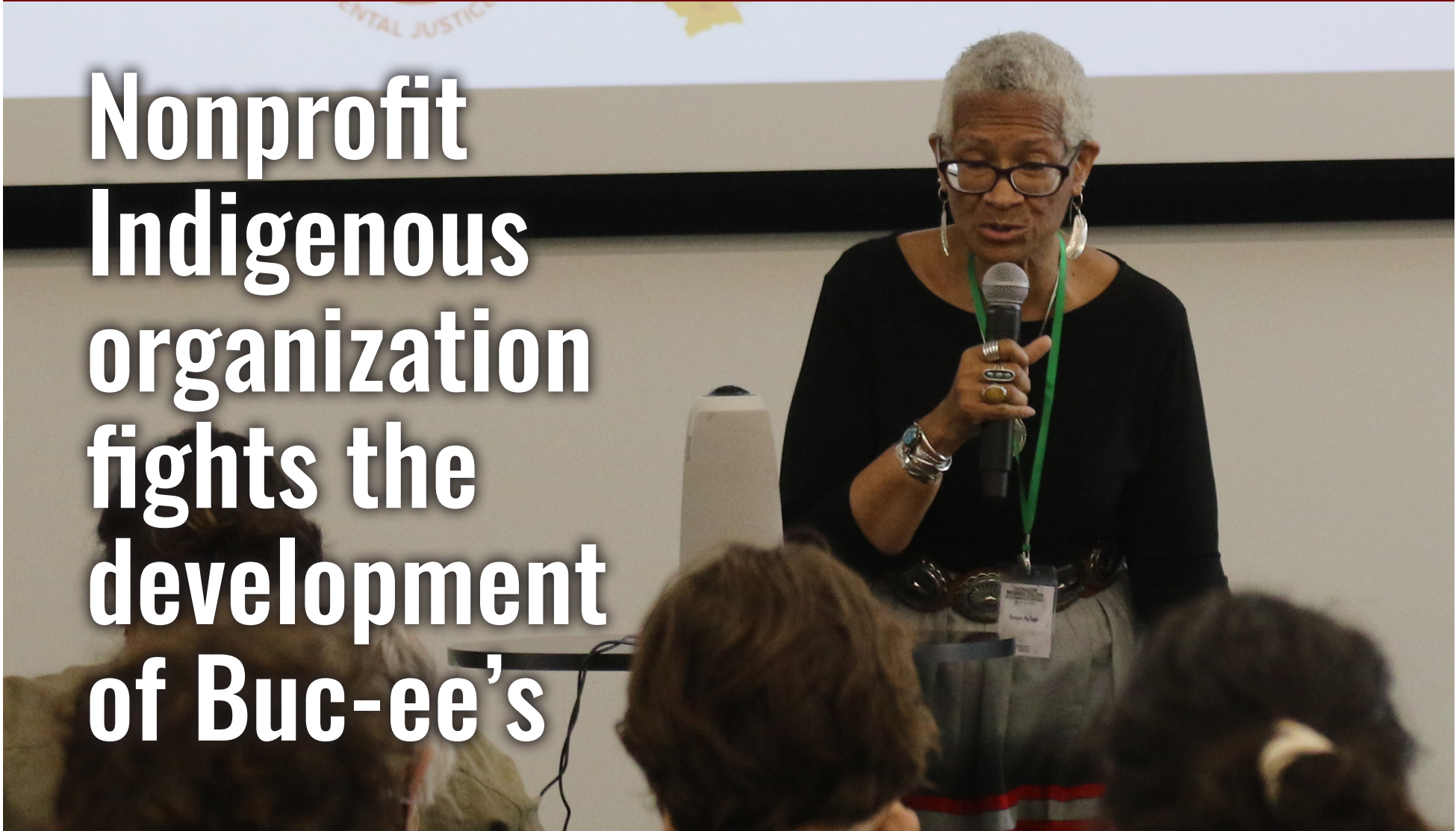


Nonprofit
Indigenous
organization
fights the
development
of Buc-ee's



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Ramona Moore Big Eagle shares her journey in growing her own food during the land sovereignty and Indigenous foodways panel March 7 at the Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference at Rockingham Community College.

The mega gas station is being built on Occaneechi-Saponi's Great Trading Path

Abigail Hobbs
Elon News Network

Omega Wilson grew up knowing his ancestors were under his feet. Wilson was raised on the narrow dirt path of Kimrey Road in Mebane, which borders the Great Trading Path — a highway of

Indigenous trade spanning from Virginia to South Carolina. At that time, the area was mainly fields and pastures for the dairy farms, full of pecan and oak trees. In between the farms and distant houses on the dusty road, and just 100 feet from his house, there was a ravine. Wilson grew up being told it was the drag trail — deep, parallel tracks left on the ground by travois, which were sled-like structures used for transporting goods and people across the land. It was common to find flint and stone arrowheads scattered along the backyard

garden of his grandparents, Samuel and Lizzie Carr. When his family was digging in the front yard to do some renovations, they came across two graves. Wilson saw the structure of their faces and hair, and there was clay covering them over the burial site. White flint arrowheads were placed around their heads. "About 100 or 200 feet from the drag trail, there were graves. There were two graves that were found," Wilson said. "It was very apparent. ... When we found them, we covered them back up."

Later, when North Carolina decided to pave Kimrey Road to hold school buses and dairy trucks, the construction unveiled layers of history hidden just seven feet beneath the surface. Wilson saw fireplaces, artifacts and bones in the construction, and his father even found an intact clay pipe. "That was something that wasn't uncommon to us," Wilson said. "It was just a part of what we saw."

See BUC-EE'S | pg. 4

'I'm not hiding out'



AVERY SLOAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Crystal Burroughs practices the songs she is about to perform at Speakeasy Carrboro during the bars weekly open mic night. March 11 was the first time she performed at the bar.

Chapel Hill resident transitions at age 60 amid rollbacks on transgender rights

Avery Sloan
Elon News Network

Crystal Burroughs knew she was meant to be a girl by the time she was 4 years old, before she knew what the word transgender meant. But even though she was sure of her identity from a young age, growing up in the 1960s and '70s without transgender representation and living through decades of normalized transphobia — she never planned to actually come out as a transgender woman. From as early as elementary school, Burroughs said she would sneak into her mom's closet and crossdress. As a child, it was normal to hear her teachers and coaches calling students slurs and derogatory terms. She said growing up, she was constantly under this "umbrella of fear" that someone would figure out who she really was — so she never told anyone, even as a married adult, that she was transgender. For years, she would wait until her wife was out of town to wear makeup and women's dresses in her

own home. "I intended to just hide it and just crossdress in private to satisfy that need," Burroughs said. However, two years ago, her gender dysphoria was only getting worse, and Burroughs began drinking heavily to cope. Gender dysphoria is defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as an incongruence between one's sex assigned at birth and their gender identity. To try and block out her identity, she decided she would buy a wig and makeup to see herself as a woman, and then that would be it, she planned to go back to fully dressing and living as a man. But, after feeling what it was like to be perceived as a woman and the gender euphoria that came along with it — she couldn't go back. "My body went numb and I just felt like the weight of the world — I'll get emotional — came off my shoulders," Burroughs said. In March 2023, when Burroughs was 60 years old, she came out as transgender, first just to her wife. Initially, she said she planned to only "make it a part time thing" and crossdress occasionally in public.

