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THE PENDULUM



With an increase in funds for the class of 2026, current students express frustration, disappointment amidst 9% increase in tuition and fees

Sophie Rosenthal | Chief Copy Editor | @sophrosenthal

CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGN CHIEF

FRESHMAN ALLISON BARNETT WILL not be returning to Elon University in the fall. Barnett, a full-time student, works two on-campus jobs to help pay for school. When the university announced next year's tuition, she looked into potential scholarship programs offered by Elon. But after this semester, Barnett will have to transfer. Students returning for the 2022-23 academic year will pay a sticker price for tuition and fees that is 9% higher than what they paid this year. For some, the new total puts Elon's cost beyond their current means. But when Barnett was searching for

ways to alleviate her tuition and fees, she found programs that are only accessible to prospective students and not current ones. "It really just makes me kind of disappointed in Elon," Barnett said. "They could be doing so much better and they're just not helping their students." Elon University directly funds six scholarship programs that are only accessible to prospective students — fellows, scholars, presidential scholarships, Elon engagement scholarships, international scholar awards and Odyssey scholars. The only program that considers a student's need is Odyssey.

According to university spokesman Owen Covington, next year's budget allocates an additional \$4.9 million in financial aid to be dispersed among fellows, Odyssey scholars, student-athletes and students with demonstrated need determined by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Within students currently receiving scholarships and funds from the university, like sophomore teaching fellow Rylee McKinney, there is a building frustration with the level of support. Scholarships are flat amounts and do not automatically change with any shift in tuition. Beginning with the incoming

class of 2026, presidential, Elon engagement and most fellows cohorts, with the exception of Honors fellows, are increasing the amount they award to students, according to Vice President for Enrollment Greg Zaiser. But current students in those programs will continue to receive their original scholarship amount. "That amount was budgeted for the academic year in which they enrolled," Zaiser wrote in a statement to Elon News Network. "The agreement all students sign stipulates the terms of the scholarship."

See **MONEY** | pg. 4

Mike Schrage resigns as Elon men's basketball head coach

Schrage went 33-52 in three seasons with the Phoenix, is expected to return to Duke University as an assistant coach

Jacob Kisamore
Sports Director | @jacobkisamore

Mike Schrage has resigned as the head coach of the Elon University men's basketball team, effective immediately, as announced by Elon Director of Athletics Dave Blank in a press release. "I would like to thank Mike for his three years leading our program," Blank said in the press release. "Although they have decided to move in a different direction, we are confident we have a

foundation in place to continue to build a very successful program at Elon." Schrage compiled a 33-52 record in three seasons with Elon and led the team to the 2021 Colonial Athletic Association Championship game. Elon went 10-22 this season and finished with a 7-11 conference record. According to multiple sources, Schrage is expected to join Duke University's coaching staff as an assistant coach for the 2022-23 season with new Duke head coach Jon Scheyer. Schrage was previously the director of basketball operations at Duke from 2002-08. Elon will begin a national search for its next head coach immediately, according to Blank. The next coach will be the third in the last five seasons for Elon.



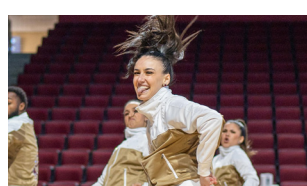
CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Former head coach Mike Schrage draws a play out with Elon's men basketball team during a timeout. Schrage resigned after three seasons with the Phoenix.



NEWS • PAGE 7
A local retirement community raises support for Ukraine



LIFESTYLE • PAGE 14
Elon student extends horseback riding to Alamance County



SPORTS • PAGE 15
Dance team prepares to head to Nationals in Daytona

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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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.

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ENN On Air
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CORRECTIONS

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

ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

Bulgogi Cooking Night

April 6 | 6 – 7:30 p.m.
Oaks Clubroom

iMedia graduate student Doo Lee will lead a cooking night in collaboration with the Asian-Pacific Student Association and Oaks neighborhood.

International Festival

April 8 | 4 – 6 p.m.
Global Neighborhood

Join the Elon University community for the international festival looking at wellness across cultures AND the planet.

Khmer New Year

April 10 | 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Wat Greensboro

Join the APSA in celebrating Khmer New Year. The group will travel to Wat Greensboro, a Buddhist temple. Transportation will be provided. Contact APSA for more information.

Ramen Tasting Party

April 11 | 6 – 7 p.m.
Moseley Kitchen

The APSA will host a spicy ramen tasting party.

K-Pop: “Best of the Best”

April 12 | 6 – 7 p.m.
Moseley 221

Join the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education for a fun night of fighting for the best K-Pop songs and bands during a game of K-Pop brackets. Fight for your favorites and also enjoy provided snacks.

Sri Lankan New Year

April 13 | 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Medallion Plaza

Hosted by the Periclean Scholars, a celebration will be held on the eve of Sri Lankan New Year, where students and the community will have the opportunity to experience traditional food and activities celebrated in Sri Lanka.
Rain location: upstairs Lakeside

History of Henna

April 14 | 7:30 p.m.
Upstairs Lakeside

Join EMPRESS to learn more about the history of Henna.

Chai Chat x Jewelry Making

April 19
Time and location TBD

Join the Gender and LGBTQIA Center and Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education for a Chai Chat and to make jewelry.

Vietnamese Spring Roll Making

April 22 | 6 – 7 p.m.
Moseley Kitchen

Join the APSA in cooking Vietnamese spring rolls — a favorite Asian dish for many.

Surtal Spring Showcase

April 22–23 | 6, 8 p.m.
Yeager Recital Hall

Surtal, the Indian Dance club at Elon University, will be performing at 6 and 8 p.m. on April 22 and 6 p.m. on April 23.

AAPI End of Year Celebration

April 27 | 5:30 – 7:15 p.m.
Upstairs Lakeside

Join the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education for the AAPI End of Year Celebration honoring AAPI students, faculty and staff. To register, visit the CREDE's website, <https://www.elon.edu/u/crede/>.

Dumpling Making Night

April 29 | 6 – 8 p.m.
LaRose Kitchen

The APSA will host a dumpling making night to conclude AAPI Heritage month.





The train track barricades malfunction for the second time in the last two weeks on April 3. Town of Elon Police Sgt. Scott Swink and the Gibsonville Police Sgt. Jennings were out directing traffic for around three hours.



KJ Baldwin of Hampton, Virginia watches in awe of Leland Melvin, a former NFL player and astronaut, at the 2022 Baird Lecture on March 31 in Alumni Gym.



Elon University dance team members (from left) Shannon Treacy, Gabby Clancy, Ava de Bruin, Natalie Ziemba and Cullen Zeno perform their hip hop routine at the team's Nationals send-off on April 3 in Schar Center.



Holocaust survivor Nate Spiewak holds up the yellow star he was forced to wear during the Nazi occupation of France. This was part of an event held by Chabad Elon and Elon Hillel along with other organizations on March 30 inside McKinnon Hall.



Leland Melvin, a former NFL player and astronaut, gives the 2022 Baird lecture on March 31 in Alumni Gym.

Current students frustrated over allocation of scholarship funds

MONEY | from cover

McKinney said though she understands the agreement, it’s not just raising the scholarship that current fellows think they’re losing out on. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many opportunities offered by fellows programs, such as study abroad and retreats were canceled, changed or postponed.

“If anything, the sophomore, junior and senior cohorts for many fellows have missed out on so many opportunities because of COVID,” McKinney said. “My idea would be, ‘OK, what’s the next step?’ It’s to give us some compensation. And then they still are holding that money and going, ‘No, nevermind, we’re not going to give you those experiences, or any more scholarship money.’”

As a member of the Student Government Association, Barnett attended the SGA Fireside Chat event with university President Connie Book last month. When asked about what the money from the tuition increase will fund, Book said a large portion will also go toward scholarships for incoming students.

Curating a strong incoming class is a priority for the university, Zaiser wrote. According to him, raising scholarship amounts for prospective students is a way to keep Elon competitive with other universities in attracting academically strong students.

But Barnett said she doesn’t understand why that priority is seemingly outweighing taking care of the students that Elon already has.

“It makes me angry that Elon chooses to prioritize first-year incoming students who haven’t even committed to Elon yet, when I’ve been here and I’ve been super active in the Elon community and they kind of are refusing to help me,” Barnett said.

Scholarships vs. loans

In a letter sent to current Elon families in February, Book attributed the tuition increase to extra costs last year incurred by the pandemic and to rising inflation rates.

“We are mindful that this increase may cause hardship for some students and will be ready to provide options for those who need extra assistance to finance their Elon education,” Book wrote in the letter.

Those options, according to Covington, come in the form of low-interest institutional loan funds.

“Elon has a long-established emergency Elon Loan fund for students with high documented financial need,” Covington wrote in a statement to Elon News Network. “Students must have first utilized their federal loan eligibility and a parent must have been determined to be ineligible for a federal Parent Plus Loan by the federal processor to be eligible for the Elon Loan.”

