

THE PENDULUM

Former McEwen Dining Hall employee, follows passion at local farmer's markets
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Freshmen tennis stars elevate women's team for spring season
PAGE 7

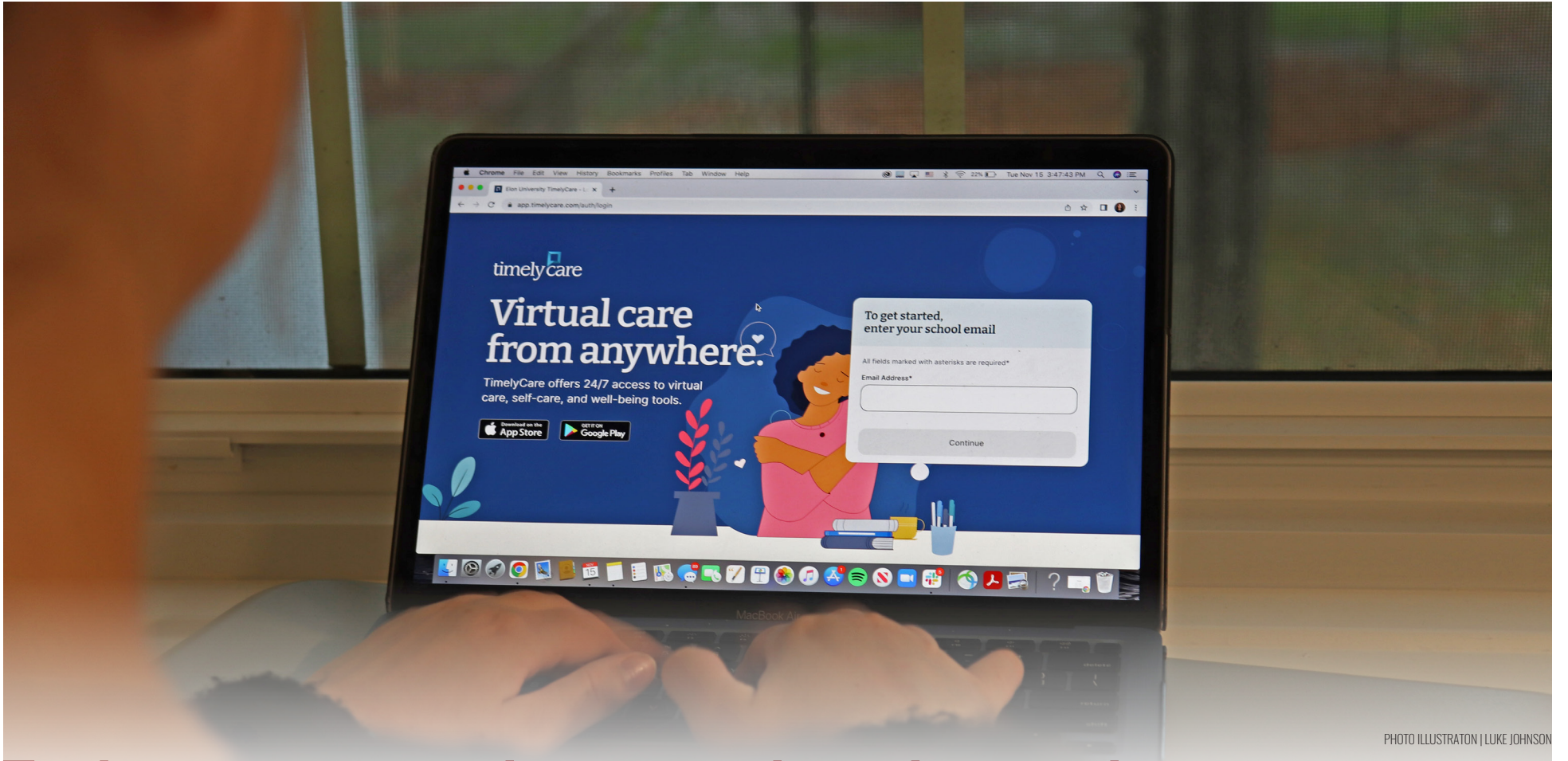


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | LUKE JOHNSON

Technology expands mental health, well-being resources

Elon University partners its healthcare and communication systems with HealthEU, TimelyCare

Sarah T. Moore, Caroline Beinfang and Ryan Kupperman
Elon News Network

“Hey everyone. It took me a while to understand that I need to seek help. These past few weeks I’ve been stressing about

financial aid, family back at home, being homesick and trying to understand that not everyone is going to want to be friends. It’s hard to feel welcomed when people give you looks or they act like you’re not there. I feel both invisible and out of place. I want to tell my friends, but I don’t want to put a burden on their shoulders. What can I do to relieve this stress?” An anonymous user of the initials IB posted on TimelyCare’s “Community” feature seeking relief and support.

Partnered with colleges and

universities across the country, TimelyCare aims to deliver virtual solutions to mental health and medical care issues for all students. The “Community” feature includes a chat service in which users can post anonymously about their thoughts, feelings and concerns. Their comments are visible and open to feedback to all those registered for TimelyCare.