See TRANSITION | pg. 6



Elon Poll shows high Stein approval rates
PAGE 2 NEWS



Burlington bookstore feels support after move
PAGE 7 LIFESTYLE



New athletic merch allows athletes to profit
PAGE 8 SPORTS

THE PENDULUM

A PUBLICATION OF
ELON NEWS
NETWORK

ESTABLISHED 1974 | VOLUME 54, EDITION 22

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.

EVERY SLOAN

Executive Director of Elon News Network
Managing Editor of The Pendulum

CHARLOTTE PFABE

Managing Editor of elonnewsnetwork.com

ANJOLINA FANTARONI

Broadcast News Director

ERIN MARTIN

Design Chief

ABIGAIL HOBBS

Copy Chief

ETHAN WU

Photo Editor

MILES HAYFORD

Sports Editor

NIA BEDARD

Assistant Managing Editor for
elonnewsnetwork.com

LILLY MOLINA

Audience Engagement Manager

FIONA MCALLISTER

Executive Producer of ENN Tonight

ABBY GRAVELY

Producer of ENN On-Air

Sarah T. Moore, Karsyn Vann and Virginia Vance contributed to the copy editing of this edition. Taylor Radney, Neil Parmar and Megan Walsh contributed to the design 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
corrections@elonnewsnetwork.com
to report a correction or a concern.

The Pendulum
publishes weekly on Wednesdays

ENN Tonight
broadcasts Monday at 6 p.m.

ENN On Air
uploads Wednesdays

elonnewsnetwork.com
publishes daily

[f](#) [X](#) [i](#) [@](#) [v](#)
[@elonnewsnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/elonnewsnetwork)

CORRECTIONS

In the last edition of The Pendulum, in a story on ICE, Marquette was incorrectly listed as a university who had released no statement on ICE, but it had. Elon News Network regrets this error.

GOV. JOSH STEIN'S FIRST 100 DAYS: CAUTIOUS AND RELIEF-FOCUSED

Stein recently signed his first Hurricane Helene relief bill into law, released a budget proposal

Miles Hayford

Elon News Network

As Gov. Josh Stein's first 100 days in office come to a close, his administration has focused on three key areas: Hurricane Helene recovery, a two-year budget proposal and cautiously navigating a Republican-dominated North Carolina General Assembly.

Stein released a budget proposal March 19, which is a recommended budget that the General Assembly will take into consideration before passing the budget themselves. After two years of a Republican supermajority, the General Assembly is heavily controlled by the GOP. Republicans currently hold a 30-20 advantage in the Senate and a 71-49 advantage in the House. This is just one seat short of a supermajority, which gives Stein slightly more flexibility to veto bills. A supermajority means that one party has the ability to immediately override a veto from the governor.

Stein's 2025-27 budget proposal included tax breaks for lower-income households, scaling back on private school vouchers, more money toward childcare, a 10.7% teacher pay raise and halting tax cuts that are supposed to come next year. Stein recommended spending \$33.65 billion in the 2025 fiscal year starting on July 1, 2025 — over a \$2 billion increase from what is planned for this fiscal year — and then increasing it by \$700 million for the following year. Comparatively, the current 2023-25 budget planned for spending \$29.8 billion in the first year and then increasing it to \$30.9 billion in the following year.

One aspect of the proposal that is expected to bring partisan disagreement is the phasing out of taxpayer-funded scholarships, or "vouchers," for private K-12 education, which Republicans strongly support. House Speaker Destin Hall told reporters March 19 that phasing them out is a "nonstarter." Stein told reporters March 19 that he is against using taxpayer funds for this because he believes the state needs to "meet the needs of our public school students."

Stein has also proposed freezing tax cuts slated for next year, arguing it would prevent "fiscal pain" when talking to reporters after he revealed the proposal on March 19. The tax cuts were passed by the Republican-dominated General Assembly as part of the 2023 budget bill, and they are not supportive of the idea of delaying or halting these tax cuts. However, political analysts such as Mac

McCorkle, a public policy professor at Duke University, do not think Stein's budget will pass.

"Stein probably understands that he's going to need to play defense in the legislature and use his executive authority to play offense more than trying to pass legislation through still pretty strongly Republican chambers," McCorkle said.

Steven Greene, a political science professor at North Carolina State University, said he agrees and sees Stein's proposal as more of a suggestion than what will be enacted into law.

"It's the Republican budget that is going to be the blueprint, and perhaps going to be modified to whatever modest degree and Josh Stein's budget is just kind of a counter proposal to try and get people thinking about different ways of doing that," Greene said.



STEIN PROBABLY UNDERSTANDS THAT HE'S GOING TO NEED TO PLAY DEFENSE IN THE LEGISLATURE AND USE HIS EXECUTIVE AUTHORITY TO PLAY OFFENSE MORE THAN TRYING TO PASS LEGISLATION THROUGH STILL PRETTY STRONGLY REPUBLICAN CHAMBERS.

MAC MCCORKLE

DUKE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

Greene said this is because there are certain issues that will be too contentious for Republicans and Democrats to find common ground on.

"You look at something like the private school vouchers, and there's just strong ideological opposition there, and a great distance between the parties," Greene said. "When you look at things like who should pay how much of the tax burden in North Carolina, there's just some really strong differences that I don't think can be genuinely resolved."

The latest Elon University Poll released March 27 reveals North Carolinians' opinion on how Stein has done so far in his first few months in office. He received an approval rating of 44% from a sample of 800 adults, and

was only disapproved by 17%. This mirrors former Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper's approval rating of 48% and Republican Gov. Pat McCrory's 46% approval rating in their first few months of office.

Greene credits Stein's popularity due to the fact that he is constrained by Republican legislature and has to have modest goals.

While Jason Husser, director of the Elon Poll, added that this early approval is common for North Carolina governors.

"North Carolina governors have tended to have what's called a 'honeymoon period' in which they're quite popular when they start out," Husser said. "Stein, also, I think benefits from his party is not the one causing a lot of controversy right now because Democrats don't have enough votes to pass legislation on their own in Raleigh. Stein's not the face of a party doing things that might be controversial."

A significant moment of Stein's first 100 days came during his State of the State address on March 13 when he addressed both chambers of the General Assembly for the first time. He covered a wide range of topics including teacher pay, public safety, a proposal for a \$4 billion education bond to repair old school buildings, the fentanyl crisis and the possibility of providing free community college to students getting certified in high-demand sectors. The heart of his speech focused around Hurricane Helene recovery efforts, and he said the state has offered \$35 million in grants to help small businesses affected by the storm.

Hurricane Helene efforts have been a key focus on Stein's time as governor so far as he recently signed his first bill into law — the Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 Part 1. The relief bill includes \$524 million in total aid for western North Carolina, including \$200 million for farmers who experienced crop losses, \$100 million to repair damaged roads and bridges, and \$20 million for debris cleanup.