The maximum loan amount is \$10,000 and has a 5% fixed interest rate with a 10-year repayment period post graduation. According to Covington, the emergency fund is meant to replace the now-defunct Federal Perkins Loan Program, which provided subsidized loans provided by a student’s school.

“

IT MAKES ME ANGRY THAT ELON CHOOSES TO PRIORITIZE FIRST YEAR INCOMING STUDENTS WHO HAVEN’T EVEN COMMITTED TO ELON YET, WHEN I’VE BEEN HERE AND I’VE BEEN SUPER ACTIVE IN THE ELON COMMUNITY AND THEY KIND OF ARE REFUSING TO HELP ME.

ALLISON BARNETT
FRESHMAN



CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGN CHIEF

Professor of finance Chris Harris said that while people should try to limit the amount they borrow as much as possible, when it comes to education, the benefits tend to pay the debt off over time. Still, he said, students should try to keep their loans to a minimum.

“The challenge with thinking of that education is to think, ‘Well, I’ve always heard that if I just get a degree, it’s all going to work out, so I’ll just borrow whatever extreme amounts,’” Harris said. “That obviously isn’t a very prudent decision.”

Freshman Keri Anderson said for her, student loans were inevitable. She tried to look for more scholarship options for next year in order to avoid having to take out higher loans.

In February, Anderson said she contacted the financial aid office and told them that she would not be able to afford Elon’s tuition next year. To her dismay, the office responded that they would not help her because she already has an academic scholarship.

“It’s absolutely infuriating how little money they give,” Anderson said “If I had enough money, I wouldn’t be asking for more.”

Elon has more merit-based programs than need-based, and Anderson said she has noticed not all students in those merit-based programs applied because they have a financial need for the scholarship attached.

“There’s not an emphasis on need-based scholarships here. It’s definitely more about your academics, your talent,” Anderson said. “A lot of times, those are reflected by the opportunities you were able to afford when you were in high school.”

Explaining Endowment

Fellows, Odyssey, international scholar and Elon engagement programs disperse endowed scholarships, meaning their funding comes from donations to the university endowment. According to Vice President for University Advancement Jim Piatt, the university specifies to donors a minimum donation amount to fund a scholarship, and then that money goes into the investment fund that is the endowment. Instead of that money going directly to one student, it’s the increase returned by the investment each year that funds the scholarship.

“The more we can meet need and provide stronger aid and access for students, the better we’re going to be positioned to shape a really strong entering class of people from different places and different backgrounds,” Piatt said. “That’s what we tend to see with universities

with really large endowments, they just have greater flexibility to make those kinds of decisions.”

In addition to scholarships, the endowment supports professorships, facilities maintenance, new initiatives and more. As of the last quarterly report in December 2021, Piatt said, Elon University’s endowment stands at \$354 million.

The amount of scholarships a school is able to fund is tied directly to that school’s endowment. Harris said though no school wants the cost to be a barrier to education, if the endowment isn’t large enough to generate enough interest to fund more scholarships, they become limited in what they can do.

The goal, Harris said, is to rapidly grow the endowment. As of April 5, the university’s Elon LEADS campaign raised \$243 million to invest in students, experiential learning, faculty and staff and university facilities. The campaign is looking to reach \$250 million.

Though Harris said Elon dedicates a high percentage of donor funding to scholarships, there is a lag period before any donation can fund anything. First, a donation must be invested in the endowment, and then it must wait to return interest. One concern now, however, is inflation.

High levels of inflation have been building for over a year, Harris said, but have become increasingly visible in the past month. In February, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index reported a 7.9% increase in consumer goods prices since February 2021.

“We’re all watching that pretty closely. As it relates to the endowment, the hope would be that the investments that we have our endowment invested in will outpace inflation in every year or in any given year,” Piatt said. “Some years, it’s just not possible, you can’t earn more than inflation. This might be one of those years.”

Piatt said he acknowledges the frustration of Barnett, along with other students like her.

“I can understand that frustration because, they are right, there are not as many endowed scholarships for upperclassmen,” Piatt said. “That is just historically, when we’ve worked with donors, we’ve encouraged them to support, basically, a student on the way in.”

Retention

Anderson’s experience with the financial aid office left her considering transferring schools. Though she said she wants to stay, knowing the

BY THE NUMBERS

\$4.9M

is the additional financial aid allocated to be dispersed among fellows, Odyssey scholars, student-athletes and students with demonstrated need determined by FAFSA for the 2022–23 academic school year.

\$354M

is the current endowment for Elon University, according to Vice President for University Advancement Jim Piatt. This number comes from the last quarterly report in December 2021.

university will not try to alleviate any of the uncertainty with her finances weighs on her.

“I love my school ... I love the people and the friends and my academics in the classes and just the life that I’ve built here so far,” Anderson said. “It’s just frustrating that all of this may just have to end.”

McKinney said she’s not surprised that some students would consider or choose to transfer because of the lack of support. At the very least, she said, the university needs to respond to students.

“They need to listen to what their students and their families are saying,” McKinney said. “If they’re not communicating effectively on what’s going on with the tuition raise and how they’re going to approach financial aid, and they’re not being clear towards students, they’re going to end up losing students.”

As Barnett finishes her last few months at Elon, she said the financial aid problems haven’t soured her time here — but she has become wary.

“I cherish my time at Elon, it is one of the best experiences I’ve ever had,” Barnett said. “I will always recommend Elon to anyone. But it will come with a warning that Elon doesn’t really do a whole lot to help you financially. And if you choose to take on that burden, that is a burden that you bear semi-alone.”

Erin Martin contributed to the reporting of this story.

A LOOK INTO ELON UNIVERSITY'S ACCEPTED STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Vice President for Enrollment Greg Zaiser discusses the university's accepted student demographics for the 2022-23 school year

Erin Martin
Elon News Network | @ErinMartin35

As more students commit to Elon University each day and admissions tours continue, the university is starting to organize data on the class of

2026. Recognizing incoming student demographics can ensure the university is meeting its diversity, equity and inclusion goals, according to Vice President for Enrollment Greg Zaiser.

This year the university received 17,492 applications and offered enrollment to 12,836. This is the second largest application pool in university history, according to Zaiser. The university received 17,834 for the 2021-22 school year.

In an email to Elon News Network, Zaiser wrote that the university has done research to identify areas that are underrepresented

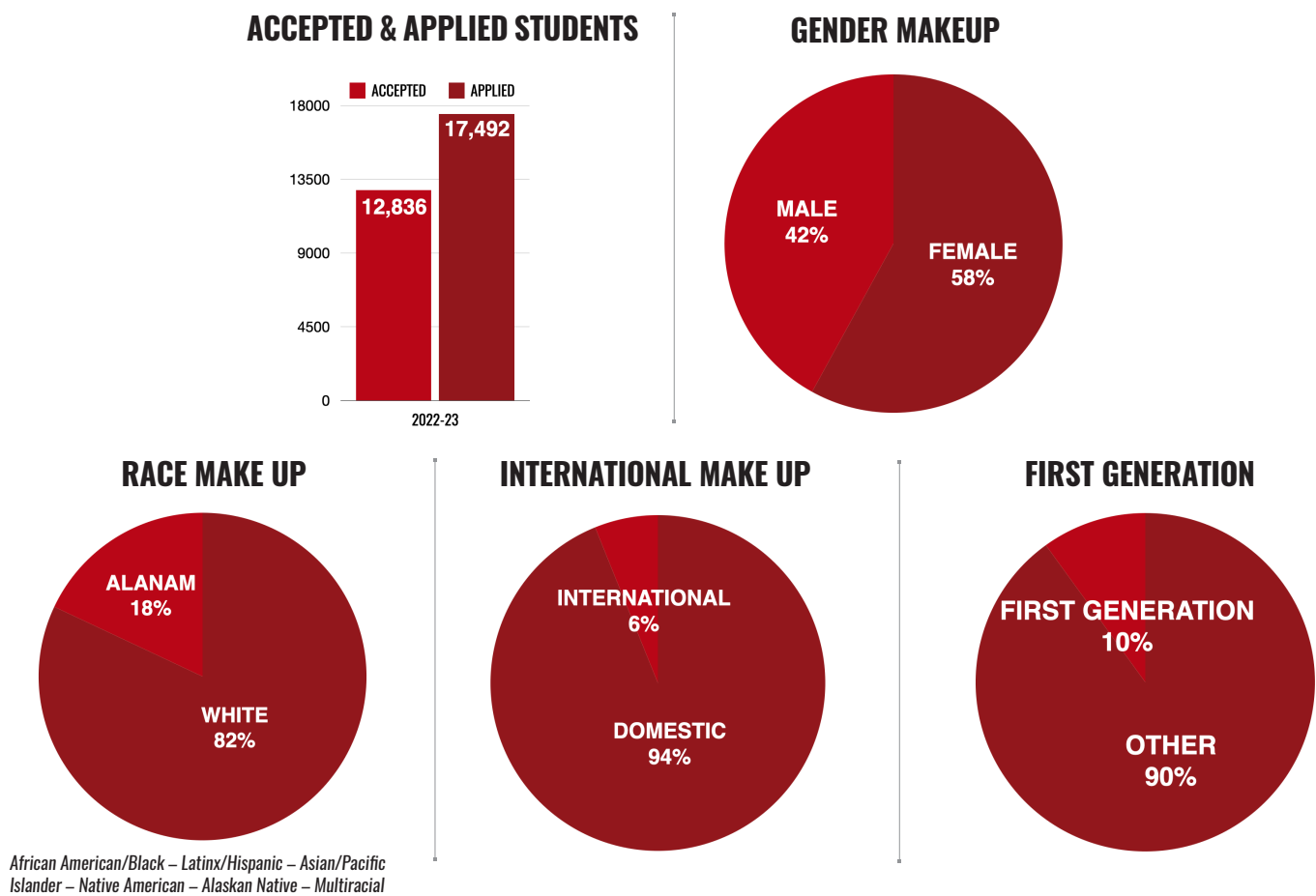
in enrollment and address new areas for growth.