“I am the same way. It’s really hard for me to ask for help. But trust me your friends want to know how you’re doing and they will want to help! You won’t

burden them. They care about you,” MB responded to IB.

“Hi! :) Do not worry about how other people see you, because they are probably thinking the same thing too and are rushing to get wherever they need to go. I may just be a tiny voice, but you are never a burden, and you are never alone. A great stress reliever for me is meditation and journaling! If you ever need a friend to talk to about anything, I’m here for you!” MM also replied to IB.

Elon’s partnership with TimelyCare comes in tandem

with the launch of the HealthEU initiative — an integrated brand and hub of resources that looks at how to best help students, faculty and staff with their mental health, medical care and wellness needs.

TimelyCare’s full services have been open, free of charge, to Elon University students since the fall 2022 semester, according to Dean of Students Jana Lynn Patterson.

See **TIMELYCARE** | pg. 4

Town of Elon holds student focus group on future development

Benchmark Planning hosted Nov. 14 focus group, plans for future community meetings

Abigail Hobbs
Elon News Network | @abigailhobbs

The town of Elon recently began its three-phased Downtown Master Plan process, which is expected to conclude in June 2023 with the presentation of a community-supported draft for the future of downtown development. Phase one, which will continue through January 2023, is also called downtown assessment, and it includes gathering input from residents, students and business owners, as well as researching market potential such as parking inventory and urban design analysis.

The town of Elon hired Benchmark Planning, a consulting firm based in Charlotte, to help create the development plan for downtown. This week, members of the planning team, Jason Epley and Dan Douglas, began meeting with Elon University students, faculty and staff, as well as Elon locals and business owners, to figure out what would work best for the community.

Ten students attended a Nov. 14 student focus group in the Moseley Student Center, open to all Elon students, to answer Douglas’ and Epley’s questions on student needs downtown.

The biggest issues outlined by the students

at the meeting were the lack of sidewalks, late-night food options and emergency healthcare facilities.

Douglas and Epley also asked multiple times about the live music scene in Elon, including band and a cappella performances at The Oak House, under the temporary tent downtown and in local bars.

Douglas said that while students have great plans, the town simply does not have the funding to create these opportunities.

“They don’t have a lot of money — you should know because the biggest business in town doesn’t give them any money and that’s this,” Douglas said, referring to the university. “They don’t pay taxes to Elon. ... I think you probably recognize that something good happens, it’s usually a partnership with the university because neither one really can afford to do it alone.”

Another issue in bringing in new stores or restaurants is the lack of staff and patrons. While students suggested stores such as Trader Joe’s or food halls, Douglas said Elon does not have enough patrons during the academic year, but especially not during the summer.

“It’s tough to figure out how to make some of these things. If there was a grocery store serving students, what would they do in July when nobody’s here?” Douglas said. “They would close or lay off everybody because they wouldn’t be able to make any money, so that makes it even tougher.”

Douglas said building sidewalks is a priority, and he and Epley are going



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jason Epley (left) from Benchmark Planning writes notes during the student focus group Nov. 14.

to brainstorm a space that appeals to students and locals with food, drinks and entertainment.

Douglas said the pair wants to garner more student opinions and are planning on sending a survey and hosting another focus group in the near future. They also plan on having a public meeting for residents and students after Winter Break where they will also ask for opinions to develop a clearer plan, which is consistent with phase two in

the master plan.

Phase two includes three workshops available to the public during February and March 2023, according to the master plan. Phase three is the finalization of the draft of the master plan, which will also include input from the public.

Based on the feedback they receive, they will submit a preferred plan to the town, which will then prepare the budget for the next year.

THE PENDULUM

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

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Erin Martin and Max Wallace contributed to the design of this edition. Gram Brownlee, Abigail Hobbs, Ryan Kupperman and Erin Sockolof contributed to the copy editing of this edition.

EDITORIAL POLICY:

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.

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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

Contact

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to report a correction or a concern.

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CORRECTIONS

In the Nov. 9 edition of The Pendulum, the story "Midterm Elections: the aftermath" conflated statewide and districtwide races. The United States House of Representatives is a districtwide race. Elon News Network regrets this error.

NEWS BRIEFS

QUICK TAKES ON STORIES YOU MIGHT HAVE MISSED THIS WEEK

1. Elon University buys properties on East Haggard Avenue

The three properties total more than \$2.5 million

Miranda Ferrante

Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com | [@ferrantemiranda](https://twitter.com/ferrantemiranda)

Elon University purchased three properties on East Haggard Avenue early last month, totaling \$2,675,000, according to Alamance County Tax Administration records.

The university purchased 716 E. Haggard Ave. for \$1,500,000, 742 E.

Haggard Ave. for \$675,000 and 738 E. Haggard Ave. for \$500,000.

The properties are located between Danieleley Center Neighborhood at 700 E. Haggard Ave. and the Gerald L. Francis Center, the school of health sciences, at 762 E. Haggard Ave.

