PEOPLE FORGET WHAT THEY DO FOR YOU, AND YOU HAVE TO REMIND THEM. THEN WHEN THEY’RE DOWN, THEY CAN REMEMBER, ‘WELL, I HAVE A PURPOSE IN LIFE.’

**DENISE SCHWEISS**  
MEMBER OF LETTER WRITERS SOCIETY

“We just found a shared love and passion for writing letters, for pen pals and for paper and pens and all those kinds of paraphernalia that you can get into,” Neill said. “So we thought, wouldn’t it be great if



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Denise Schweiss writes a letter during the April 8 meeting of the Alamance Letter Writers Society. Schweiss became interested in letter writing as a child, when her grandmother would send her letters at 3 years old.

we could bring together other people who have the same sort of passion? And that’s how the group was born.”

Once a month, the group meets at the Mebane Public Library and writes letters to military members serving overseas, retirement communities and a variety of friends and family. At the April 8 meeting, the group of five wrote birthday letters to a member’s father for his 95th birthday and get well soon cards to a friend in San Jose, California.

“Letter writing is a real, physical, personal way to connect with people,” Neill said. “I think it’s a lost habit, it’s a lost way of communicating. And so for me, I get excited when I get something in there, like a card or a letter. So I think I want to do the same thing for other people.”

Sending letters has been decreasing steadily over time, with 116.2 billion pieces of mail sent in 2023 compared to 154.3 billion in 2015, according to the United States Postal Service.

Starting April 1, the USPS saw the first introduction of “enhancements” that is estimated to save the service at least \$36 billion over the next decade by cutting costs and improving efficiency. This follows the service’s agreement with the Department of Government Efficiency that determined USPS would cut 10,000 jobs between March

and April.

The club, usually about six to 10 members a month, uses free cards that have been donated to the library.

The April 8 meeting was Jean Catlin’s second time attending the club, and she said she was driven to join due to the personal connection she feels with letter writing.

When Catlin was 13, her best friend moved across the country to Seattle, and the pair has been sending letters for over 50 years.

Catlin’s friend recently sent her a cassette tape that she originally sent her at 13. Even though she can’t find a way to play it, it symbolized how much they value their correspondence.

“I just think that it’s really special to be able to keep in touch with people and just right in people’s day, instead of a bill or flyer or political ad, it’s really nice to be able to know what’s going on in people’s lives,” Catlin said. “It’s different than a phone call. It’s just something that you could hold.”

The Alamance Letter Writers Society meets at 6 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month at the Mebane Public Library.

## IF YOU GO

The Alamance Letter Writers Society meets at 6 p.m. every second Tuesday of the month at the Mebane Public Library.



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jean Catlin, Lindia LaFrance and Denise Schweiss talk and write letters during the April 8 meeting of the Alamance Letter Writers Society at the Mebane Public Library.





# Maker Hub prepares to take over Moseley Center with over 40 student projects



Displays to combine student creativity, practicality in semester-long projects

**Virginia Vance**  
Elon News Network

The staff of Elon University’s Maker Hub are preparing to make creativity come to life at the upcoming Maker Takeover. Maker Takeover has occurred for the past six years and centers around displays of projects made at the Maker Hub throughout the year. The Maker Hub has tools such as 3D printers, sewing machines, laser engraving and tools for creating electronic projects; the Maker Takeover features projects in any of these categories. This year’s takeover takes place April 30 and advertises over 40 student projects, as well as an escape room, stations for crafts and a presentation about the history and making of chainmail. Working behind the scenes to coordinate all these displays is the Maker Hub’s student leadership team — which is an entirely different roster from last year. Senior Amalie Keefe, the Maker Hub’s team lead of operations, said all of the team leads from last semester are on study abroad, leading to a completely new leadership team

compared to last year. Keefe said she felt that being new to leadership could be its own advantage. “I think that sometimes when you stay too long in a leadership role, you lose sight of what it’s like to interact with people who come into the space every day,” Keefe said. Senior Avery Shipp, the Hub’s team lead of workshops, is working on physical preparations for the takeover, and some of the preparations are things that she said people wouldn’t expect. “Weirdest thing would be having to explain to people that I need to leave work to go count outlets,” Shipp said. Shipp said many of the projects to be displayed must be plugged in, so a large part of her job has been finding ways to get power for all the projects that need it. “It’s just not something you think about until it’s time to do it,” Shipp said. Keefe said all of the new leadership previously worked directly with people in the Maker Hub as tool consultants, which helps them better understand the wants and needs of those in the space. Shipp said many of the Maker Takeover projects are sewing projects because Maker Takeover is meant for full-semester projects, and sewing projects tend to be particularly time consuming. Sophomore Finn Wilkinson works

as part of the 3D printing team at the Colonnades Maker Hub, but rather than pursue a project within her job’s description, she’s following the trend Shipp identified to another medium: clothing.