According to Zaiser, the university is focused on recruiting in Texas, Illinois, California, Minnesota and Colorado, while also maintaining other national and international areas this year. The acceptance rate for the class of 2026 is 73%, which is a slight decrease from the class of 2025's 78% acceptance rate.

The graphs below show information on committed students of Elon University's class of 2026. As of April 4, 1,013 students have committed to Elon.

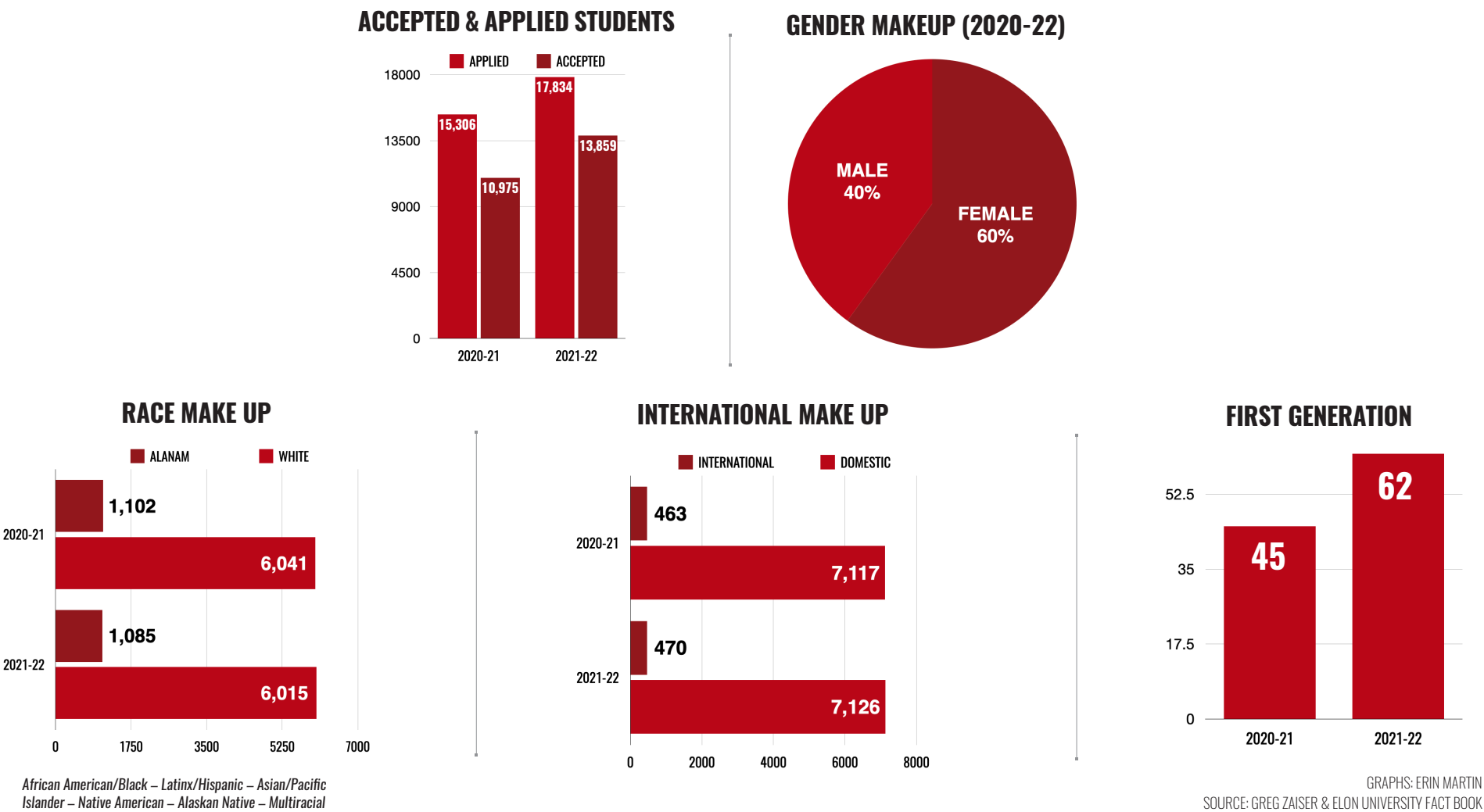
CLASS OF 2026 COMMITTED STUDENTS

As of April 4, 1,013 students have committed to Elon University, according to Zaiser. These graphs and numbers are created off of committed students.



2020, 2022 UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

A look at Elon University's undergraduate student demographics from the 2020-21 to 2021-22 academic school years to compare to next year's class.



Hillel advocates to add Yom Kippur onto academic calendar



Zoe Kurtz, senior and co-president of Elon Hillel stands outside of the Hillel Center on April 4. Kurtz said adding Yom Kippur to the academic calendar will help a number of Jewish students, as she said that many of her professors only offer two or three excused absences throughout a semester. She said people are reluctant to file for these exemptions when it comes to planned events.

After discussion started by Elon’s calendar committee, Hillel looks to support Elon’s growing Jewish population

Ryan Kupperman
Enterprise Story Coordinator

When Yom Kippur fell on an academic day this past fall, senior Lindsay Rosenzweig was faced with a difficult decision: fall behind on eight hours of internship work in favor of attending religious services, or not attend services. Despite choosing her internship at the Family Justice Center over attending services, Rosenzweig said she still took the holiday seriously and fasted — having to endure the day with no food or water.

“I was put in a position of losing significant amount of work hours. It really came down to that,” Rosenzweig said. “I’m sure that my peers can share similar experiences of either missing class and having to struggle making up that work, or going to class and missing the observance aspect of the holiday. It really is difficult to do both.”

With Elon’s Jewish community in mind, Rosenzweig, co-president of Elon Hillel, said Hillel is pushing for Elon to add Yom Kippur as a day off to the academic calendar. Rosenzweig said that Elon’s consistently growing Jewish population is also grounds for addressing this change now, compared to in previous years.

According to Elon University’s 2021-22 factbook, 557 undergraduate students reported themselves as Jewish out of a total of 6,301. Hillel also reported that the class of 2025 has 184 Jewish students — Elon’s largest Jewish representation in one class ever.

According to Rosenzweig, Hillel began advocating for a calendar day off when they heard Elon’s calendar committee — the party responsible for planning and confirming the academic calendar — was discussing it.

In March 2022, Elon’s Multifaith Strategic Planning Committee sent a memo to Elon’s Calendar Committee titled “Issues to Consider for the Academic Calendar Regarding Religious Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.” Using data obtained from the 2022 preliminary report released in January, the committee recommended adding one Jewish holiday as a day off on the academic calendar.

Highlighting Yom Kippur as the holiest of the Jewish holidays, as perceived by

Elon’s campus as well as other universities across the country, the committee wrote they “acknowledge that canceling classes on only one Jewish holiday — Yom Kippur — falls far short of what some Jewish students and staff members have recommended.”

Although Rosenzweig recognizes that students are able to fill out religious exemption forms in order to observe these holidays under excused absences, she pointed out that students still have to worry about the work they miss while out of class.

“It’s a great first step. It doesn’t check all the boxes, though,” Rosenzweig said. “It doesn’t mean that just because you’re offered a religious holiday, they’re gonna scale back the assignments, scale back the presentations — the lectures that they give. So while you are legally missing a day of class for an excused reason, it doesn’t mean you’re not making up everything you’re missing. It doesn’t mean that that’s not in your mind.”

Co-president and senior Zoe Kurtz, said that many of her professors only offer two or three excused absences throughout a semester, so people are reluctant to file for these exemptions when it comes to planned events.