The properties at 738 and 742 E. Haggard Ave. still have homes on them.

The purchase of these properties on East Haggard Avenue comes alongside other efforts for university expansion, including plans for a new residence hall located in the East Neighborhood set to

break ground on June 1.

The university also officially opened Founders Hall and Innovation Hall in the former McMichael Science Center parking lot in August. The two new buildings are a part of Innovation Quad, a hub for STEM.

"As it has throughout its history, Elon University periodically makes strategic purchases of properties to support our mission," the university said in a statement. "Specific plans for these properties have not been finalized at this time."

2. Elon University campus police achieves reaccreditation

Fewer than 100 agencies earn the recognition

Miranda Ferrante

Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com | [@ferrantemiranda](https://twitter.com/ferrantemiranda)

Elon University Campus Safety and Police has earned reaccreditation from the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. The department was first accredited by the association in 2018.

Chief of Campus Police Joe LeMire said accreditations like IACLEA are often tied to policies, and Elon is one of fewer than 100 agencies across the

country to earn the recognition.

LeMire said some of these policies are related to use of force, deadly force, body camera footage and officer accountability. The accrediting bodies set standards for these policies to ensure the agency is meeting them.

"It's a lot to do with how you operate, how you perform, how you do things related to the job from investigations to handling evidence to recruiting and retaining and promoting employees," LeMire said. "The standards that are set out there, you're meeting those things, so universities, cities, counties, other areas know that when you're meeting those levels, it's a professional organization."

In August, IACLEA administered

an on-site assessment as part of programming to achieve accreditation. The public was able to offer feedback to the assessment team.

In four years, the agency will seek reaccreditation again.

"You hope that all those policies that you have that as you train your staff to those levels, the increase in professionalism and accountability of your police department goes up," LeMire said. "As that accountability and professionalism goes up, your reputation in the community goes up. And then when you're looking to hire and recruit and retain some of the best officers, they'll look at the department and say, 'that place has a reputation of being a very good police department.'"

3. Elon University alumnus named assistant dean for development, alumni relations at Elon Law

Scott Leighty most recently served as assistant director of annual giving

Miranda Ferrante

Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com | [@ferrantemiranda](https://twitter.com/ferrantemiranda)

Scott Leighty '09 has had a number of titles at Elon University. From student to senior engagement officer — and most recently, assistant director of annual giving — Leighty is now joining Elon University School of Law in Greensboro as the assistant dean for development and alumni relations.

Leighty, whose professional

experience is in fundraising and programmatic development in higher education and nonprofit sector, is set to begin the role Nov. 28, according to a press release from Elon Law Nov. 11.

Leighty will focus on forming connections with Elon Law graduates while creating philanthropic support for the law school from alumni and additional sources.

"I am thrilled to join the team at the Elon University School of Law," Leighty said in the release. "Elon Law has been a powerful force for creating positive change in the world and I look forward to engaging our alumni and leveraging the power of philanthropy to create more opportunities for our students."



Scott Leighty

VISIT OUR WEBSITE ELONNEWSNETWORK.COM TO READ MORE

EVENTS THIS WEEK

**TRANS DAY OF
REMEMBRANCE &
RESILIENCE | 7 -
8:30 A.M.**
Numen Lumen

17

**NAHM - LUNCH
CHAT | 12 - 2 P.M.**
McKinnon Hall D

17

**NCAA FIRST ROUND
MEN'S SOCCER VS
MARSHALL | 6 P.M.**
Rudd Field

17

**MEN'S BASKETBALL
VS NORTH DAKOTA
8 P.M.**
Schar Center

17

**ELAN FALL
CONCERT | 7:30 - 9
P.M.**
McCrary Theatre

17

**ELON DRONE DAY II
8 A.M - 6 P.M.**
Schar Communications
- Snow Atrium

18

**WOMEN'S
BASKETBALL VS
UNCG | 2 P.M.**
Schar Center

19

**USA VS IRAN
WORLD CUP WATCH
PARTY | 2 - 4 P.M.**
Sklut Hillel Center

29

Graduate student guard Lenaeha Evans attempts a three-point shot from the corner during the women's basketball game against N.C. State on Nov. 10 at Reynolds Coliseum. Elon lost 89-55.



JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



ELLA PITONYAK | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Graduate student forward John Bowen III goes for a dunk in warm ups prior to the Nov. 11 men's basketball match up against East Tennessee State University at the Asheville Championship.



RUTH CRUZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

During a first-generation college student event Nov. 7, Director of the Moseley Student Center Michael Williams asks students in LaRose Commons about their experience on campus and what they wish to improve on for the future.



ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University students cheer on the Elon men's soccer team during the Colonial Athletic Association Championship game Nov. 12. Elon lost 1-2 to Hofstra University.



AIDAN BLAKE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior defender Kasper Lehm goes all out to save possession for Elon men's soccer in a tight match against the Hofstra Pride in the Colonial Athletic Association Championship on Nov. 12. Elon lost 1-2.