McCorkle called the focus on disaster relief a strategic move.

"He's doing the right thing from a moral point of view and political point of view by focusing on western North Carolina and clean recovery," McCorkle said. "It is one of the few things that gets beyond partisan divides and has allowed him, early on, to work with the legislature."

Yet, there is still much to be done as 35% of adults surveyed in the recent Elon Poll expect full recovery to take 3 to 5 years. The \$500 million in aid that the new bill pledges is still far short of the \$60 billion in damages that Stein estimates. Additionally, about 4,800 western North Carolina households are still receiving temporary housing assistance and more than 200 public roads remain closed or just partially open, according to state data.

Hurricane Helene recovery efforts have not been met with a positive response from North Carolinians. Forty-six percent of adults said they were very or somewhat unsatisfied with the progress, according to the Elon Poll. Only 26% rated the recovery response from various agencies as good or very good, and 43% said the Federal Emergency Management Agency's response has been very poor or poor.

Greene summed up Stein's first 100 days as uneventful but emphasized that it's not entirely a bad thing as Stein has had to play his cards carefully to avoid partisan conflict and find compromise.

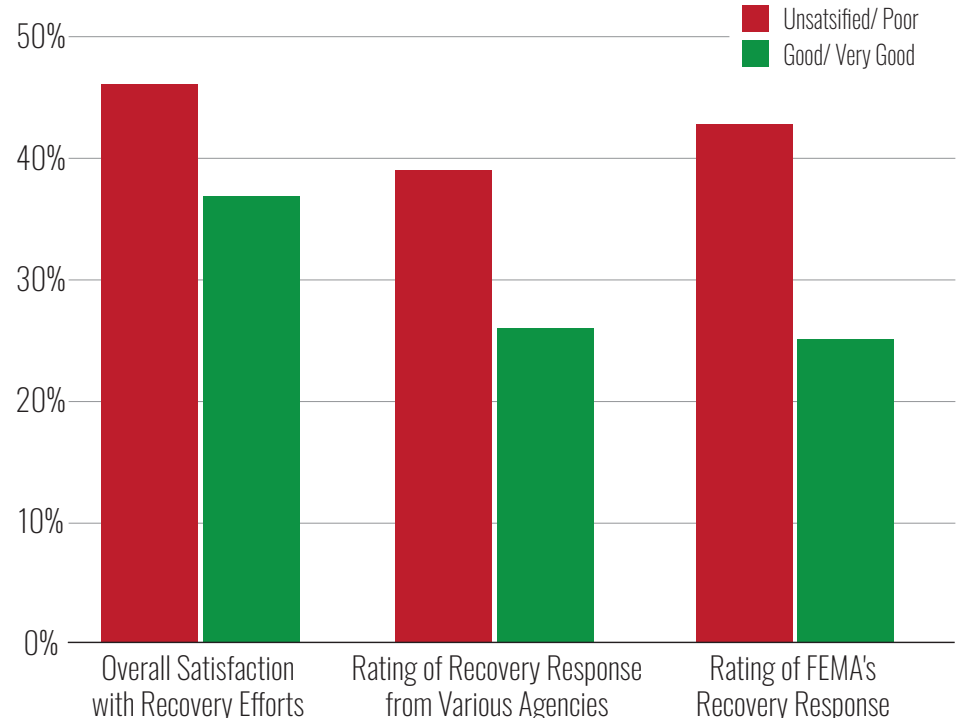
"You know what gets attention? Conflict," Greene said. "Quietly doing your job and trying to find areas of compromise and working together does not get a lot of attention. This just kind of speaks to the fact that he has tried to avoid high stakes conflict."

Despite Stein finding some bipartisan compromise with Hurricane Helene efforts, McCorkle said he thinks Stein's job will start to get harder as he gets further into his term.

"Just by the numbers, a governor like Stein or Cooper and anybody else, they're going to be playing defense in the legislature and not be able to pass a whole agenda," McCorkle said. "That would be really surprising if it happened."

Nia Bedard contributed to the reporting of this story.

Survey respondents overall felt unsatisfied with recovery efforts from both FEMA and various agencies