“There’s Rosh Hashanah and there’s Yom Kippur, so those are your two absences,” Kurtz said. “They are excused, but then you still have to count those in your mind. A lot of Jewish students don’t want those to be their absences. You have to count for sick days, or emergencies, and so taking that into consideration, many students aren’t comfortable taking those days off.”

Rosenzweig also said she shared Kurtz’s concern in regards to Elon’s Jewish community during Jewish holidays.

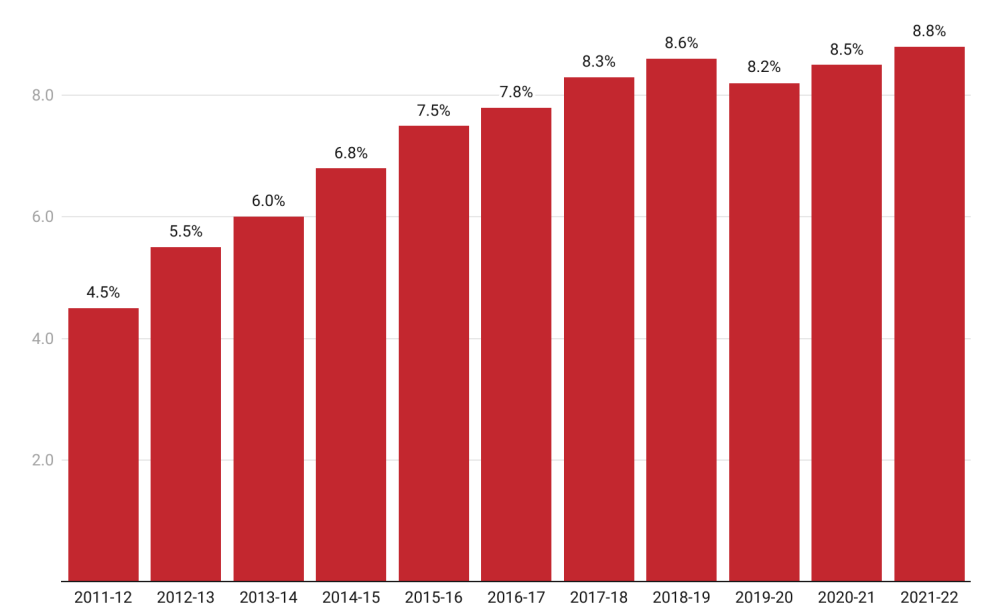
“God forbid you get sick, God forbid something happens and you have to leave,” Rosenzweig said. “Those are absences that are being used against you, and a lot of people in the Jewish community still see that on Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah.”

Kurtz said she feels like this will be a great change for faculty, staff and students because it will allow them to feel more comfortable, open and supported with practicing their religion at Elon.

“I think what makes this so special to me is that my sister’s a first-year here, and so I want my sister to have the opportunity to have what I didn’t have,” Kurtz said. “I’ve had so much at Elon, I’ve had the best four years here. ... I want to give back to the Elon community, and the Jewish community here.”

In the future, Rosenzweig said she would love to see other religious holidays

PERCENTAGE OF UNDERGRADUATE JEWISH POPULATION BY ACADEMIC YEAR



The percentage of undergraduates who reported themselves as Jewish — according to Elon University’s 2021-22 Factbook — for each academic school year. As the Jewish community continues to represent more of Elon’s total population, Hillel is advocating to add Yom Kippur as a day off on the 2023-24 academic calendar.

“

I’VE HAD SO MUCH AT ELON. I’VE HAD THE BEST FOUR YEARS HERE... I WANT TO GIVE BACK TO THE ELON COMMUNITY AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY HERE.

ZOE KURTZ
CO-PRESIDENT OF HILLEL

included on Elon’s calendar — Jewish or otherwise.

To affirm Hillel’s position on advocating for the calendar change, Rosenzweig and Kurtz said they will be writing a letter to Elon’s administration and having Hillel’s executive board sign it.

“While it is one day out of the academic year, it is a really difficult day ... to make everything come together,” Rosenzweig said. “I would just like students to not have to choose between those things. They should be able to just go and observe without having to worry about how much work they’re going to miss.”

Rosenzweig and Kurtz also said they are looking to hear from Jewish students, especially within the Hillel community, to share their experiences of being Jewish at Elon and balancing practicing their religion with attending classes. They plan to share these experiences with the administration to emphasize how this change could greatly support people in the Elon community.

Students can share their experiences through email, sending them to Rosenzweig or Kurtz at lrosenzweig@elon.edu and zkurtz2@elon.edu respectively.

“This is not to badmouth the university, it’s not to badmouth the administration,” Rosenzweig said. “We want Elon to be a more inclusive environment. We know Elon wants to be a more inclusive environment, so we are using this as a call to action to the administration to be more supportive of Jewish students on campus.”

CHEAT SHEET

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

Elon lecturer explains North Carolina primary system

Thomas Kerr discusses importance of voting and how North Carolina primaries function

Avery Sloan
Politics Editor | @averysloan

North Carolina’s primary day for the midterm elections is May 17 and will include all races that had multiple candidates for each party run. This year is a midterm election year, meaning there is no presidential race, but there are both federal and local races. Primary elections will determine who from each party will make it to the midterm election in November. North Carolina’s primaries are semi-closed, which is not the case in every state, and means that if you are registered to vote for a specific party, that is the ballot you have to take in a primary election.



Elon University political science lecturer Thomas Kerr offers insight on primary elections. He discusses open versus closed or semi-closed primaries, voter apathy and the effect of redistricting.

What does North Carolina’s semi-closed primary mean?

“It means that those who are registered for that party and registered independent can vote in the primaries, as opposed to open primary, where it doesn’t matter your political affiliation. You can vote for either party; it doesn’t matter.

So it somewhat limits what’s called strategic voting, where there’s an idea where if say you’re a Democrat, and in the primary, you either don’t care who is going to be the nomination, or it’s pretty locked up who the nominations going to be for your party, you would actually vote the other party’s primary to either go for someone that you wouldn’t mind seeing elected or get someone that you really don’t want elected, or you can be super strategic and vote for the person that the polls are showing your favorite candidate would actually beat. However, not many people



CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGN CHIEF

actually do that.”

How do you think the redistricting shift will affect North Carolina’s primary elections?

“The map that just came out, that got approved, it’s good for North Carolina standards. It’s definitely going to level the playing field for the Republicans and the Democrats because, up until this point, North Carolina has a long history with gerrymandering. But this map seems like it’s tackling that pretty well. We might see a more even breakdown for how congressional districts turn and go Republican and Democrat, because the way they were gerrymandered was heavily favoring Republicans. Not so much now.”

North Carolina has a Republican-controlled Senate and Democratic governor. How have North Carolina elections worked in the past to allow that to happen?

“It shows how the state is purple in that in a statewide election, there is a tendency to go a little bit more toward the blue, especially with demographic shifts. Raleigh is exploding, Charlotte is growing quite fast and empirically urban centers vote blue, so as that shifts we’re going to see more and more statewide elected offices go toward the blue. But there are also very rural areas within North Carolina and with the gerrymandering in house districts, even more so than congressional districts, that it is favored by the Republicans. You see

that in a lot of other states as well, where their legislature is based upon gerrymandered or potentially gerrymandered districts goes Republican and a statewide office which you can’t gerrymander goes Democrat.”

In North Carolina, the largest demographic of voters is independent. Why do you think that would be the case if people aren’t strategically switching their vote in primaries?

“Personal pride, personal affiliation. There’s nothing really strategic, it allows you to vote on either side and primaries, but people don’t do that very strategically very often. So it’s more of an identity thing than actual political machinations. People like to say that they are independents.”

Because of the redistricting the primary is shifted later. Do you think that’ll have any effect on who votes?

“With everything being pushed back, up until when the congressional maps were approved, some candidates didn’t know where to campaign. So the ability to get out to vote, that might have had an effect on it, so it’d be interesting to see what the actual voter turnout this year is going to be like. There’s a lot of causal mechanisms so trying to pinpoint whether or not the delay had anything to do with it will be difficult, but potentially it could have. Because confusion breeds, ‘I’m not going to mess with it,’ and we already have pretty high voter apathy, so anything that makes voting even more difficult, is going to push down numbers.”

What do you think students should know about North Carolina primaries?

“Primaries are important. The primaries are really important. They get ignored, they get overlooked a lot. When it comes to primaries, it matters more than the usual because there’s usually less voter turnout. In primaries, you can usually vote for a candidate that’s closer aligned to your policy preferences than in a general election. Usually, in a general election, it comes down to the least bad option. In a primary, you might be able to actually find a candidate that you truly support and back. Primaries are really important.”

For information on where to vote visit ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-person-election-day.