TimelyCare, HealthEU shape future of health services

TIMELYCARE | from cover

“We did a really hard look at things like capacity around urgent care in the area, and if a student got sick outside the areas of student health or needed to talk to someone to engage in a counseling relationship outside of counseling services hours, there were just not a lot of options for our students,” Patterson said. “And if there were, they required that our students be able to pay for them.”

TimelyCare

With TimelyCare, students also get access to 24/7 on-demand mental health support, scheduled virtual appointments with certified health coaches, licensed counselors, psychiatry services by referral and self-care content such as yoga, meditation, sleep tips and healthy relationship advice.

Students are able to use their Elon login to access TimelyCare’s website, where they can schedule appointments and access on-demand care. TalkNow is the platform’s on-demand mental health service. According to Mallory Olson, a media relations manager at TimelyMD, the average wait time for Elon students to connect with a provider for TalkNow is four minutes.

Seli Fakorzi is the director of mental health operations for TimelyMD and a licensed clinician who works directly with students. She said that the goal for TalkNow counselors is to work with the student to create a comprehensive “care plan” for them to follow. TalkNow sessions can last up to 30 minutes and are intended for in-the-moment student support.

“Students are able to understand what is the plan, what are the next steps,” Fakorzi said. “And then also understand if it’s an isolated event, or scheduled counseling is not the next step for them, that they can also reach back out to our service anytime they would like to.”

TalkNow matches students with the next available counselor, but TimelyCare’s scheduled counseling appointments allow students to choose their provider. Elon students are able to schedule 12, free virtual counseling appointments each year through TimelyCare. Students can either schedule appointments with the same counselor or with different counselors each time.

“Every provider has a bio where you can see a photo of the person, their name, their credentials and information about their areas of specialty,” Abby Waldron, a senior client success manager for TimelyMD, said. “We make all of that information readily available to students so that they can find someone that they feel comfortable with.”

According to Fakorzi, students are also able to contact TimelyCare’s Customer Care Navigation Team, which allows students to enter what they are looking for in a provider and receive assistance in finding a match from TimelyCare staff.

Expanding and adapting

As TimelyMD continues to establish and expand its partnerships with colleges and universities across the country, more and more students have access to their services. According to Fakorzi, during the COVID-19 pandemic, TimelyCare saw a significant increase in students using its services.

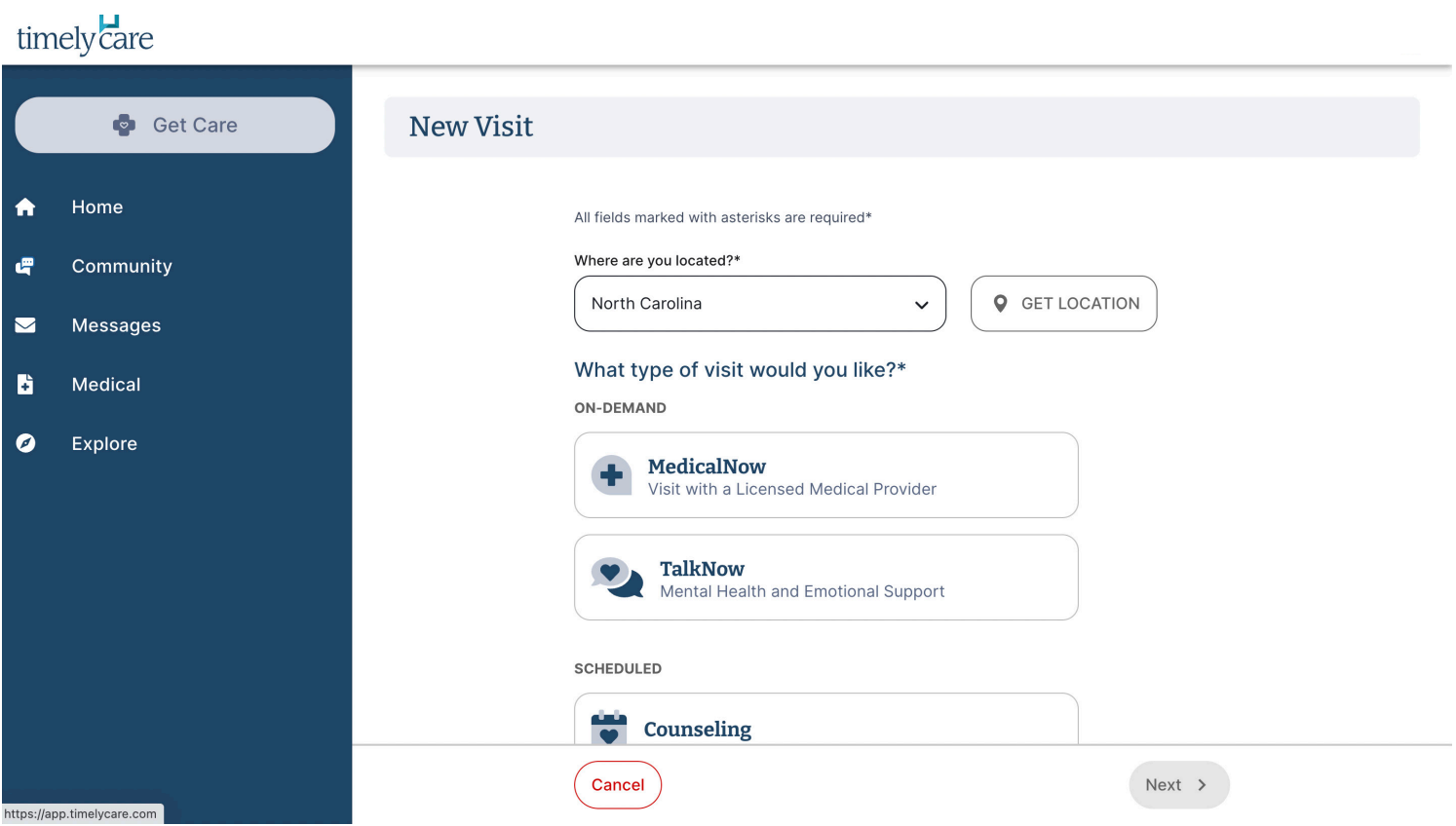
“We’re the only virtual health solution focused exclusively on higher education,” Waldron said. “Currently we serve more than 1.5 million students at nearly 250 college and university campuses nationwide.”