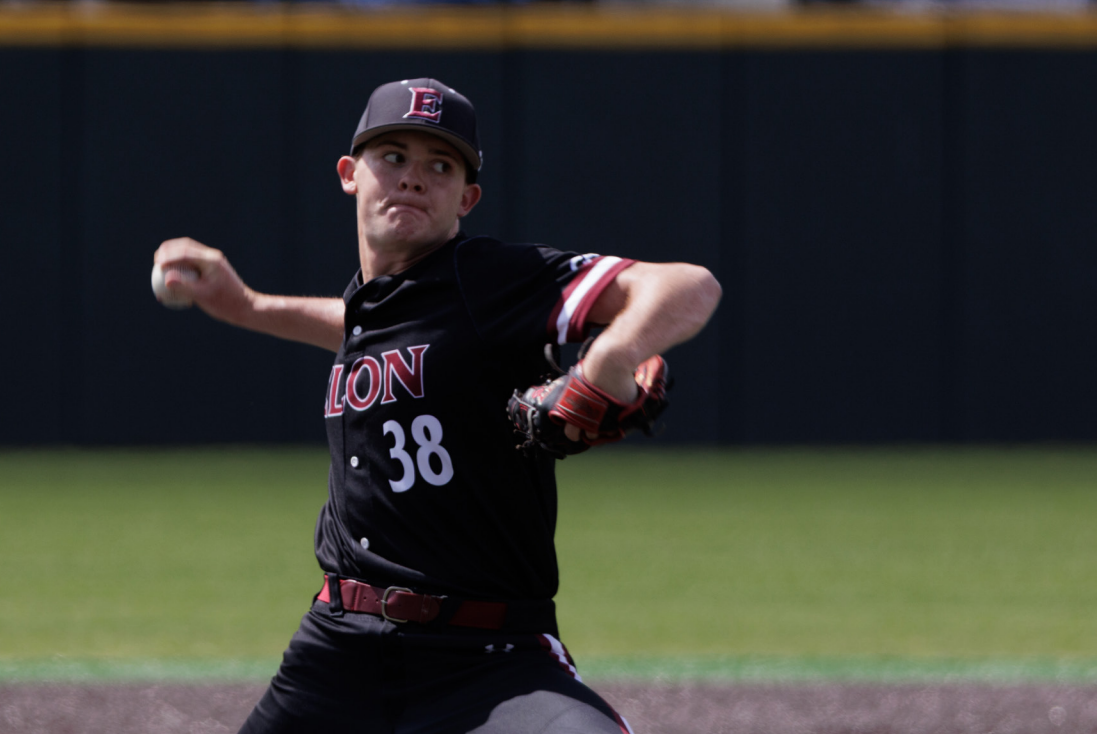


DATA FROM ELON POLL

DATA VISUALIZATION BY TAYLOR RADNEY



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR
A crowd cheers as senior Ethan Lowe kisses sophomore Jamari Heredia's hand as he walks down the center of the crowd during Kiki Ball hosted by the Gender & LGBTQIA Center on March 28 in the Taphouse. The Kiki Ball includes runway-style performances and is focused on celebrating LGBTQ+ cultures. Elon senior and president of oSTEM — an organization that encourages and supports members of the LGBTQ+ communities within STEM fields — Maria Ledin said events such as the Kiki Ball are pivotal for students to build relationships and community with like-minded individuals. "It's underestimated how important events like these are," Ledin said.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR
Sophomore Hudson Narke pitches the ball toward a Delaware Blue Hens batter March 30 at Latham Park. Elon lost 17-12.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR
Liberal Arts Forum guest speaker Maysoon Zayid advises attendees about the power of their voice and actions during her show "Find Another Dream: An Evening of Comedy and Questions" on March 27 in Whitley Auditorium. Zayid — a comedian, actress and disability activist living with cerebral palsy — spoke about a number of topics, ranging from her personal experiences to advice on how students can choose their identity. "Disability does not discriminate," Zayid said. "We are the one group that you can join whether you want to or not, at any time. Disability does not care about your religion, your ethnicity, your economic class, your gender or who you love."



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR
Senior Preston Burnside, left, and Adrianna Jackson, right, pose in at a photo booth with giant glasses during Elon Ball March 29 in Global Commons. The ball included dancing, food and a photo booth.



MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Senior Brooke Scheuermann sprints up the field during Elon's Senior Day win over Campbell on March 29 at Rudd Field. Elon won 13-10.



North Carolina's first Buc-ee's will be constructed in Mebane on the Occaneechi-Saponi's Great Trading Path. The Buc-ee's will be a 20 minute drive from Elon.

BUC-EE'S | from cover

The Great Trading Path

Wilson remembers backlash when the roads were being developed more than 60 years ago. There was a small paperback book written by a historian that his cousin showed him describing the historic land and expressing concern over its destruction.

Just a few years ago, people from neighboring farms came to Wilson and asked what his family had seen on the land. Just like Wilson, the neighbors had been collecting arrowheads, hatchets and other artifacts from the land for years.

The neighbors shared that when they came across graves in the farms, which they often would, they would plow around them.

Now, however, that land houses a Walmart distribution center, a Lidl regional distribution center and an Amazon fulfillment center.

"They knew what some of these sites were because they owned the land, and they were concerned about these areas being totally destroyed by some of the mega industrial and distribution and highway construction that is going on right now," Wilson said.

Since the 1670s, the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation used this trail to transport fur and deerskin, braiding the cultures of Indigenous people along the Southeast.

"Now, most of that area, the visibility, has been destroyed," Wilson said.

In January 2024, the Mebane City Council approved the development of mega-gas station corporation Buc-ee's, comprising 32 acres and 120 gas pumps, to be built at 1425 Trollingwood-Hawfield Road — directly on the Great Trading Path.

On Jan. 8, 2024, Cavalier watched as the Buc-ee's developers spoke for three hours about the project at the Mebane City Council meeting, their excitement draining as one woman discussed how they tested the land for Native American history and found nothing.

It was past midnight when Coda Cavalier finally got to speak.

They were tired — it had been six hours of listlessly waiting in the overflow room, watching the meeting on a screen.

It was their first time at a local government meeting. They said they went into the experience excited to speak about the Great Trading Path, which many people had no idea about.

"That was one of the biggest takeaways that I remember from that night is people just don't know the history, and so that's my biggest goal is to let more people know the history of why this trading path is so important to us," Cavalier said.



IT'S NOT JUST A TRADING PATH, OR IT'S NOT JUST A HISTORICAL THING, BUT IT STILL HAS TIES TO OUR PEOPLE TODAY.

CODA CAVALIER
YOUTH COORDINATOR AT 7 DIRECTIONS

Finally, it was Cavalier's turn to speak. They were one of the last ones to be called up that night. Cavalier only had three minutes to speak, so she knew she had to make it count.

Yet, they left at 1 a.m., and the Buc-ee's was approved by the Mebane City Council by 2.

"It's not just a trading path, or it's not just a historical thing, but it still has ties to our people today," Cavalier said.

The fight against Buc-ee's

Cavalier is the youth coordinator for 7 Directions of Service, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advocating for Native land and rights, particularly for the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, whose land stretches across Alamance County.

"We started to realize that there's a whole lot of issues here in North Carolina that affect all sorts of people, not just Native people, but Black and brown people, low income people, so we started that organization as a way to kind of get our foot in the door, get a solid say, a solid organization, nonprofit going so we can have events to help people get educated

and aware, and to also do more work in our community," Cavalier said.

The organization was founded by Crystal Cavalier-Keck and Jason Crazy Bear Campos-Keck — Cavalier's parents — in 2021. Though the Buc-ee's was approved by the city council over a year ago, 7 Directions has been advocating against the development through door-to-door canvassing and community meetings, as well as social media campaigns, to make people aware of the project.

Dominique Daye Hunter, cousin of Cavalier-Keck, is a community member of the Saponi of Granville County. The tribe is relationally recognized, meaning they do not have state or federal recognition but are recognized by the six other Saponi communities, including the Occaneechi Band.

Hunter published her first book, "Seeds: Stories of Afro-Indigenous Resilience," in 2022 and has a combined total of over 10,000 followers on Instagram and TikTok. In January, one of Hunter's TikToks went viral — garnering 23.3k views and 578 comments.

The TikTok was sharing information

about how Buc-ee's is being built on the Great Trading Path. Since the TikTok was posted Jan. 12, the signatures on the 7 Directions petition tripled.

"I'm just seeing hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of comments just like, 'I had no idea that this was either happening or coming or about Buc-ee's, and that it's awful, and people are signing the petition to stand against it,' Hunter said.

Even when people are excited about the



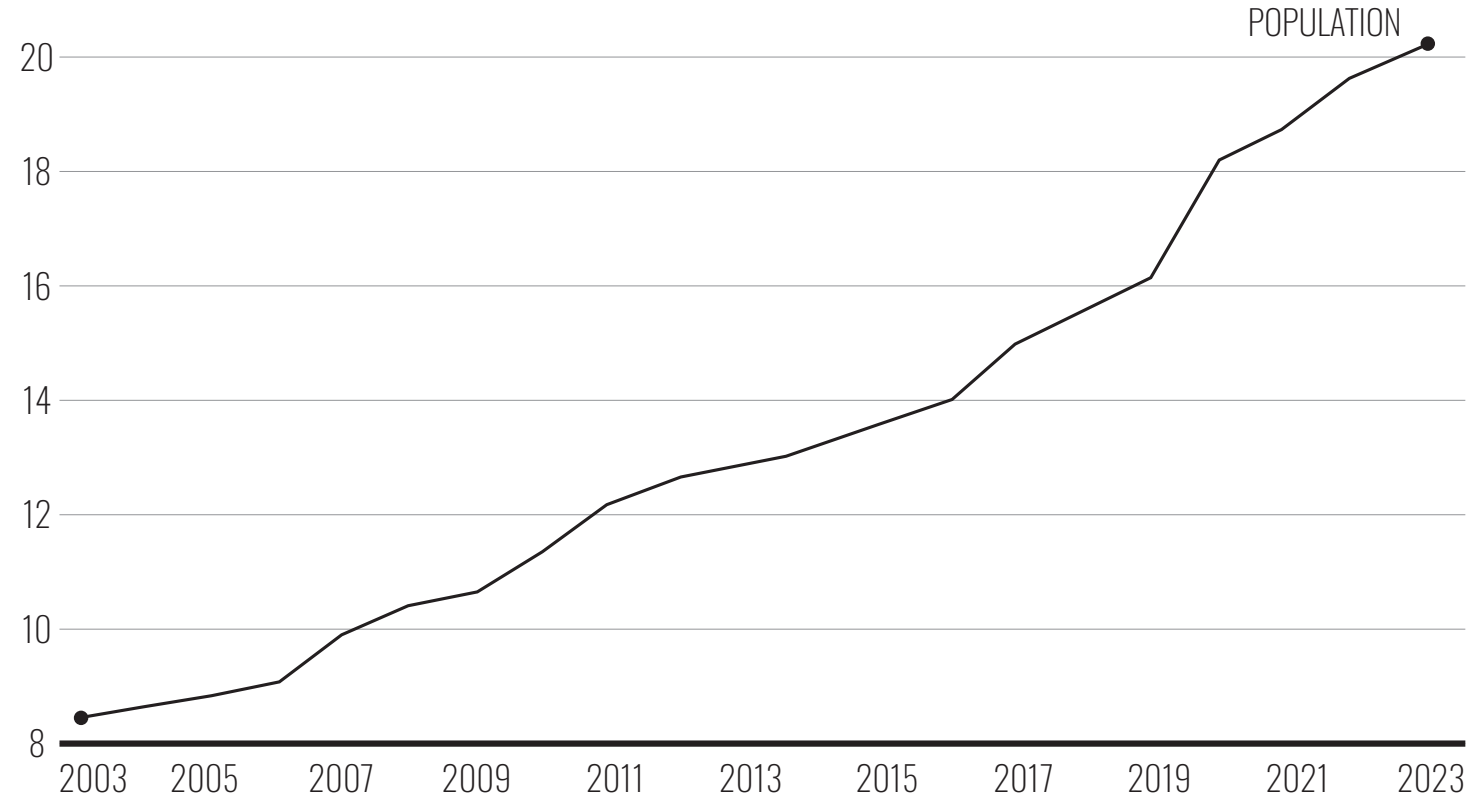
PHOTO SOURCE BUC-EE'S
Logo of Buc-ee's.



ABIGAIL HOBBS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Bottom: Audience watches the Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference on March 7 at the Rockingham Community College.
Right: View of I-40 at the development site of Buc-ee's, located at 1425 Trollingwood-Hawfields Road.

Mebane population growth over time

Population in thousands



DATA VISUALIZATION BY ABIGAIL HOBBS

Mebane — home to North Carolina's first Buc-ee's — is the fastest growing city in the Triad, according to data from the U.S. Census.

member of the Occaneechi-Saponi Tribe, was one of the panelists.

"We all have blood on the soil. We have tears dropped on the soil, and to just bypass it, and to and to not take thought, take heed into everything that's been going on is very detrimental, because they don't want us here, to be recognized," Watkins said during the panel. "They don't want to understand us at all."

Cavalier-Keck, 7 Directions co-founder and moderator of the panel, brought up the UPS and Amazon warehouses already in the city.

"Of course, our greedy town of Mebane was like, 'Our motto is positively charming,' but it's not really positively charming," Cavalier-Keck said during the panel. "Those mega warehouses where they built all of these things is right smack-dab on the drag trail."



OUR GREEDY TOWN OF MEBANE WAS LIKE, 'OUR MOTTO IS POSITIVELY CHARMING,' BUT IT'S NOT REALLY POSITIVELY CHARMING.

CRYSTAL CAVALIER-KECK
CO-FOUNDER OF 7 DIRECTIONS

Cavalier-Keck also recalled the Mebane City Council meeting when they voted on the development in January 2024, when one of the council members asked, "Why do you care now?"

"They did this whole dog and pony show knowing that they were going to vote yes for it," Cavalier-Keck said. "Just why do you even have a comment period if you already made your mind up? That really just pissed me off."

Cavalier-Keck also had a similar reaction to a new Target being built along Trollingwood-Hawfield Road, which will open within the next two years.

"My God, do we need any more crap in the city? Like, I'm not against development, but they are building right on our section, right?" Cavalier-Keck said. "Put it somewhere else."

With nearly 2,000 people moving to the city from 2020 to 2023, Mebane is the fastest growing city in the Triad — an increase of 10% — according to the U.S. Census.

Mebane mayor Ed Hooks declined an interview with Elon News Network but said in a statement that the claims of Native American history

were false.

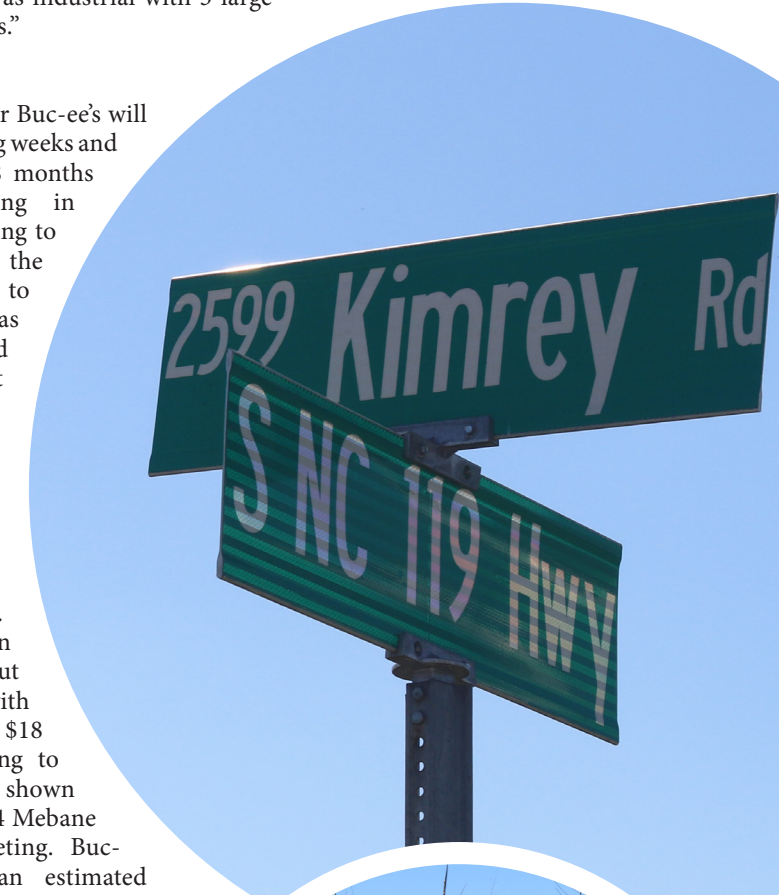
"The topic about the land came up during the meeting with no facts, or proof that it existed. The developer had researched with the state and feds to see if this indeed a fact," Hooks wrote. "It was interesting they did not show up months earlier when we initially approved the land as industrial with 3 large industrial buildings."