Local retirement community contributes aid to Ukraine

The Village at Brookwood in Burlington has been collecting donations for victims in Ukraine

Nyah Phengsitthy
Managing Editor | @nyahphengsitthy

Residents at The Village at Brookwood have spent the past few weeks clearing their closets and filling suitcases. The Burlington retirement community has been collecting items to add to North Carolina’s aid and donations to Ukraine and neighboring European countries.

Mary McNeil, chair of the Care and Concern committee at TVAB, said there was a response to the donation drive the minute flyers were posted and emails were sent.

“The first day, one resident cleaned out his closet with jackets and sweaters, shoes and suitcases,” McNeil said. “He alone donated enough to fill the two suitcases that he had.”

According to McNeil, the Care and Concern committee serves as a group and support system that cares for all residents, whether it’s welcoming new members, delivering flowers to those in the hospital or connecting with the community. But now, it is finding ways to support other people outside of TVAB. McNeil said two other residents helped her lead the mission — Lori Gore and Helen Moore.

Gore, who has been part of the

community since 2019, said she saw residents turn in beautiful clothing and sanitary supplies to donate, even some with tags on them. Small things like backpacks, flashlights and batteries were also turned in. Each item will go a long way for those in Ukraine, especially for those who have lost almost everything or needed to evacuate to surrounding countries.



IT’S A SMALL PART OF WHAT THESE RESIDENTS AT THE VILLAGE AT BROOKWOOD DO. THEY’RE VIBRANT, THEY’RE READY TO DO THINGS. THEY TELL US, ‘HEY, WE GOT PLENTY OF TIME, SO USE US.’

MAX MCNEELY
LIFE ENRICHMENT ASSISTANT AT TVAB

“I was really proud of the people here and thankful that they were able to support us and give from their hearts,” Gore said. “A lot of people have big suitcases which they don’t

need anymore when they’re 80 and 90 years old. They turned in the big suitcases, and we packed them up just as full as we could.”

Both Gore and Moore repacked the items into boxes. According to TVAB, donation items filled up an entire pickup truck and a van.

“I was just amazed that our items were in good, really great condition,” Moore said. “It just made me feel a little proud that they could come up with stuff to help our friends in Ukraine.”

Max McNeely, life enrichment assistant at TVAB, worked closely with Gore and Moore as they coordinated the drive. McNeely, who has been at TVAB for almost six years, said the residents have an abundance of energy and are always looking for opportunities to get involved.

“People are understanding what needs to be done, and stepping up and helping,” McNeely said. “It’s a small part of what these residents at The Village at Brookwood do. They’re vibrant, they’re ready to do things. They tell us, ‘Hey, we got plenty of time, so use us.’”

Though these residents are just part of one community in North Carolina, their care and concern will reach others in other countries.

“It’s amazing to be a part of such a caring, supportive community,” McNeil said, “We always look for ways to support our local community, as well as the world.”



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

From top: Mary McNeil, Lori Gore and Helen Moore are the three women from The Village at Brookwood that began the donation drive for Ukraine.



1 Students and staff from the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life prepare for the Holi celebration at Speakers Corner by filling plastic cups with colorful powder on April 1. This was the first time the event was held in-person on campus in two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



2 Students begin throwing colored powder on Speakers Corner. The Holi celebration was open to students, faculty and staff from the Elon community.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR



3

ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Cups of Holi powder were prepared for students, faculty and staff to throw and fill the air with.



4 Three Elon students, covered in Holi powder, take a selfie during the celebration.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR

CELEBRATING HOLI

The pandemic held back in-person celebrations for the past two years. This year, students and community members brought the celebration back to campus.

Nyah Phengsittthy | Managing Editor

THE SPEAKERS CORNER AT Elon University witnessed colored powder fill the air on the very first day of April. The bright celebration was recognizing and honoring the Hindu holiday and festival, Holi. It's been two years since Elon celebrated the tradition in person, but the colors have returned to campus.

Also known as the Festival of Colors, Holi marks the start of spring after a long winter. According to the Hindu calendar, Holi fell on March 18 this year, but Elon celebrated it on April 1 for scheduling and weather reasons. Holi begins the day prior with Holika Dahan, where there is lighting of bonfire in the evening

to signify victory over the evil forces that came out the following day at sundown.

For marketing professor Nyah Phengsittthy, celebrating Holi at this time was perfect, especially for students and community members who are from east India or who have moved to the U.S. since she moved.

"It's a busy time of year, but it's a great way to celebrate life together and live because this is what Holi is about," Mohanty said.

Since joining the staff, Mohanty said she



5



6
Sophomore Sydni Brown looks at sophomore Jillian Shor as she spins around in Holi powder. This year's Holi celebration was on April 1, though it fell on the Hindu calendar on March 18.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR



7
An Elon student throws Holi powder into the air, surrounded by her friends at the celeration.

CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

ING WITH COLOR: AT ELON

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udents, faculty, staff and other
ought out the colors again

ing Editor | @nyahphengsitthy

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essor Smaraki Mohanty,
time in the semester was
students and other Elon
who needed it. Mohanty,
has been celebrating in
d here eight years ago.
the semester, it's a good
— celebrate the good in
this celebration is about,"
Elon community this
e has enjoyed seeing the

university celebrate other cultures. Though she
is part of a small Hindu community at Elon,
she admires the recognition the school has for
celebrations like Holi. As of the spring 2022
registrar's report, there are currently 24 Hindu
undergraduate students.
"It's really nice to see, even though we have
such a small community of Indian people
around, that every festival is being celebrated,"
Mohanty said.
Mohanty said that while many people
celebrate Holi differently, the celebration is still
joyous wherever she goes. This photo story
will look at Elon's long-awaited in-person Holi
celebration.



8
Elon University sophomore Sydni Brown gets hit with colorful Holi powder.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



LUKE JOHNSON |
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Students throw
Holi powder in the
air, celebrating the
Hindu holiday that
recognizes victory
over evil.



9
Facilities management workers, Tim Miles and Warren Daye, clean up the colorful and messy aftermath of the Holi celebration on Speakers Corner.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Student body president-elect strives for change within SGA



Student body president-elect Nadine Jose celebrates her victory with her friends at Medallion Plaza.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR

Student Body President-elect Nadine Jose recognizes people don't know what SGA does, something she hopes to change in her term

Avery Sloan

Politics Editor | @averysloan

"What does the Student Government Association do?"

That's a question Student Body President-elect Nadine Jose hears a lot. Jose said one of her main priorities as president is to educate students on what SGA actually is.

"SGA is truly about just helping student organizations and students get their messages to people who ... have access to administrators on a more regular basis, and really just amplifying student concerns to people who have the capacity to ameliorate or at least work on something for those concerns," Jose said.

Trevor Molin, class of 2023 senator, said he has seen the effects of certain legislation passed, such as the outdoor renovations because he was able to see more people outside with hammocks and utilizing the equipment SGA funded. However, he said that the legislation SGA has written in the past has not been enough.

According to Molin, the previous legislation hasn't had a large impact on the student body, making it difficult to name a tangible effect SGA has had, apart from allocating funds. Jose said doing more than allocating funds is another priority of hers for next year.

"A lot of times those things have been symbolic, like legislation conveying our will about certain things," Molin said. "We had one talking about Black Lives Matter when I was here. I do think that those things are important for us as an organization, but students aren't going to really feel any effects of that immediately."

Molin said one of the issues SGA has is that senators aren't currently able to act with autonomy. Decisions have to be made as a body, a slow process that doesn't have a large impact on the student body. However,

“

SGA IS TRULY ABOUT JUST HELPING STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND STUDENTS GET THEIR MESSAGES TO PEOPLE WHO ... HAVE ACCESS TO ADMINISTRATORS ON A MORE REGULAR BASIS, AND REALLY JUST AMPLIFYING STUDENT CONCERNS TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE CAPACITY TO AMELIORATE OR AT LEAST WORK ON SOMETHING FOR THOSE CONCERNS.

NADINE JOSE

STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT-ELECT



Junior Nadine Jose hugs current SGA President Jack Corby after being elected the 2022-23 student body president.

JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Molin said the biggest impact SGA is able to have is the access it has to senior administrators.

"A lot of times we get opportunities by having administrators come to our meetings or a fireside chat and having things like that where we can really go a little bit deeper and figure out why things are happening on campus," Molin said. "We have a better opportunity to voice our own concerns on the fact that the administration knows me and other people in SGA on a first name basis just makes it easier for when I have an issue to feel like I can reach out to those people."

Jose ran on a platform of amplifying student voices, and she wants to make this happen through making sure people understand what SGA does.

"I've noticed, for the last two years, previous presidents talk about a push for more people to know what SGA is, but what that push means is a little difficult," Jose said. "It's hard to figure out exactly how to increase that visibility, but it has to happen somewhere in order for us to help

the student body to our best capacity."

As a part of this change, Jose plans on reaching out to freshmen in the fall by doing classroom visits, and talking to different fellows programs or student organizations. But something that Jose said is harder to do is reach upperclassmen, as it is difficult to find spaces that include everyone.