According to Olson, TimelyCare is on track to reach 500,000 appointments across the platform’s services by the end of the fall semester.

“Demand for our services has never been higher,” Olson said. “So far this fall, students have accessed mental health and well-being services through TimelyCare more than 325,000 times.”

According to Cara Plasencia, associate director of Elon’s Counseling Services, Counseling Services has provided over 1,300 appointments to roughly 500 different clients since August 2022.

Yet, both Plasencia and Fakorzi said



Once logged in to TimelyCare, Elon students can access on-demand video and phone counseling or schedule up to 12 regular sessions a year.

neither Elon’s Counseling Services nor TimelyCare are designed for long-term mental health care and emphasized the importance of working directly with students to create long-term plans and support systems.

“Counseling Services can also help a student get connected to a long-term provider in the surrounding community,” Plasencia wrote in an email to Elon News Network. “Students can work directly with their counselor, or request a care coordination appointment with our Counselor/Referral Coordinator for assistance when seeking long-term care or specialized care that we are not able to offer in-house.”

Sophomore Jasmine Walker has scheduled appointments with both TimelyCare and Elon’s Counseling Services since she started attending Elon.

Walker said that she preferred TimelyCare over Elon’s Counseling Services because of the accessible nature of the platform. The virtual appointments meant she could attend appointments from a more comfortable setting, which she said allowed her to feel less anxious and more comfortable opening up.

Junior Samantha Pomerantz said she has had the opportunity to utilize some of TimelyCare’s resources, and believes it is very beneficial for the future of mental health services.

“I think it’s been amazing,” Pomerantz said. “In my experience, I think TimelyCare is a great asset. ... It’s definitely easier to connect with people about mental health.”

While she said she prefers in-person counseling sessions, as well as in-person spaces such as the meditations rooms located in the Truitt Center, Pomerantz does value the benefit of telehealth resources — especially for students who are not on campus.

“I think I do prefer to do in-person sessions, but when leaving the state for school, virtual could be beneficial in terms of staying with the same provider,” Pomerantz said. “I did virtual and in-person with the same person during COVID.”

According to Patterson, Elon law students are a great example of working through distance barriers, as they are located in Greensboro. Although not possible previously, Elon has increased the ability to engage students that weren’t easily reachable or accessible before.

While senior Maggie Bickerstaffe said she agrees with Pomerantz and prefers in-person sessions, TimelyCare is critical both for students in other locations and for students who cannot afford to wait once a month for an appointment.

“I do know a lot of people who tried to get in to see someone before, and there was like a huge waitlist where they couldn’t get in for like a month even,” Bickerstaffe said. “So

it has definitely helped with that.”



IN MY EXPERIENCE, I THINK TIMELYCARE IS A GREAT ASSET. ... IT'S DEFINITELY EASIER TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH.

SAMANTHA POMERANTZ
ELON JUNIOR

Navigating

Despite the large number of students logging in for appointments, TimelyMD continues to meet the demand, according to Olson.

“Our blended care model of providers helps us adjust to student needs while maintaining timely access to care, diversity of providers and quality of care,” Olson said.

Yet, TimelyCare is not the only option for Elon students seeking counseling services.

Elon’s Counseling Services include individual counseling, group and couples counseling, support groups and referral support. Students are able to schedule appointments online with one of Elon’s nine clinicians. Appointments are only available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays; however, students who need support outside of those hours are still able to connect with an Elon crisis counselor. Similar to TalkNow, students are also able to call (336) 278-2222 to connect with an on-call counselor at any time.

Plasencia said access to counseling is important to student success at Elon.

“It’s important for students to have access to counseling and support to help them reach their goals and be successful during their time at Elon,” Plasencia wrote. “Mental health concerns among young adults has been on a continuous climb for several years, and it is important that our university provides access to support mental wellbeing on our campus.”