Next steps

Construction for Buc-ee's will begin in the coming weeks and will take about 18 months to finish, opening in early 2027, according to Hooks. Originally, the gas station was set to open in 2025 but was delayed due to road construction that will accommodate more traffic. The road construction project will cost about \$38.7 million, and Buc-ee's will pay \$10 million of that cost.

The station will hire about 225 employees with wages starting at \$18 per hour, according to the presentation shown at the January 2024 Mebane City Council meeting. Buc-ee's could add an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 additional vehicles through Trollingwood-Hawfields Road on weekdays and 2,300 on Saturdays, according to North Carolina Department of Transportation data.

Beverly Payne of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation



ABIGAIL HOBBS
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Top: Road sign for Kimrey Road, the road where Omega Wilson grew up. Along the road, Wilson often found flint arrowheads and other artifacts.
Middle: Development site of Buc-ee's, located at 1425 Trollingwood-Hawfields Road.
Bottom: Betty Osceola, member of the Panther Clan of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians in Florida, discusses traditional ecological knowledge March 7 at the Southeastern Indigenous Coalition Environmental Conference at Rockingham Community College.



Crystal Burroughs tunes her guitar as she prepares to perform at Speakeasy Carrboro's open mic night March 11. This was her first time performing at an open mic night.

AVERY SLOAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

TRANSITION | from cover

“The more I got out, I felt so wonderful to be out and myself, the desire to be fully transitioned and living full time that way — it was overwhelming,” Burroughs said.

By the end of 2023, she said she decided to go on hormone replacement therapy and begin physically and socially transitioning. Now, she is fully out as transgender to her job and larger community. At a state level, an estimated 0.9% of the adult population identifies as transgender, according to data from UCLA school of law Williams Institute from 2022. As a Chapel Hill resident, she said she feels supported and safe in her local community.

“In Chapel Hill, I can’t walk down the street without running into another trans person,” Burroughs said. “I mean it’s that much, and people practically high-five you.”

Yet at the national level, the conversation around transgender rights has become much more contentious. President Donald Trump has targeted transgender rights through a series of executive orders. His orders, while mostly still in limbo in court, specifically target groups including transgender athletes in schools, teenagers looking for gender affirming care and transgender people in prison.

The majority of U.S. adults favor or strongly favor certain laws and policies that restrict transgender people, according to a study from the Pew Research Center done in February. Sixty-six percent of survey respondents supported transgender athletes competing on teams matching their sex assigned at birth, and 56% of survey respondents supported banning health care professionals from providing care related to gender transitions for minors.

But, at the same time 56% of adults expressed support for policies aimed at protecting transgender people from job, housing and public discrimination. Overall, the survey found Americans have become more supportive of restrictions for transgender people.

While older members of the transgender community are not as directly affected with current executive orders, Burroughs said it is still a scary time to be transgender. Burroughs has lived through a period of transgender rights growing exponentially, yet said in recent months, the future feels more uncertain.

“The chance of violence against me, I think, has risen considerably,” Burroughs said.

Burroughs is a member of Transcend Alamance, an organization with the goal

Generational divides with seeking gender affirming care

Average number of years it took each age group from when they first started feeling gender dysphoria to undergoing gender transition



DATA FROM NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE

DATA VISUALIZATION BY AVERY SLOAN

of supporting members of the LGBTQ+ communities through support groups and programming. While Burroughs now has a larger community in the Chapel Hill and Carrboro area, she said this group was specifically helpful for her when she first came out.

Julie Tyson, a member of Transcend Alamance’s board of directors, has lived through an increase of rights for the LGBTQ+ communities. Yet, as a lesbian who has lived all over North Carolina, she said that recently she has noticed things have changed in certain ways.

“I GO TO WORK IN THE MORNING AND I DO WHAT I DO. I GO TO WORK AND I PET SIT AND I TAKE CARE OF MY MOM AND I’M A RAGING MACHINE OF ANGER AT THE SAME TIME. I AM ABSOLUTELY INFURIATED.”

JULIE TYSON
TRANSCEND ALAMANCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBER

Tyson said she remembers hearing people yell slurs at her in the 1980s, and she hasn’t heard anything like that for 30 to 40 years. But, she said for the first time in many years she

recently had someone come up to her in her car and harass her for the multitude of stickers she has that represent parts of her identity.

Tyson said despite that experience, what keeps her up at night is her concern for younger members of the LGBTQ+ communities. Tears welled in her eyes as she recounted her own experience growing up knowing at a young age that she was a lesbian and feeling loneliness and anger at the world. As an adult, knowing children are feeling those same emotions and seeing their own rights discussed in the news — she is at a loss for words.

“I go to work in the morning and I do what I do,” Tyson said. “I go to work and I pet sit and I take care of my mom and I’m a raging machine of anger at the same time. I am absolutely infuriated.”

Burroughs has found her safe haven within her local community through both formal events meant for members of the LGBTQ+ communities and informal social events, such as comedy shows and open mic events.

Burroughs, who has been a musician her whole life, performed at an open mic night for the first time on March 10 at Speakeasy Carrboro. The speakeasy is a place she has been able to find community in since coming out.

She said finding community and living her authentic life is worth everything she has lost. Last month, Burroughs and her wife separated after 32 years of marriage.

Burroughs said she thought the separation was due to the physical changes from her hormonal replacement therapy, but she still has no regrets about coming out. She said she has found the majority of her friends and family members were more supportive than she could have ever hoped, even those whom she grew up with and knew long before her transition.

Tony Sharpe said he and Burroughs became close friends from a young age from riding the same school bus and pulling pranks together in the same Boy Scout troop. Even now, as adults living in different states, they have stayed friends. Sharpe was one of the first people Burroughs came out as transgender to, Burroughs said.

“It didn’t matter to me, we’ve been friends for so long,” Sharpe said. “It’s like I said then, if you’ve known this and had this feeling since you were 5 and I’ve known you our whole lives, there’s nothing different about our friendship.”

Sharpe said in the moment he was just initially surprised that there was something this big about Burrough’s identity which he never knew about — but that it didn’t change their friendship.

Despite her identity resulting in the end of her marriage, Burroughs said after 60 years of keeping this part of her identity hidden, she isn’t afraid to express herself.

Burroughs said it’s been scary to see how quickly executive orders restricting rights of transgender people and other members of the LGBTQ+ communities have been written. Burroughs said she disagrees politically with the majority of what the Trump administration stands for and is worried for her friends who are struggling to refill hormone therapy medicine on Medicare insurance and other younger members of the LGBTQ+ communities who might struggle to receive gender affirming care. But, Burroughs said while she is nervous thinking about what the future of transgender rights in the U.S. might look like, she is proud of her identity and secure in her local community.

“I’m not hiding out, I’ll go down fighting,” Burroughs said.



Bulldozers and excavators on the HealthEU building construction site March 23 as a part of phase one of the construction process. The building is planned to be done by the summer of 2026, according to David Haught, senior director of planning, design and construction management.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Construction underway on new HealthEU center, set to finish later than expected in fall 2026

Ruby Burckle & Kate Gray
Elon News Network

Construction on the new HealthEU center began unexpectedly for some students. Sophomore Sam Lindo, who lives in the Colonnades Neighborhood, has a direct view of the construction site from his window.

“I had my windows open because it was a nice day and then I just started hearing trees falling down,” Lindo said.

Construction began in January, raising both excitement and concerns among Elon students. The project was announced in the spring of 2024, with the goal of being completed by summer 2026. However, the building will now be completed that fall instead, according to David Haught, senior director of planning, design and construction management.

According to Haught, construction is currently in phase one, which involves tree removal, utility work and reshaping land to prepare the site. After that is completed, the next phase will encompass building the structure itself, beginning with foundation and working up through structural framing and interior development.

The team is working to lessen student

impacts by working during regular work and school hours and creating physical barriers between students and the construction.

“We’re trying to limit the impact on the students as far as the start time during the day, and we’re trying to protect the students — the perimeter fence has been built to maintain safety around the site work,” Haught said. “Most of the work will be done during regular work hours, so class hours, and then work will continue through the summer break.”

For now, students such as Lindo are disappointed about the changing landscape of the field, which provided views for students in the Colonnades Neighborhood.

“I don’t like that they tore down all of the trees,” Lindo said. “I had a nice forest view and

now it’s all just construction.”

Freshman Samantha Degree also mentioned concerns about the construction’s appearance, but acknowledged that it hasn’t been too disruptive.

“It’s not the prettiest to look at, but noise-wise it hasn’t really made much of a disturbance yet,” Degree said.

However, the construction has also impacted Lindo’s extracurricular activities.

“I am a little upset that it is being built. I am part of the astronomy club, so I spend a lot of time outside with telescopes, so we often would use that field,” Lindo said. “There’s not a lot of light there so you can see the stars. But they’re putting a building there, and because of the plans there’s not going to be any roof access.”

Persnickety Books embraces change in its new location after leaving downtown Burlington

The bookstore offers more space for community engagement in its new home

Abigail Hines
Elon News Network

When Persnickety Books packed up its shelves and moved to a new location due to a rent increase, co-owner Ian Baltutis wasn’t sure what the new space would hold for them. But after a month at its new location, Baltutis said the store has only grown from where it used to be.

“It is a relief to know that as we took this change, took this risk of moving, we feel like we didn’t lose a stride, and we have a nice solid foundation to build from,” Baltutis said. “Instead of having to rebuild, we feel like we truly are carrying that energy and momentum, and we get to shape our future in this new space.”

The first task was moving the store’s entire inventory from its downtown Burlington location six blocks down the road to its new home on East Davis Street. The neighborhood around the bookstore features fewer businesses than the downtown area, but Baltutis said they have seen a similar number of customers visit the new space.

Baltutis said the large turnout of volunteers who came out to help pack and transfer books highlights the store’s connection to the community.

“We moved the entire store in about seven hours on a Saturday, which was a true

testament to our community of support,” Baltutis said. “Fifty volunteers, including the Beta fraternity from Elon, came out. There were over 20 Elon students here helping move some very heavy items, and we’re eternally grateful to them.”

While the square footage is similar, the new store’s layout differs from its former three-story space. Baltutis said its new space puts all of its retail items on the same floor, forcing them to cut back on what they can display. However, he said the new space allows them to offer a larger seating area for customers to socialize.

“Before, we had a coffee bar in a bookstore, and the idea was you come get your coffee and shop for some books,” Baltutis said. “Now, we really have the space to work from your laptop or meet your friends and neighbors or ride your bike down here and hang out, and I think that really fits our vibe of being more immersed in the neighborhood.”

The new store is also more accessible, according to Baltutis. They now have an American with Disabilities Act accessible restroom and other amenities to fit the diverse needs of their customers, Baltutis said. Compared to its last space, all of the business’s retail is accessible on one floor.

Local resident Terri Robinson has shopped at both locations and said she’ll miss having the bookstore in the downtown area but is excited to see how the store will impact its new neighborhood.

“I was really disappointed because I liked having it in downtown, and I hate that there’s not a bookstore in downtown because it was a great place to hang out,” Robinson said. “But it’s closer to me, and maybe they’ll bring some



ABIGAIL HINES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Customers browse March 28 for books in the new cafe seating area of Persnickety Books.

life to this particular block. So there’s a win on that one, but sad for downtown.”

Jesse Vargas owns Seven Ten Distillery across the street from Persnickety and has seen an uptick in foot traffic since more stores have opened in the neighborhood. Vargas said both he and the employees at Persnickety encourage their customers to head over to the neighboring businesses.

“We couldn’t do our business without the community that we’re building, and we definitely appreciate the fact that Persnickety took the opportunity to come down to this

part of town and really take ownership of some of this as well,” Vargas said.

Vargas said every business in the area wants the same for the neighborhood: a lively area with a thriving community.

“Everybody here is homegrown North Carolina, and everybody just wants East Davis Street to become a new part of the downtown area,” Vargas said. “It was once forgotten, and now everybody from the massage parlor to the shipping center to the dog groomers, from Persnickety to us, everybody just wants this to become a new, fruitful community.”

THIS PAST WEEK IN ELON ATHLETICS

Baseball

Elon baseball had a home series against Delaware this past week, losing the series after capturing the series opener. They started the series off strong with a win thanks to junior Jackson Alford's pair of home runs. The bats were hot across the board as senior



Jackson Alford

Kenny Mallory Jr. reached base five times and sophomore Vince Fattore got two runs. Junior pitcher Justin Mitrovich struck out eight and only let up two hits. Elon lost the second game of the series in a low-scoring pitcher's duel off a wild pitch in the ninth inning. The final game of the series was an offensive explosion as the Phoenix started the game with 8 runs in the third inning. Two clutch runs in the bottom of the ninth tied it at 12-12 and sent it to extra innings but the Blue Hens scored five runs in the 10th inning to secure the victory.

Women's Tennis

Elon women's tennis fell to East Carolina University in a hard-fought 4-3 loss. ECU started strong, winning the doubles point but Elon didn't go out quietly. Sophomore

Mariana Reding started the Phoenix's singles effort off with a quick 6-0, 6-2 victory. ECU and Elon ended up splitting the singles matches as junior Helen Sarikulya lost the deciding match in a three set duel. The loss drops Elon to 11-6 on the season as it heads into its final five games of the season.

Men's Tennis

Elon men's tennis took down CAA foe William & Mary this week, beating them 5-2 after starting the day by losing the doubles point. Sophomore Jack Curtis delivered a strong performance, winning his doubles match and then went on to dominate his singles match with a 6-2, 6-4 victory. Junior Oskar Antinheimo also secured a straight set victory with a win at No. 3 singles 6-2, 6-1.