Jose also said her goals for next year include lowering the cost of laundry for students, remaining transparent about student issues and reaching students who have previously not been included in SGA, such as student athletes and STEM majors who are less represented in SGA.

"Going to those groups and seeing why they haven't heard of us and what we can do to increase visibility ... SGA is one of those that it really does matter and it can affect what organizations get funding, who is talking to your administrators on a more regular level," Jose said. "For a while, SGA has seemed like this institution that is self-serving and cares for itself and I want that to change because it's not about us by any means."

NC animal shelter extends rescue efforts to Ukraine

The war has left many animals in Ukraine in dangerous conditions, one NC animal shelter is trying to help

Nyah Phengsitthy
Managing Editor | @nyahphengsitthy

Galyna Karpenski has always had a soft spot for animals — from rescuing them to providing rehabilitation through her organization, Fine Whines and Lickers. She and her husband, Peter Karpenski, founded the nonprofit in 2016, with the shelter's mission of rescuing “hard to adopt” dogs from local animal shelters in Caswell County and the surrounding area.

But when she saw her home country of Ukraine quickly become torn apart because of the war, she knew she had to do something — not necessarily focusing on humans, but rather, the animals.

“All these animals, they don’t know what’s going on,” Karpenski said “Why are they getting bombed?”

Since Russia began its war with Ukraine in February, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights reported over 3,400 civilian casualties: over 1,000 killed and over 2,000 injured as of April 3.

But humans aren’t the only ones in danger — animals in rescue shelters are dying in fires, pets are filling the streets and strays are starving due to food shortages. With millions of Ukrainians evacuating their homes as the war advances, more pets are being abandoned. These concerns linger as more humans evacuate, resulting in more displaced animals.

To help with these issues in Ukraine, Fine Whines and Lickers has held fundraisers, hosted online auctions and raised donations since February. Pet food, crates, kennels and monetary aid are going straight to animal shelters in Ukraine, including Tailed Hostages of War in Lviv and the Happy Paw Foundation in Kyiv.

Oksana Koshak, founder of Tailed Hostages, said the support efforts and donations from the United States have helped many shelters in Ukraine. Tailed Hostages currently partners with 16 other organizations to reach animal welfare in various locations, including Kyiv and Mykolaiv.

Koshak said that when Tailed Hostages receives monetary donations and other animal items, the group delivers the food and materials to other shelters, especially in the war-torn regions. Currently, Tailed Hostages is located in western Ukraine



A worker at an animal shelter in Ukraine receives a load of dog food from Tailed Hostages of War, an animal welfare organization in Lviv, Ukraine. Tailed Hostages is able to disperse pet food to different locations through a number of monetary donations and other essential animal items sent from the United States.

“THERE ARE MANY, MANY PEOPLE IN UKRAINE WHO COULD NOT EVACUATE IN A PROPER AND TIMELY MANNER. ANIMALS ARE LEFT IN UKRAINE IN THE HOTSPOTS.”

OKSANA KOSHAK
FOUNDER OF TAILED HOSTAGES

away from the main battlefield. “There are many, many people in Ukraine who could not evacuate in a proper and timely manner,” Koshak said through a translator. “Animals are left in Ukraine in the hotspots.”

Koshak said right before the war began, she was the head of a wealth management department under the Lviv City Council, but when the Russians invaded, she immediately quit to help animals off the streets. She said she is receiving multiple phone calls every day, solving more animal problems, even at the Poland border. Every single day is filled with seeing more animals in danger.

“When people left and evacuated or just escaped, they abandoned their animals and they left them there,” Koshak said. “We hope that they will not be abandoned forever, but this is a problem that a huge number of animals are left on the street.”

Koshak said Tailed Hostages is serving the needs of around 100,000 animals in Ukraine.

Working closely with Koshak is Nastya Aboliesheva, a Happy Paw worker in Kyiv. Aboliesheva said the support for the dogs is so vital, as many of them are unaware of what is going on. Dogs have died due to shelling, fires and even psychological shock.

“Animals for sure do not understand what is going on and what is happening right now,” Aboliesheva said through a translator. “Animals, in particular dogs, are very scared and some get panic attacks under the shelling and they’re quite nervous. It really is bad for them.”

Aboliesheva said that although animals are facing a number of negative psychological effects, it’s just as bad for humans caring for them, especially for those who are staying back as the war continues.

“Our psychologists advised us to care about our work-life balance, now they are advising us to care about war-life balance, and this balance is not good,” Aboliesheva said.

Aboliesheva said although it’s difficult to stay back in the country right now, she and other volunteers do it for the animals.

Veronika Solodar, a volunteer at Fine Whines and Lickers, said her shift to supporting animals in the war occurred when she realized they weren’t receiving the spotlight they needed in the news. As a Ukrainian living in North Carolina, she said humanitarian assistance to Ukraine is important, but animals should be a priority too.

“It’s the cats, dogs, any animals in the zoo, all of them that were left behind in the locked apartments or houses that were

BY THE NUMBERS

\$13,000+

is how much money Fine Whines and Lickers has raised since they started fundraising for animal shelters in Ukraine in February. Since then, the donations have increased.

not evacuated,” Solodar said. “Yes, priority goes absolutely to people, but that doesn’t mean that animals should stay and should be left behind.”

Since Fine Whines and Lickers started raising money in February, Karpenski said they have raised more than \$13,000 to send to Ukraine.

Both Aboliesheva and Koshak said they are thankful for everything Fine Whines and Lickers has done for them. And although this money is not going directly toward humanitarian aid, it’s helping victims who are just as innocent — the animals of Ukraine.

“We wish this war will end soon, but unfortunately it is still going on,” Koshak said. “We need continuous support from everyone from abroad because we understand that this will go a long way to help animals in Ukraine.”

SCAN TO FIND MORE WAYS TO
HELP ANIMAL SHELTERS
IN UKRAINE
OR VISIT
FINEWHINESANDLICKERS.ORG



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



Outside of being the founder and owner of Fine Whines and Lickers, Galyna Karpenski is a music teacher. She sits with donations from her students that will go to Ukraine. Since the war began, she has been finding ways to raise money and donate items to animal rescue shelters to her home country.

LIFESTYLE

GIBSONVILLE PHOTOGRAPHER PLANS FOR ‘PICTURE-PERFECT’ BUSINESS YEAR



Ashley Bagamary, a Gibsons ville photographer, tells couple Trevor Sigler and Erin Burgner how to pose. The two took their engagement photos at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh.

ELLIS CHANDLER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

After two years of postponed weddings, the photography industry sees surge of couples walking down the aisle

Ellis Chandler & Annemarie Bonner
Elon News Network

If caring for her three children and tending to farm animals wasn't enough to keep Ashley Bagamary busy, her photography business makes sure she's completely booked. But when COVID-19 canceled more than half of the small business owner's 15 scheduled weddings in 2020, she had to reconsider her career choice.

"I think all of us in the wedding industry, we all started to rethink like, 'What have we done here?'" Bagamary said. "We all need to get a backup plan. That was stressful. It was really hard."

Bagamary is a wedding and family photographer in Gibsons ville, North Carolina. When building her clientele in 2017, her first few years were slow. But through social media and word of mouth, her clientele expanded. During the pandemic Bagamary said she received special permission to work physically distanced from her clients, but was only getting a fraction of the work she previously booked.

Now, Bagamary is helping couples who were planning to tie the knot over two years ago finally make it down the aisle through her photography business.

Taking photos was a creative outlet before it turned into a business. According to Bagamary, the hardest part of her job is balancing her professional and personal life.

"A weekday is more about being a mom and wife, and a weekend is about being a traveling photographer," Bagamary said.

Editing her photos late at night is one of the ways she gets her work done. Although the balancing act can be hard at times, she said if sacrificing sleep is one of the worst disadvantages, then it's not all that bad.

“

I DO LOVE, LOVE. I GET REALLY INTO STUFF, AND WHEN I'M SHOOTING PEOPLE, BEHIND THE CAMERA I'M CHEERING, OR I'VE CRIED AT WEDDINGS BECAUSE IT'S SO SWEET.

ASHLEY BAGAMARY
PHOTOGRAPHER

"In order to have it all, there are some cons that you have to accept when in the process," Bagamary said.

Feeling sentimental is something Bagamary said many wedding photographers experience while working. She said the feeling she gets while working is special because she's celebrating intimate moments and milestones with her clients.

"I do love, love," Bagamary said. "I get really into stuff, and when I'm shooting people, behind the

camera I'm cheering, or I've cried at weddings because it's so sweet."

Bagamary works with couples from Raleigh to Greensboro and everywhere in between. One of them is college sweethearts Erin Burgner and Trevor Sigler who plan to get married in February 2023. The two met while living in the same dorm at UNC Greensboro and through mutual friends. They graduated in 2020 and got engaged in December 2021. Burgner and Bagamary met when she photographed Burgner's sister's wedding, and she took Burgner's college graduation photos as well.