Patterson also said that the university is partnered with both the Jed Foundation, a non-profit, national organization dedicated to protecting mental and emotional health, and Alamance Psychiatric Associates, where the university is working with local hospitals to receive expedited services. What normally would be a four to six week wait for psychiatry care, is now a one to two week wait for Elon students.

As part of the Jed partnership, the university undergoes a three-year review and feedback process — which Elon began just before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“One of their recommendations was ‘You’re doing all kinds of great things, but people can’t find it,’” Patterson said. “The next piece of HealthEU is really going to be a collaborative effort across the university about thinking about integrated health and well being.”

Patterson said she has been at Elon since 1986 and has been involved in student health and mental health services right from the start. According to Patterson, the university’s use of technology over the years has had a lot to do with the era of and events occurring around the world.

“We had some students who said, ‘Would you ever think about virtual services?’ And we thought ‘Well, that’s not really our model, you know, we’re in person,’” Patterson said. “Well guess what, in March 2020, we had to go flip to virtual services. ... When COVID forced us to do that, and people did it well, and our students responded positively to it — then it was a shift for us institutionally.”

While she said she doesn’t believe virtual and remote resources will completely replace in-person ones, Pattern said technology has done wonders for keeping students grounded and connected to each other.

“They see this as probably what the wave of their future is gonna be,” Patterson said. “Once they graduate from Elon, many of our students are working remotely so they’re engaging in virtual services. I do think that as we continue to work virtually and remotely, we’ve got to continue to develop ways to have connections with people. And sometimes that’s going to be virtually.”

TIMELYCARE

1. Download the TimelyCare app or go to timelycare.com
2. Log in with your Elon email address
3. Update your medical information

ELON COUNSELING SERVICES

Appointments are available 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Students who need support outside of those hours are still able to connect with an on-call Elon crisis counselor.

Call (336) 278-2222 to connect with an on-call counselor at any time.

TIMELYCARE.COM



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Amanah, an Iranian woman, joins protesters in Stanton park before marching to the Capital of the United States in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 15. She marched to demand change in the Iranian regime and support women's rights.



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Protesters gather in Washington, D.C., at Stanton Park on Oct. 15, for a rally bringing awareness to the alleged police murder of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini by Iranian authorities.

IRAN ISSUES FIRST DEATH SENTENCE FOR RECENT ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS

PHOTO STORY

Luke Johnson
Elon New Network | @lukergjphoto

Following the recent protests in Iran sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, Iran’s Revolutionary Court handed down its first legal decision to execute a protester Nov. 14. Protests, which began after Amini died in police custody Sept. 16 were met by a brutal and swift response by Iranian authorities and saw more than 15,000 Iranians arrested. The protester in question was accused of setting fire to a government building and charged with “war against God,” “corruption on earth” and “acting against national security,” according to The Washington Post.

In the past two months, Iranian security forces have killed at least 326 people in protests, according to CNN. Furthermore, Iran has executed at least 314 political prisoners in 2021, according to The Washington Post.

Members of the Iranian community in Washington D.C. gathered at Stanton Park Oct. 15 for a rally and march to the U.S. Capitol. They marched to show solidarity and support for women in Iran fighting for their rights and calling for regime change in the country.



JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Protesting against the Iranian government, people arrive at the United States Capitol Building after marching from Stanton Park in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 15.



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Nazila Masoumi and other protesters rally and march from Stanton Park in Washington, D.C., to the United States Capitol on Oct. 15. They marched to show solidarity and support for women in Iran fighting for their rights as well as calling for regime change in Iran.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Iranian Protesters march to the United State Capitol Building on Oct. 15, to show solidarity with women in Iran and advocate for a regime change in the nation.

LIFESTYLE

Local gardener expands company; finds personal growth

Gardner Bob sells “gut healthy” products at local farmers markets after cooking for Elon Dining

Gianna Smurro and Caroline Mitchell
Elon News Network

Robert Thomas, or “Gardener Bob” as Elon students know him, is embarking on his second year through local farmers markets.

In the summer of 2021, Thomas had two options: collect unemployment or find an alternative income. Thomas had worked at Elon University’s McEwen Dining Hall that year, part of a long run of culinary-related careers, and was let go for the summer months. Initially, Thomas saw his career at McEwen as an opportunity to innovate and be creative in the kitchen, but after additions to the facility like The Chicken Shack, he said the job became less fulfilling.

“In the very beginning, we were able to create a lot more, and honestly, when you’re able to create, there’s a lot more fun,” Thomas said. “The food kind of became more bland and dumbed down, and I went from creating awesome meals to grilling chicken for six hours a day.”

The same summer, Thomas began to realize the impact certain foods had on his health. Growing up, Thomas had a “bad gut” and was sick for extended periods of time. He recognized that he could better control what is put in his body if he made his own food products, and began to make drinks and food that promote healthy digestive systems.

“I started making kombucha, and I started making sourdough at the same time because I know both of those are very good for the gut,” Thomas said. “So in making those, a couple of friends were like, ‘You should sell me some each week.’”