Softball

Elon went on the road for a weekend series against Delaware but dropped two of three games, ending a five-game winning streak. Elon's offense in the first game was held at bay as it only managed four hits and one run. Senior McKenna McCard struggled on the mound, giving up five hits en route to a 9-1 win for the Blue Hens. The Phoenix bounced back with a win off the back of fifth year Gabi Schaal's 2-4 day. Schaal had a double and a home run. Elon lost the series-deciding game after Delaware walked it off in extra innings

with a sacrifice fly. The series loss moves Elon's record to 17-14.

Lacrosse

Elon lacrosse continued its undefeated start to conference play with a win against Campbell on Senior Day. Freshman Lillian Austin and redshirt sophomore Ana Lee Vandiver both got hit tricks, and sophomore MJ Santa Barbara had 12 draw controls,



MJ Santa Barbara

bringing her career total to 200 and setting a new school record. Elon dominated early, but Campbell came back in the final minutes and scored 3 goals in under 2 minutes to make it a 4-goal game with just over four minutes left in the game. However, Elon regained focus and held on to win. Head coach Josh Hexter was proud of the team's resiliency. "We've gotten really good at just understanding that we're pretty tough and resilient and a next-play attitude," Hexter said. "So regardless of if we do something really well or a bad call, or if we make a mistake, it's just onto the next play and try to stay consistent that way."

Elon athletes turn their names into brands with help from Elon University NIL store

Student-athletes can create and sell personalized merchandise, with over 80 students involved

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

Elon University student-athletes can now be seen wearing their names not only on the field, but off. The name, image, likeness store empowers student athletes to represent their brand by creating merchandise, such as jerseys and sweatshirts, with \$6 per shirt, \$8 per crewneck, \$10 per hoodie, and \$12 per jersey going back to the student athlete.

The most expensive accessory on the website is a jersey, for almost \$110. 9.1% of jersey, 6.1% of shirt, 6.8% of crewneck and 6.5% of hoodie sales go back to the student, according to the rates given to student-athletes by the NIL Store. Elon University has recently partnered with the NIL store and has contracted with 86 out

ELON STUDENT-ATHLETES SIGNED UP PER SPORT

Softball-	22
Football-	21
Baseball-	11
Volleyball-	7
Women's Basketball-	6
Men's Basketball-	5
Men's Soccer-	5
Track & Field-	4
Lacrosse-	3
Cross Country-	2

allowing college athletes to profit from their name, image, and likeness. Elon's NIL Store launched on Feb. 12, and in the first two weeks after the store's launch, 183 items were sold, generating over \$10,600. Just over \$1,500 went to the student-athletes contracted.

Elon's NIL store currently showcases the men's basketball team, but three of them — Nick Dorn, Matthew Van Komen and Deandre

Smart — have entered the transfer portal. Senior Sam Sherry is also featured on the website but will graduate from Elon in May.

Sean Ellenby, director of marketing and communications for the NIL store, said there are over 100 schools and 20,000 student-athletes partnered with the store.

"We work very closely with school partners like Elon and athletes at those schools to help them have success in the NIL space when it comes to apparel. And the NIL is a lot of different things," Ellenby said. "We always say that apparel is just one piece of that whole pie when it comes to an athlete's NIL, and we like serving that piece of the pie."



APPAREL IS JUST ONE PIECE OF THAT WHOLE PIE WHEN IT COMES TO AN ATHLETE'S NIL, AND WE LIKE SERVING THAT PIECE OF THE PIE.

SEAN ELLENBY

NIL STORE DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

NIL agreements empower athletes to build their brands, gain business experience and establish professional connections that can benefit them beyond their playing careers, according to Ellenby. Ellenby said players should be able to make money and monetize their likeness, and this is where the store comes into play.

"At its core, what we do with apparel is we believe this is what NIL was intended for — for an athlete to be able to sell their jersey, to sell their merchandise and make money off their likeness," Ellenby said. "So we've always felt very confident in what we're doing when it pertains

to the landscape."

The NIL store opening process begins with the NIL license and working with Elon's licensing team to use Elon's marks and logos on apparel. Ellenby said Elon's athletic department and students are engaged in the partnership and have made strong sales.

"I always say that it really doesn't matter the size of the school, it's how bought in the athletic department is. How much do they believe in what it can be and what it can do," Ellenby said. "Elon's had a lot of success because the athletic department bought into the process. So that's been a lot of fun, working with Elon the last couple of months."

Players can either join Elon's group licensing agreement with the NIL store or sign one-on-one with the NIL Store. To Ellenby, an important aspect of the store is that it not only includes star player positions like the quarterback or the starting point guard, but every player on a team has an opportunity to join.

"We believe every athlete has a market, even if it's just their family that wants to buy their stuff," Ellenby said.

The NIL store can also arrange customizable merchandise based on athletes who make better sales. Customizable merchandise can include nicknames or big plays. Merchandise is currently not shown on the Elon NIL store website.

"We're identifying athletes that we think, 'Oh, this, this athlete is sold pretty well,'" Ellenby said. "I think that they'd be worthy of doing something a little bit more custom for them, that features their nickname or after like a big play that they had, or whatever it might be."

Students usually sell their merchandise to peers, friends and families by sharing it with the community, Ellenby said. Ellenby said one of the coolest things about the NIL store is seeing the merchandise off the courts, especially in the crowd or around town.

"We love watching every NCAA Tournament game, and every time they show you behind the bench, I'm just looking in the crowd, and I can see all the moms and dads that are wearing their son or daughter's merch, which is really cool," Ellenby said.

Denotes home game

Denotes away game

Scoreboard

Baseball

March 28
Elon 8 | Delaware 2

March 29
Elon 1 | Delaware 2

March 30
Elon 12 | Delaware 17

Women's Tennis

March 29
Elon 3 | East Carolina 4

Men's Tennis

March 30
Elon 5 | William & Mary 2

Softball

March 28
Elon 1 | Delaware 9

March 29
Elon 5 | Delaware 4

March 30
Elon 2 | Delaware 3

Lacrosse

March 29
Elon 13 | Campbell 10

Upcoming

Baseball (10-17)

April 2 - 6 p.m.
Elon at East Carolina

April 4 - 6 p.m.
Elon at William & Mary

April 5 - 3 p.m.
Elon at William & Mary

April 6 - 1 p.m.
Elon at William & Mary

April 8 - 6 p.m.
Elon vs. North Carolina

W Tennis (11-6)

April 2 - 2 p.m.
Elon vs. North Carolina A&T

April 5 - 10 a.m.
Elon vs. College of Charleston

M Tennis (7-6)

April 6 - 1 p.m.
Elon vs. Presbyterian

Softball (17-14)

April 4 - 5 p.m.
Elon vs. College of Charleston

April 5 - 2 p.m.
Elon vs. College of Charleston

April 6 - 1 p.m.
Elon vs. College of Charleston

Lacrosse (6-4)

April 4 - 1 p.m.
Elon vs. Delaware

Women's Golf

April 7 - Tennessee Spring Challenge at University of Tennessee

Track & Field

April 4-5 - VertKlasse Meeting at High Point University