I AM A PRETTY BIG FAN OF DRAG RACE, AND A HUGE PART OF DRAG CULTURE IS CREATING YOUR OWN OUTFITS AND COMING UP WITH YOUR OWN DESIGNS, AND I FEEL LIKE THAT’S SOMETHING THAT’S VERY MAKER TAKEOVER.

**FINN WILKINSON**  
ELON SOPHOMORE

“I am a pretty big fan of Drag Race, and a huge part of drag culture is creating your own outfits and coming up with your own designs, and I feel like that’s something

that’s very Maker Takeover,” Wilkinson said. “I wanted to give myself a whirl and see if I could make my own design.” Wilkinson’s project includes her first attempt at making a sewing pattern, which she said was less easy than she thought it would be. Junior Jose Besednjak, who works as part of the Maker Hub’s textiles team, is also doing a sewing project. His idea is strongly rooted in practicality: He’s creating a life-size teddy bear based on one made by Ikea. “I’m like, ‘That’s very cute. I don’t want to spend \$50 on my own teddy bear, though,’” Besednjak said. Not every takeover project involves a sewing machine, though. Senior Maggie Dion, who leads 3D tool usage at the Maker Hub’s Colonnades location, is 3D printing a nightstand inspired by Maurice Sendak’s “Where the Wild Things Are.” Dion is working on her nightstand as part of Elon’s Kickbox program, which provides funds and guidance for a few projects each year. “I’ve always been mesmerized by how your imagination can take you to faraway places,” Dion said.

**IF YOU GO**  
Maker Takeover will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. April 30 in Moseley Student Center.



Moseley student center on April 22. The Maker Takeover will take place April 30 in the Moseley Student Center.

ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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# THIS PAST WEEK IN ELON ATHLETICS

## Baseball

Elon lost a road series against Monmouth this past weekend. It dropped the series opener in a back-and-forth affair that got away from Elon in the eighth inning. Its bullpen ended up letting up four runs in that inning, dooming the Phoenix. Eleven hits and gave way for Elon's bounce-back win the following day. Monmouth won the series in the final game of the series despite a strong performance from pitcher Declan Lavelle.

## Men's Golf

Elon men's golf won the Coastal Athletic Association Championship for the first time in program history on April 22 after finishing in 2nd place the last two years. Elon was in third place going into the final day but eagles by sophomore Jack Wieler and senior Garrett Risner in a playoff against Drexel allowed the team to surge forward and capture the championship. Senior Juan Callejo Ropero finished in fourth place individually.

## Women's Tennis

Elon women's tennis finished the regular season with a gritty 4-3 victory over William & Mary. The Phoenix captured the doubles point quickly, but William & Mary fought back in the singles. A 4-6, 6-3, 6-1 comeback victory by sophomore Mariana

Reding secured the victory for Elon. Elon now readies itself for the CAA Tournament, which will be hosted at Elon April 25 to 27 at the Jimmy Powell Tennis Center.

## Men's Tennis

Elon went 1-1 this past week, losing to St. John's and beating Charleston. It capped off the regular season with an impressive performance against CAA rival the College of Charleston. Junior Veljko Krstic got a quick doubles win and then followed it up with a 6-3, 6-3 win in singles. Elon ends the regular season with a 10-7 record. The CAA Tournament will be April 25 to 27.

## Softball

Elon beat North Carolina A&T on the road in a dominating performance, winning each game of the series by at least five. Senior McKenna McCard led the way in the series opener as she set a career-high with 15 strikeouts — the most strikeouts by an Elon pitcher since 2011. Elon exploded for four home runs, including two from senior Kaitlyn Wells, in a 14-1 victory in the second game of the series.



McKenna McCard

The team recorded 14 hits in the game. Elon completed the series sweep with another impressive offensive output, recording 16 hits thanks to eight different batters getting a hit. In its final game of the series, Elon's win clinched a spot in the CAA Tournament.

## Lacrosse

Elon lacrosse clinched its spot in the CAA Tournament for the second straight year with a big win over Towson. Elon went into halftime tied at 6-6 but outscored Towson 10-6 in the second half and forced 10 turnovers. Redshirt sophomore Ana Lee Vandiver was a standout, scoring five goals. Elon has won five of its last seven games after starting the season 3-4. Head coach Josh Hexter said the team is focused on continuing to stay together.



Ana Lee Vandiver

"We're not thinking about outcomes or anything," Hexter said. "It's just keep stacking plays and making sure we're connected and sharing the ball." Elon plays its final home game of the season against Queens on April 23 before heading to conference opponent Drexel for its final regular season game.

# Elon's newest volleyball head coach looks to build player-coach connections

Matt Troy uses one-on-one meetings as an opportunity to know the new players he will coach in the fall

Benjamin Berfield  
Elon News Network

When Matt Troy took the head coaching job for Elon University's volleyball team, he saw it as an opportunity to grow as a coach. Troy previously hadn't heard much about Elon's volleyball program but after watching film of the team, he believed they had potential that could be built upon once the season begins in August. Last year, Elon finished 11-18.

While Troy does plan on incorporating a few things such as an up-tempo offense, he isn't looking to change everything about the team. Elon will have 11 returning players next year, and Troy recognizes how tight-knit most of the players are going back to former head coach Mary Tendler's tenure. Tendler spent the last 22 seasons coaching Elon where she won over 300 games.

Troy said he made it a priority to know the players on the team so he could get a better understanding of who they are. He and his staff have also started recruiting players in preparation for the fall.

"One of the first things I did coming in is I started to put meetings into play," Troy said. "Once we started in February, I have them in my office every week and just get to know them."

Troy said he'll typically ask the players questions about their lives such as their personal interests or how they're doing in school. He doesn't want to know them as only volleyball players.

"We're invested in them as players of course, but also as people," Troy said.

When it comes to volleyball, Troy finds it easier to apply his offense from his previous coaching jobs, which he acknowledges is different from the offense they ran in the fall. During Troy's most recent stint at Johns Hopkins, he compiled a 151-17 record which

included an appearance in the 2019 NCAA Division III Championship. His career record in 14 seasons is 357-96.

Troy said he uses practices as an opportunity to get the players accustomed to his offense. The practices resemble most game simulations with lots of gameplay in an attempt to replicate game-like scenarios.

Although Troy recognized it might take some time to be fully effective, he is fine with this philosophy.

"In practice, it's a lot of six on six and learning within the gameplay," Troy said. "We're willing to take some chances in our practices, and we might make some mistakes but we're going to be better because of that."

Troy also counts on the players to express their thoughts in practice. He believes that giving them ownership of the team will allow them to be more invested going forward.

So far players including junior Cameron Lanier have admired Troy's efforts in building connections with everyone on the team. She said Troy has been friendly and said she has gotten to know him better through one-on-one meetings.

"Almost every week we do one-on-one meetings with him, and we watch film or go over questions that we have," Lanier said. "That's been really nice because he cares about us and wants us to get better."

Troy said he's invested in watching film of plays. He believes it's an opportunity to really break down everything without worrying about performing a particular skill.

Lanier said Troy hasn't been afraid to incorporate new ideas during practice either. She believes the team has already shown glimpses of how effective Troy's up-tempo strategy could be.

She also said Troy sets high expectations for practice when the team is scrimmaging against each other. She said Troy expects everyone to practice the way they'd compete in an actual game.

"He holds us to a high standard in practice and wants us to hold each other to a high standard," Lanier said. "He's always mentioning that which is nice because it's true."

Through Troy's first few months on the job, he has found the players to be very receptive of his approach toward building connections along with the style of practices.

He hopes to continue developing relationships among the players before the season through team activities whether it's having dinner at his house or team road trips.

"They're brought into it pretty well," Troy said. "One of my hopes is that a lot of our activities start taking place in the fall. And I think it's fun when they're a bit more genuine and not always planned."



COURTESY OF ELON ATHLETICS  
Head volleyball coach Matt Troy watches the Elon volleyball team during an offseason scrimmage April 17.

Denotes home game  
Denotes away game

## Scoreboard

### Baseball

April 18  
Elon 4 | Monmouth 9

April 19  
Elon 10 | Monmouth 4

April 20  
Elon 0 | Monmouth 3

### W Tennis

April 19  
Elon 4 | William & Mary 3

### M Tennis

April 15  
Elon 0 | St. John's 4

April 17  
Elon 4  
College of Charleston 0

### Softball

April 18  
Elon 6 | NC A&T 1

April 19  
Elon 14 | NC A&T 1

April 20  
Elon 9 | NC A&T 2

### Lacrosse

April 19  
Elon 16 | Towson 8

## Upcoming

### Baseball (15-24)

April 23 - 6 p.m.  
Elon at High Point

April 25 - 6 p.m.  
Elon vs. NC A&T

April 26 - 4 p.m.  
Elon vs. NC A&T

April 27 - 1 p.m.  
Elon vs. NC A&T

April 29 - 6 p.m.  
Elon at East Carolina

### W Tennis (17-5)

April 25 to 27 - 10 a.m.  
CAA Tournament at Elon University

### M Tennis (10-7)

April 25 to 27 - 2 p.m.  
CAA Tournament at Elon University

### Softball (25-15)

April 25 - 5 p.m.  
Elon vs. University of North Carolina, Wilmington

April 26 - 2 p.m.  
Elon vs. University of North Carolina, Wilmington

April 27 - 1 p.m.  
Elon vs. University of North Carolina, Wilmington

### Lacrosse (8-6)

April 23 - 5 p.m.  
Elon vs. Queens

April 26 - 1 p.m.  
Elon at Drexel