"I like the style of her photos a lot, the coloring she uses looks better on me," Burgner said. "It just worked out that picking her was already in the cards."

Burgner and Sigler plan to elope in Mexico because they don't want all the stress that comes with planning a wedding. Burgner said that their engagement photo shoot was one of the easiest parts of their planning process because Bagamary makes posing her clients feel natural.

"I've seen how she works and I know she's pretty good at making it seem organic," Burgner said. "Trevor and I do not take a lot of pictures together. We're not very picture-people, so it's nice to have something to just capture the time."

Bagamary shot engagement photos for the couple at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, which is just one of the places she goes to photograph clients, along with Northeast Park in Gibsons ville and the Union Grove Farm in Chapel Hill.

Once her clients tie the knot, Bagamary is often booked again for maternity and family photos.

She said she loves capturing relationships in photographs and feels like she is creating a tangible memory with her work.

"It's a gift that you can give to someone else, to other families, because once the day happens all you have is the memory," Bagamary said. "I try to keep in touch with everybody because it is about relationships. People really do value that even more so than the artwork. They value how you treated them and how you continue to treat them. They appreciate that, they remember that."

Now that she's seen what happens when the calendar is wiped clean, Bagamary said she wants hers to stay fully booked.

"There were times where I used to dread going into a wedding day because it is a long day and it's a long work process," Bagamary said. "But now I'm just so thankful."

SCAN TO SEE ASHLEY BAGAMARY'S WORK

OR VISIT

ASHLEYBAGAMARY PHOTOGRAPHY.COM



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

PANDEMIC DRAWS COLLEGE STUDENT INTO MEDICAL FIELD



Freshman Antonella Tommasi stands in the School of Health Sciences in the Francis Center as a current nursing student. When she becomes a nurse, Tommasi hopes to provide support for those who have lost loved ones.

Elon freshman pursues nursing major after her father died from COVID-19

Abigail Hobbs | Elon News Network | @abigaillhobbss

Freshman Antonella Tommasi sent her father videos after being inducted into the National Math Honor Society her senior year on Oct. 29, 2020. It wasn't until the next morning that Tommasi learned of her father's death due to complications from COVID-19.

"I kept calling him for like 30 minutes maybe, trying to get him to answer the phone because he should have been awake," Tommasi said. "I was like, 'It's not true, it can't be true.' Because clearly he was here the day before."

A year and a half later, Tommasi is studying to be a nurse. After watching overwhelmed hospitals in 2020 prevent her father from receiving the care and attention he needed, the occupation became her new goal.

Prior to his death, Tommasi's father lived in Italy and was transferred to four different hospitals due to overcrowding. Living in Italy, he was receiving his IV drip from a Dyson plastic water bottle due to a lack of medical supplies.

"They couldn't take care of him anymore because of how bad the capacity was. On Oct. 28, I got that one last call. ... He was on the ventilator again,"

Tommasi said. "We found out his organs were failing again but faster so we couldn't do anything about it."

Overcrowding has become worse in hospitals because of the global nurse shortage. According to the International Council of Nursing, up to 13 million nurses will be needed to close the shortage.

Since her father's death, Tommasi sees COVID-19 as just as dangerous as when it was first introduced in the United States. With Elon University dropping its indoor mask mandate on March 14, her concerns have only grown. Tommasi continues to wear masks in her classes and around certain people.

"It's just sad coming to college and seeing that nobody cares about COVID anymore," Tommasi said. "Nobody cares that people are still dying because of it and they think they're invincible because they're 18 to 21."

The toll on Tommasi's mental and physical health was severe. She said that when her father died, she isolated herself from others.

"I don't have any emotions anymore toward it, because I've always been taught to be strong — don't let people see your

weakness," Tommasi said. "It was just bad. I just didn't see the color in the world for a very long time."

Tommasi's mother, Beatriz Requejo, said she doesn't think her daughter has processed everything.

“

IF I, AS A NURSE, AM ABLE TO SAVE SOMEBODY'S DAD, BROTHER, SISTER, MOM, NIECE, NEPHEW, GRANDMA, GRANDPA ... THAT'S GOING TO MEAN THE WORLD TO ME.

ANTONELLA TOMMASI
FRESHMAN

"It's been real tough," Requejo said. "I'm just very proud of her for going to college, for doing what she's doing, for standing up for herself and for just moving on

BY THE NUMBERS

13M

nurses will be needed to fill the global nurse shortage gap in the future, according to the International Council of Nursing.

forward with this void."

Once she becomes a nurse, Tommasi hopes to help others who have lost their loved ones because of the pandemic.

According to a study published in the Lancet Medical Journal, at least 5.2 million children have lost their caregivers due to COVID-19 in the first 19 months of the outbreak. Deaths have only increased since then, with the pandemic still going on today.

"If I, as a nurse, am able to save somebody's dad, brother, sister, mom, niece, nephew, grandma, grandpa ... that's going to mean the world to me," Tommasi said. "But if I'm there, when sadly they are dying, they can say their last goodbye, I think my world is going to be OK because I feel like the rest of my life is going to be redemption for everything my dad went through."

THE LONGEST RIDE:

FRESHMAN TRAINS, RIDES HORSES IN ALAMANCE COUNTY



COURTESY OF ALAN MONTEMAYOR

Freshman Alan Montemayor rides his horse at the Red Hills Horse Trials in Tallahassee, Florida in March 2021.

Montemayor balances full class schedule with equestrian training for eventing

Madison Powers
Elon News Network

When freshman Alan Montemayor tried horseback riding in seventh grade, he despised it because he felt he knew nothing about the sport.

Two years later, at his sister's riding camp, her trainer asked Montemayor to try again, and this time, the challenge of complicated jumps and rough terrain caught his eye.

"In this farm, there were a lot of fields with different jumps," Montemayor said. "I just found that really cool."

Now, Montemayor trains horses every day in Alamance County. Riding his own Argentinian gray horse, Courage Son "AZ," and others in the area, Montemayor competes in eventing, which consists of dressage, show jumping and cross country.

"It's practically a horse triathlon," Montemayor said.

Eventing is a relatively small sport in the United States, with the United States Eventing Association holding only 250 competitions per year.

Before finding his love for horseback riding and participating in competitions, Montemayor took a gap year after high school working at Overlook Farm for Sara Kozumplik, a five-star eventer — the highest ranking — in Berryville, Virginia.

"I decided to take that gap year,

not only because of COVID, but because I wanted to dedicate good time to the horse," Montemayor said.

Montemayor said that his gap year was mentally and physically taxing due to long hours and little social interaction, but he learned a lot.

"I knew that this was not forever," Montemayor said, keeping in mind the learning opportunity.

Head groom at Overlook Farm Sara Kelson said she watched Montemayor grow in maturity and riding during his year.

"He came to us not really knowing anything," Kelson said. "He had the mentality of, 'I want to learn, I want you to teach me.' He's very open-minded in that sense."

Montemayor said he was grateful for his year at Overlook Farm, but he realized that pursuing a career as a professional eventer was too high a commitment for him and left little room for family and travel.

Montemayor currently rides at the two-star level, and while he doesn't want to pursue eventing professionally, he has goals for riding at the three-star level by the end of 2022.

He plans to compete in the Central American and Caribbean Games in spring 2023 and the Pan American Games in fall 2023.

One of Montemayor's proudest moments was competing in eventing at the Kentucky Horse Park in summer 2021. He said that he didn't think he would complete even half of the challenging course.

"I started crying when I was galloping," Montemayor said. "It's crazy, it's never happened to me, but I was so proud of my horse for wanting to do well and caring

enough about me to actually try hard. It kind of goes to show the kind of relationship we've been able to build."

Fellow rider and junior Katie Cox also enjoys horseback riding, despite it being a demanding sport. Her horse, Constantine, is a 7-year-old Swedish Warmblood with whom she shares a strong bond.

"If you don't love it wholeheartedly, you can't stay in it, because it's a sport that will chew you up and spit you out," Cox said. "It's all built on your knowledge, the horse's knowledge and your bond. It takes years to develop that."

According to Cox, a tight bond between the horse and rider is extremely important in order to succeed, and at the recent horse show in the Sun Circuit in Ocala, Florida, Cox said she was reminded of that connection with her horse.

"I may not have won anything, but it was one of the best experiences I've had with him, just because he was really excited to be there," Cox said.

Kelson also said she recognized this important connection between human and horse.

"They'll try extra hard for you because you have that bond," Kelson said. "That kind of unspoken bond is one of the greatest things ever."

Montemayor loves the thrill of riding but said that he gets nervous in the seconds before starting a competition.

"I just start doubting myself. Why am I doing this?" Montemayor said, but the adrenaline kicks in once he begins riding. "Well, I've already started galloping, there's no turning back."