Kombucha helps with digestion, while boosting energy and ridding the body of toxins — while sourdough bread is a prebiotic that promotes beneficial bacteria in the intestines. Combining his goal for digestive health with culinary experience resulted in the start of his brand, Gardener Bob.



CAROLINE MITCHELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Robert Thomas sells his Gardener Bob products at the Elon Farmer's Market.

At his first farmer’s market in the summer of 2021, Thomas sold \$70 worth of kombucha. He eventually shifted his business to only selling baked and pickled products, but by the end of his first summer, his sales were enough to sustain an income. This allowed him to leave his position at McEwen as he began investing more time into his small business.

“No matter how much you work for somebody else, you can never find that satisfaction,” Thomas said. “I’ve gotten in the last year more satisfactory compliments about how amazing stuff was and all that than I’ve ever got working for somebody else.”

For Thomas, Gardener Bob isn’t just about the money. Thomas said it is his mission to change the community around him and help others with their own health journey. Other than sourdough bread, Thomas also sells

”gut-healthy” options, such as picked fruits and vegetables, jellies and gluten-free baked goods.

“It’s a story that I’m trying to tell,” Thomas said. “We’re all in this life to make a living, but more than just a living is making an impact on people’s health and society itself.”

Dealing with personal struggles for much of his life, Thomas said the business has become an outlet for himself. Reflecting on his past, Thomas said his personal goal of living a healthy lifestyle stems from a previous struggle with addiction.

“I was an ex-heroin addict, a drug addict. So the fact that I’m actually sitting here talking to you right now is a miracle,” Thomas said. “It’s a very small percentage of people that make it out of addiction like that.”

Students and customers can find Thomas and Gardener Bob products weekly at local

markets, and his pastries are also sold at The Oak House. After two years in the Elon community, Thomas is hopeful for the future of his business and the impact he can have.

“We can fix our health, but we can fix our community by caring about the people that are in our community directly,” Thomas said. “That’s how we grow together and get healthier together.”

IF YOU GO
Town of Elon Farmer’s Market
Where:
271 N. Williamson Ave.
Elon, N.C. 27244
When:
Thursday, Nov. 17, 4 –6 p.m.

Burlington gym teaches self defense for women

Shannon Marshall-Hughes, owner of Pink & Fierce, strives to empower women through martial arts

Sophie Rosenthal and Jules Martin
Elon News Network

For Burlington resident Shannon Marshall-Hughes, Krav Maga is the key to unleashing her “inner lioness.” She opened Pink & Fierce, a women’s self-defense gym located in Burlington, to help other women do the same through martial arts.

At Pink & Fierce, Marshall-Hughes offers self defense, bootcamp and children’s classes. A typical class has about five participants, and the gym provides punching bags, pull-up bars, weights and other equipment to help women achieve their self-defense goals. According to Marshall-Hughes, she often teaches classes to groups of women from Elon University.

Though Marshall-Hughes has been teaching Krav Maga for 20 years, she didn’t always focus entirely on women’s self defense. When she initially moved to Burlington, Marshall-Hughes and her husband at the time ran a larger gym on Church Street with about 150 members and 14 instructors.

After eight years of business, the gym closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the gym closed, Marshall-Hughes said she thought she was done teaching. But when the building owner of the downtown Burlington storefront reached out offering the space to her, she decided to reopen — this time, scaled down and dedicated to women.

“I’ve always wanted to do this but never had the opportunity because I had such a big studio and so many obligations, so then I never had the opportunity to really focus on the women,” Marshall-Hughes said.

Rekha Ravindra is friends with Marshall-Hughes and said she often attends kickboxing classes at Pink & Fierce.

“It’s nice to let out my stress from the day punching the bags,” Ravindra said. “It’s just a fun group activity. So I am getting the fitness in a group environment, and they also incorporate a lot of strength training and muscle building.”

Marshall-Hughes learned the art after her brother suggested it while living in Los Angeles. Once she started, she said, there was no turning back.

“I walked in, and I never left,” Marshall-Hughes said. “It was a long, grueling process, but it is something that I’m so proud of.”

Though she doesn’t know where her martial arts journey will go, Marshall-



JULES MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pink & Fierce owner Shannon Marshall-Hughes punches a punching bag during class on Oct. 25.

Hughes said she hopes to continue empowering women.

“I think it’s really important for women to know how to defend ourselves, and just embrace your pink and your fierceness,” Marshall-Hughes said. “We’re never taught how to defend ourselves, we’re never taught how to use our voice, we’re never taught basic safety rules. Some things we just don’t know how to do, and we always think that we can’t defend ourselves, but we can.”

IF YOU GO
Pink & Fierce
Where:
216 E. Front St.
Burlington, N.C. 27215
When:
Check pinknfierce.com/events for upcoming classes

SPORTS

NCAA Men's Soccer First Round
vs. Marshall

Thursday, Nov. 7 | 6 p.m.
Rudd Field

Women's Basketball vs. UNCG
Schar Center

Saturday, Nov. 19 | 2 p.m.
Schar Center

5-STAR FRESHMEN
HEADLINE ELON'S WOMEN'S TENNIS



LEFT: Freshmen Madison Cordisco (left) and Helen Sarikulaya (right) high five during a doubles match at the Jimmy Powell Invitational on Oct. 30.

TOP RIGHT: Freshman Helen Sarikulaya hits a forehand during a doubles match with partner Miray Konar at the Elon Fall Invitational on Sept. 16 at the Jimmy Powell Tennis Center.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Freshman Madison Cordisco hits a backhand during her doubles match with partner freshman Helen Sarikulaya at the Jimmy Powell Invitational on Oct. 28.

JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ranked at the top of their classes, Madison Cordisco and Helen Sarikulaya hope to push Elon into the NCAA tournament

Matthew Farina
Elon News Network

Elon University's women's tennis team has a lot to look forward to in the spring. Freshmen Madison Cordisco and Helen Sarikulaya, both five-star recruits according to The Tennis Recruiting Network, are two of the highest ranked players the program has ever seen. Their skill translated fast, as they posted a combined 14-2 record in singles and 5-1 playing doubles together.

After a 17-9 season last spring, it was huge to get two top recruits. As head coach Elizabeth Anderson enters her 19th year at Elon, she said the smooth transition was mutual between her and the two freshmen.

"Both Helen and Madison quickly developed great relationships with the team and have had a very good transition to Elon and college tennis," Anderson said. "They are both very hard workers and great teammates who love the team atmosphere."

Elon was a fit for both recruits both academically and athletically. Anderson said Sarikulaya and Cordisco made their decisions

after successful visits and careful consideration with other schools like The University of Kansas and Tennessee.

"They reached out to me in the recruiting process as they were looking for schools where they could reach their full potential both academically and athletically. I thought Elon would be a very good fit for them," Anderson said. "They both had wonderful visits at Elon and immediately connected very well with the team and I."

A friendship between the freshmen is developing both on and off the court. After meeting for the first time this past summer, Anderson hopes their connection will translate to wins in doubles play.

"They have developed a close bond with each other, and I think their strong bond has helped them to transition so well," Anderson said. "This strong relationship also enhances their doubles chemistry, and they have great instincts on the court."

Cordisco and Sarikulaya had different journeys to Elon.

"Coming in I was afraid of not being able to fit into the group," Sarikulaya said. "But, since coming in, they have always been there for me, even through my worst moments in tennis."

Sarikulaya, from Rockville, Maryland, started playing at age 10. With her dad as her coach, she didn't join an academy until age 15.

"They've helped me improve my game and be the person I am today," Sarikulaya said.

As the No. 2 ranked player in Maryland in the Class of 2022, Sarikulaya said she saw Elon's program as the best way to improve on her game.

"When recruiting my coach helped me pick Elon, I wanted to go into a team where I could build it to be a better team than the other schools," Sarikulaya said. "I do want the best for myself but I also want the best for the team."

Madison Cordisco took a much different road to Elon's team. Originally from Pittsburgh, she spent most of her high school career at Hilton Head Academy and followed in the footsteps of her former coach, who also went to Elon.

"My coach inspired me to go to Elon, he said it was a great school, great environment and a beautiful campus," Madison said. "After visiting, I couldn't agree more."

For the high school graduating Class of 2022, women's tennis recruiting was much harder because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Spots were limited because of many reclassifications from the Class of 2021 and extended years for college athletes.

"Everyone was taking a fifth year," Cordisco said. "They didn't have scholarships available for our year. That made the recruiting process much harder for us."



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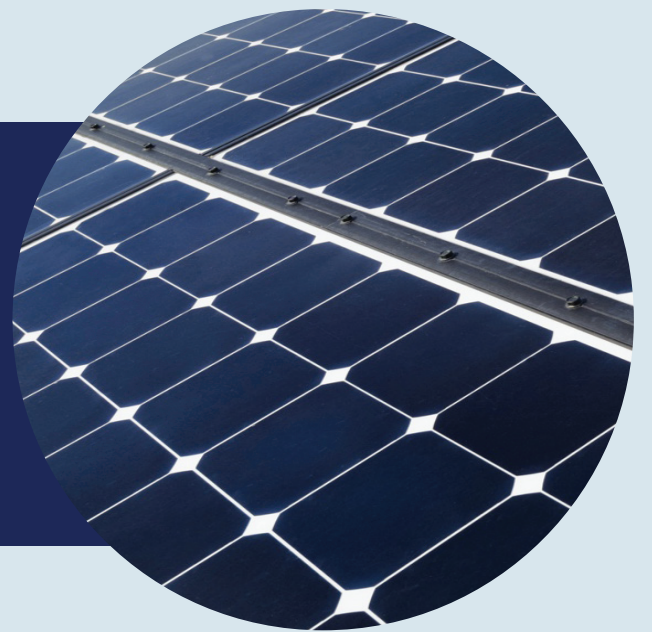
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