Another riding goal of Montemayor's is to compete for



COURTESY OF ALAN MONTEMAYOR

Montemayor and his horse gallop through water during an event in the Red Hills Horse Trials in Tallahassee, Florida in March 2021.

Mexico in the 2024 Olympic Games. Eventing is currently small in Mexico, with only 38 horses registered in 2018 with the Fédération Equestre Internationale, an international organization that governs equestrian sports.

While Montemayor is unsure whether this goal is attainable yet, he said he is proud of how much he and his horse have grown.

"We've been through stuff together and we've come out of it together," Montemayor said.

Elon University dance team prepares for Nationals

The team qualified for the national championship in August after receiving the program’s first gold bid

Erin Martin
Elon News Network | @ErinMartin35

After months of preparation, the Elon University dance team will finally travel to Daytona Beach, Florida this week to compete in the National Dance Alliance’s National Championship from April 6 to 10.

This is the first time in two years the team has attended Nationals and the first time in the team’s history going with a gold bid. The team received the gold bid after winning the Game Day routine competition in August 2021 at the NDA summer camp, and it will provide the team with perks such as five free hotel rooms, reduced registration fees and priority hotel assignment.

Although this will be the first time traveling to Daytona for many of the athletes, this is not the case for head coach Elly Dirks. This year will be her fourth time going to Daytona with Elon, but her first watching from the sidelines.

Dirks ’19 used to be the captain of the Elon dance team and became the head coach following her senior year at Elon. In her last year as an undergraduate student, Dirks said she started to step up and guide the team because the team was coachless. Since her coaching career began, she said she is grateful to witness the growth of the program first hand.

“I remember when I was on the team and there were eight people. We were struggling,” Dirks said. “Now, we have a team of 18 phenomenal dancers who are



CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Elon University dance team performs two routines on Sunday, April 3 in Schar Center during its Nationals Send-Off for the 2022 NDA Nationals Competition in Daytona Beach.

all 110% dedicated to this sport and dedicated to growing the program.”

Senior Meredith Hertweck said that the team’s connection with each other is stronger than ever as they head to Nationals this year.

“You can tell that this team wants it bad,” Hertweck said. “We want it real bad. And you see it every day in practice.”

Hertweck said the team is driven to get first place, and

since they have not traveled to the championship in two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, that motivation is even stronger. Hertweck also said that going into the competition with the gold bid has given the team extra confidence.

“You just have a different kind of hunger because it’s been festering for a few years,” Hertweck said.

Senior Nyla Rivers said although she wishes she was

able to experience Nationals her sophomore and junior year, she is grateful to have seen support from the Elon community grow tremendously.

“Getting a standing ovation was unheard of,” Rivers said. “We did not get that same support and love from our Elon community my freshman year.”

Dirks said she and the team are motivated after seeing an increase in support from the Elon

community, student body and the athletic department. The team hopes to return to the university with more success than before and support from their Elon peers.

“One thing I’ve really pushed them to do is to show their heart when they’re dancing,” Dirks said.

The event will take place at the Bandshell and Ocean Center in Daytona Beach. Elon will compete on April 7 in Pom Division I and on April 8 in Hip Hop Division I.

Spring football training, practice returns in full swing

Big changes on the field come to Elon’s football team as it goes through spring practices

Mason Willett
Elon News Network

Elon University football head coach Tony Trisciani said the team has been playing fast and physical since the beginning of spring practices. Practicing since the beginning of March, the team will finish spring training on April 9.

“Everybody came out here wanting to get better, got off to a fast start,” Trisciani said. “Our guys came out with a lot of energy, right from the get-go.”

The team has one big role to fill — the quarterback. Former quarterback Davis Cheek graduated last year after becoming the second leading passer in program history. But Trisciani said he is not worried, with three redshirt players — senior Matthew McKay, junior Joey Baughman and sophomore Justin Allen — competing for starting quarterback.

“We’re spreading the reps around pretty evenly amongst Joey, Matthew and Justin right now, and they’re all coming along,” Trisciani said. “They’re making mistakes everyday, but we’re really pushing them to not make the same mistake. We don’t expect them to be perfect, just give us a new mistake to fix. But they’re all competing



JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University football players warm up at a spring practice on March 31.

real hard against each other right now and getting some good reps.”

Trisciani said he also believes in the team’s ability to improve for next year from the spring training session so far, even without this summer’s incoming recruiting class. He said the leadership of the current players will help give the team success in the fall season.

“We’ve got a veteran football team,” Trisciani said. “We should be able to win football games with the guys that we have on the field.”

One of those veteran players is redshirt senior Torrence Williams, a defensive lineman who received praise from coaches

as his role is expected to grow this upcoming season. He said he tries to be an older brother figure for the younger players on the team, pushing them when they make mistakes and lifting them up when they succeed.

“I try to connect with them and build those relationships so that we’re playing for more than just football on the field,” Williams said. “We’re playing for our brothers, playing for our family, so I just try to be that big brother.”

Another veteran player is redshirt sophomore offensive lineman Jabril Williams. He said with his increased role this upcoming season, he can make a big contribution to the team, whether that is on the field or on the sideline.

“It always feels good to be able to contribute to the team any way you can, even if that is playing or just being on the sideline cheering on your teammates,” Williams said.

The Phoenix’s first game of the 2022 football season will be against Vanderbilt University. Elon’s only previous matchup against Vanderbilt was in 2011, when the Phoenix lost 45-14. According to Williams, the players are excited for the chance to play a Football Bowl Subdivision opponent, as it brings more competition than a conference game.

“It’s always pretty fun to play a FBS team,” Williams said. “Playing Vanderbilt, going up to Vanderbilt, that’d be a pretty cool experience.”

“

EVERYBODY CAME OUT HERE WANTING TO GET BETTER, GOT OFF TO A FAST START. OUR GUYS CAME OUT WITH A LOT OF ENERGY, RIGHT FROM THE GET-GO.

TONY TRISCIANI
FOOTBALL HEAD COACH

TEACHING ON TWO FIELDS



Mitch Mitchener, the defensive coordinator for the varsity football team at Eastern Guilford High School, stands in front of Rhodes Stadium at Elon University on April 5. He and the rest of the Eastern Guilford coaching staff visited the university to watch the football team's morning practice.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mitch Mitchener, social studies teacher and football coach at Eastern Guilford, makes a difference in his students' lives

Kyra O'Connor, Jacob Kisamore & Andrew Hartle
Elon News Network

Each day, Eastern Guilford High School social studies teacher Mitch Mitchener teaches civics in his second-story classroom. His desk is covered in sticky notes with messages from his current and past students, and his walls are filled with past assignments.

However, Mitchener also has a second classroom at Eastern Guilford — the practice football field located next to the school's stadium. Every Tuesday night, he teaches the game of football and the game of life to students.

Mitchener, a long-time town of Elon resident and former Appalachian State University football player, is in his third season as the defensive coordinator for Eastern Guilford's varsity football team. He said he feels sports provide high school students the opportunity to learn important skills that extend far beyond game-specific techniques and strategies.

"Team sports help people to work good in groups and be able to work with people from different ethnicities, different religions, different sexualities," Mitchener said. "There's just so much diversity on sports teams, but you have to work together as one team if you want to be successful."

Eastern Guilford is located in Gibsonville, with the district teaching students from the Gibsonville to Greensboro areas. According to the North Carolina School Report Card for EGHHS, 63.8% of the students who attend

Eastern Guilford are "economically disadvantaged," compared to the state average of 46.5%.

Mitchener has worked with these diverse backgrounds in the county. According to wrestling coach Maurice Atwood, Mitchener has encouraged several football players to join the wrestling team or other athletic teams as a way to stay involved in the school's community and be active.

"He helps a lot of these kids around here that are socially disadvantaged, the same way that other coaches here do and to do what has to be done to keep kids as involved as possible," Atwood said. "He's just a great all around guy and I'm glad he is here working with me."

For Mitchener, the best part about being a coach and teacher is the involvement in his students' lives.

"You're spending a little bit more time with them before practice or after practice talking with them, getting to know them a little bit better, building a better relationship," Mitchener said. "The kids get to become more like your own kids because you get to know so much more about them, and their family, and their lives and what they have going on."

While Mitchener works hard to help his players become the best they can be on the field, he said he also strives to make them better people off the field.

"You can show them, in my case, what a good male role model would be," Mitchener said. "No matter what sport you coach or who it is, you kind of take on a little bit of a parental role for the kids that you're coaching."

From challenges on the field to the challenges from the pandemic, Mitchener said he encourages his students to persevere and think about the end goal.

"You're going to get pushed a little bit outside of your comfort zone," Mitchener said. "But at the end of the day, you're going to do something that's really awesome that you weren't going to be able to do before."



The Eastern Guilford High School football team lines up against the Ben L. Smith Golden Eagles during a drive in its game on Oct. 22, 2021 in Gibsonville.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER