



Immigrants in Alamance County adjust to evolving policies

DAVID DEE DELGADO/GETTY IMAGES/TNS

An ICE agent monitors hundreds of asylum seekers being processed upon entering the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building on June 6, 2023, in New York City.

Community reacts to federal immigration changes, reflects on past racial profiling

Avery Sloan
Elon News Network

Blanca Nienhaus, a Graham resident and Mexican immigrant, said she comes from a country where people traditionally are afraid of the police. When she came to the U.S., she did not think the same thing would be true. Yet both herself and other immigrants she knows, despite having documentation, have faced instances around the police where they have been worried for their safety.

One day, Nienhaus was driving home and decided to take a new route through an unfamiliar neighborhood. A police car saw her pull in and started following her, continuing until she pulled into her own driveway of her house. Despite this experience, Nienhaus has continued to use her ability to speak both English and Spanish, her connection to the community and her

American citizenship to help advocate for immigrant rights.

"I became part of a minority, which is easy to say, but not easy to live," Nienhaus said. "People heard that I spoke English, ... people started coming to me and asking me things or asking for help or for giving information. So I was able to have each foot on one side of the coin."

Nienhaus is a member of Fairness Alamance — an organization that was created in response to racial profiling from the Alamance County's sheriff department to provide support to immigrants. In Dec. 2012, the U.S. Department of Justice sued the sheriff's department for illegally targeting Latino drivers, and Fairness Alamance played a large role in helping provide the DOJ evidence.

Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson said the sheriff's department has had a contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement since 2007 and has been holding ICE detainees in the county jail since 2012. In 2022, ICE released a press release saying it would no longer use the county's detention facility for long-term detention, only short

periods of custody if it meets applicable standards. This was because of concerns about conditions in the facility. The ACLU of North Carolina released a statement in response to this stating that the detention center for years has raised concerns for them due to its "horrific conditions, reports of abuse, and serious medical neglect at the Alamance County jail."

This January, the county's contract with ICE ended and is being renegotiated now, Johnson said.

Not knowing what is coming next is part of what Nienhaus said is anxiety provoking.

"People are scared because of the previous experience and because there are lots of uncertainty, nothing for sure so far," Nienhaus said. "But people are afraid."

Nienhaus said in Alamance County, she is used to a sheriff who has been openly against immigration, yet seeing immigration constantly in the federal news is newer. President Donald Trump campaigned on the promise of increased deportations.

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Holocaust survivor visits Elon, tells story of courage, reconnecting with faith

Renée Fink shares her story as a 'hidden child' of the Holocaust, warns against repeating history

Abby Gravely
Elon News Network

At age 4, Renée Fink's parents loaded her onto a stranger's bicycle with no explanation. She was taken to live with a Catholic family in Holland, and she never saw her parents again.

To a standing-room-only Turner Theatre crowd on Feb. 6, Fink shared her story as a childhood Holocaust survivor with an audience of Elon students, staff and community members. Her conversation with retired professor of journalism Rich Landesberg marked the latest event in an Elon tradition lasting more than eight years: inviting Holocaust survivors in commemoration of International Holocaust

Remembrance Day. The event was hosted by the School of Communications, Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, Jewish Life and the Jewish Studies department.

"Everyone in my family was murdered, either in Auschwitz or in Sobibor," Fink said. "My grandmother, one of her three children and I survived."

The early years of Fink's life were characterized by the courage she saw from the adults around her.

Born in 1937 to a Jewish family in the Netherlands, her parents sent her away, not knowing if they would never see her again but understanding it would increase her chances of survival.

In 1941, Fink moved in with the Van Den Brink family: two parents, five sons and three daughters, in a small house. She became the 11th family member and was given the name Rita. Her identity was changed to fit with her new family and remain hidden.

She said she is still thankful for the Van Den Brink family's courage, knowing that

if they were caught they would have been killed.

"What amazes me is that they didn't know if I could be there a few weeks, a few months or a few years," Fink said. "I learned the rosary, got a new name and became a devout Catholic."

Though she did her best to blend in, there were features that made Fink stand out from the pale skin and blonde hair of the rest of the Van Den Brinks.

Fink said she was once stopped on the street by a woman who told her to wash her eyes because they were too dark. When German soldiers came to check the Van Den Brink home, the family would try to conceal Fink's identity so she would fit in with the family. She recalled wearing a dunce cap during one visit and being buried under blankets under the guise of being sick during another.

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Elon students prepare for housing selection for the 2025-26 academic year

Rising juniors, seniors face decisions amid changes to the housing selection process

Nia Bedard
Elon News Network

As Residence Life prepares for housing selection for the 2025-26 academic year, rising juniors and seniors are faced with the decision of whether or not they want to continue to live on-campus.

This housing selection, where applications were due Feb. 10, comes after the new construction of East Commons and Loy Farm Ecovillage — which added 102 beds for students, according to Elon University, — and Residence Life allowing students who live in Crest, Oaks and Danieley Center to renew their leases. Selection times for rising juniors and seniors will be released on Feb. 12 and housing selection and lease renewal will occur from Feb. 13 to 26. Selection times for rising sophomores will be released on March 4 and will occur from March 6 to 12.

Last year, Residence Life announced that students living in Crest, Oaks and Danieley would be unable to renew their leases.

One of the reasons behind last year's decision to limit lease renewal was to make sure there was enough room for rising sophomores to live on-campus due to Elon's housing requirement, which requires undergraduate students to live on campus for their first two years, Kirsten Carrier, director of Residence Life, said.

"We had been so tight on housing previously that we wanted to make sure we had enough housing for our sophomores," Carrier said. "Last year, we did the calculations, and we didn't have enough bed spaces for our sophomores. So we did have to kind of limit how many of those juniors and seniors were able to kind of renew their leases for the following year."

According to Elon University's Residential Plan website, there are 770 apartments offered by the university that are available for sophomores, juniors and seniors to live in. In addition to the amount of apartments available, there are also around 4,200 total beds on campus according to Carrier. There are 1,607 freshmen and 1,509 sophomores, leaving around 1,000 beds available for juniors and seniors, according to Elon's Registrar's report.

Despite being allowed to renew leases, Elon sophomore Taryn Jordan who is currently living in Danieley Center, wants to move to Oaks or Park Place and continue to live on-campus despite the stress she said the housing selection has previously caused her.

"The battle for apartments is really difficult going into your sophomore year," Jordan said. "It's super hard, because if you don't get a good time, then you're not going to get the best place to live. We're going to get whatever's left."

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THE PENDULUM

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CORRECTIONS

In the last edition of the Pendulum, on a story on Ora Teahouse, the location of the Daily Grind and the name of a business partner was missattributed. The business is in Burlington and the business partner's name is Omie's Coffee & Roastery.

In a caption for a story on Jayda Angel, it said the game was against William and Mary but was against Stony Brook. Elon News Network regrets these errors.

Wes Durham '88 visits campus ahead of May 2025 commencement address



ABIGAIL HINES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Wes Durham interviews with Elon News Network as a part of his campus visit before he will give the 2025 commencement address in May.

Elon '88 alum will deliver 2025 commencement speech, reflects on time as student

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

Wes Durham '88 will give Elon's commencement address in May to the class of 2025. Durham is a play-by-play commentator for ESPN and ACC Network, and he has served as the radio play-by-play voice for the Atlanta Falcons since 2004. He received the 2013 Distinguished Alumni Award in the School of Communications. Durham's brother, also an Elon graduate, is the play-by-play announcer for Elon's men's basketball, football and baseball teams, and their dad is well known for being the "Voice of the Tar Heels" for the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for 40 years.

Elon News Network sat down with the class of 2025 commencement speaker before the 2025 graduation ceremony.

This interview was edited for clarity.

Being the commencement speaker, can you tell me a little bit about that process?

The process was, I got a text from Dr. Book asking me if she could give me a call. And I said, that'd be great. And once we had a chance to visit on the phone that day, she asked me if I would be the commencement speaker in May, and I kind of thought she was kidding, to be honest. And once I realized, no, it's this serious situation, I said, 'I'm incredibly honored, and of all the things I've been blessed in my career to do.' This might be the highest, highest highlight, highest honor for me. It gives me an opportunity to come back to campus and refamiliarize myself with not only the Elon I attended and went to school with, and the Elon I'm still connected to, but now what the real Elon is in 2024 and 2025.

Going back to your time at Elon, what are some of your most memorable moments from your time in Elon?

As years have moved on, I feel more blessed to have been in on the ground floor of what ultimately has become the School of

Communications. I was in the first four-year graduating class that communications existed in 1988. It was an idea when I arrived in the fall of '84, they awarded some degrees in '85, '86 and then '87 and '88 was really kind of the upswing of the department, and Dean Gaither is continuing the legacy of great, intentional faculty and staff and communications.

For me, it was an opportunity. I knew what I wanted to do from about the time I was 14 or 15 years old, and I came here on a mission to try and accomplish that. And to this day, I'm grateful that I had an opportunity to do what I did in four years here, and that was 150 football and basketball games on radio at WSOE and that was a game changer for me. I graduated here with a lot of bad tape and some good tape, and hopefully the good tape is what got me to my first job. And from that point on, I've always tried to take that legacy that Elon gave me in those four years and continue to grow it.

Are there any aspects of your job that you can clearly point to Elon preparing you for?

I think one of the things that has struck me since I got the phone call in December, about potentially doing this in May, is the characteristics that I learned here that now are still with me, and one of those is collaboration. The one thing I learned in college, at least very early on, on a small scale, was that you had to be a part of the team. No person can be successful alone in this industry, you've got to have we consider today — we need great camera folks, great audio folks, producers, that kind of thing. And that's a really important process to go through, and it's a growth piece. And I learned that here. It helped me in my first job out of college. But the collaboration piece, I think, is something that's not just primary to the school of comm, it's something you learn here at Elon period.

What kind of lessons have you kind of learned in your career that you hope graduates will take to heart?

I think one of the things that will be probably in my remarks will be: I've been very blessed in my career to see incredibly successful people achieve things in sports, I had the good fortune of calling all of Calvin Johnson's games at Georgia Tech as a college

player and obviously he's their first ballot Pro Football Hall of Famer. And Calvin Johnson was inspiring to watch play games, but he was even more inspiring and impressive to watch him practice and his philosophy in practice. The other person that impacted me in my career, in terms of just his work ethic, and he was already accomplished when he had come to Atlanta to play for the Falcons, was Tony Gonzalez. And Tony Gonzalez went through a work ethic every day in practice that pretty quickly told you why he was going to be a Hall of Fame player. And some of those things, they attracted me to those guys, not because they were good, but because what they did to be good. And I think that's part of the lesson we have to learn here is, there's an old saying that Coach Smith used to have at North Carolina, the long time basketball coach there, that success is not a destination, it's a constant journey. And that's something that Calvin and Tony both reinforced with me.

In May during this commencement speech, is there one piece of advice that you hope to give to the graduates?

If there is, I haven't come up with it yet. That's part of the reason I'm here. I think it's really important that whoever's charged with giving the commencement address, I think, number one, you want to be brief. Two, you want to leave them with something that will be applicable to them. I mean, stories about success and stories about characteristics and things like that are all fine, but I think at the end of the day, you've also got to let them tell you what they're going to remember most. And so I think kind of the tail end of what my remarks might be, or at least the balance of those remarks have still yet to be crafted, because I really want it to be about them. They're the ones that are being honored that day. It's not me, although it's an unbelievable honor for me. They're the central figure, the people graduating, who've done the work, who now have a degree, just like I do, and they've made my degree more valuable because of the work they've done. And this institution has made my degree more valuable, and it's important they know that too, but they really have to kind of tell me the story of what their experience has been.



Freshman Lisa Kranec winds up for a forehand in her match against Belmont Abbey on Feb. 8. Elon won 7-0 and is 5-1 on the season. The Phoenix plays the University of North Carolina, Charlotte next Feb. 14.

BENJAMIN BERFIELD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Elon senior Chris Murphy performs at the Black History Month Tiny Shelf concert on Feb. 7 in Belk Library. This was the second event in Elon's Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education Black History Month calendar, following the Black History Month Kickoff. The event showcased student performers, including jazz studies students, the band Yards Davis, Elon's hip-hop performance group Limitless and Melanated Melodies.

MONIKA JUREVICIUS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Sophomore Lia Miller winds up for a pitch in a game against North Carolina Central on Feb. 8 at Hunt Softball Park. The game was part of the Elon Softball Classic where Elon won 13-7, going 1-4 at the Elon Softball Classic.

MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Lion Dancer performs at the Lunar New Year Celebration Feb. 7 in McBride Gathering Space. The event was hosted by the Asian-Pacific Student Association, Chinese Club and the Truitt Center. Lunar New Year is a holiday marking the beginning of the new year on the lunisolar calendar.

KATRINA HOLTZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



A decade after racial profiling lawsuit, concerns persist in Alamance County

The Confederate monument located in front of the Alamance County Courthouse in Graham as seen on May 3, 2022. In 2012 the U.S. Department of Justice sued the Alamance County sheriff's department for illegally targeting Latinos. ENN FILE PHOTO

ICE | from cover

In the less than 30 days Trump has been in office, Trump has tried to pass an executive order to block citizenship for children in the U.S. born to undocumented immigrants and has significantly increased ICE enforcement — arresting 7,400 people in nine days, according to ICE's X account.

Johnson, who has been a partner with ICE for over 10 years, has previously agreed to give ICE 40 out of 346 beds at the detention center, Johnson said. While negotiations are still underway, Johnson said if ICE requests more bed space he could likely provide space at the old county prison unit.

Despite the lawsuit for racial profiling in 2012, Johnson said any immigrants who do not have a criminal record should have no cause for concern. Johnson said this is the current federal government's policy and is what the county follows.

"There will be no racial profiling by the Alamance County sheriff's office," Johnson said.

Even if immigrants with no criminal record are not the target of the department, getting pulled over or being stopped by

a police officer in general can be a nerve racking experience — even with campaigns such as "know your rights," where people are told to remain silent and wait for a lawyer, Nienhaus said this is easier said than done.

"People get scared," Nienhaus said. "It is not the same reading in a paper. If somebody, if a police, knocks at your door, ... it's easy to say, but when the people are living in that situation, they just freak out."

Over ten years ago, the lawsuit against the sheriff's department was on law 287g — a law that allowed local law enforcement to begin deportation proceedings, not just federal ICE agents. The county settled this case as it was found the sheriff's department was using this law as a reason to specifically target the Latino and Hispanic communities.

The department signed an agreement that it would accept the monitoring of the DOJ and commit itself to best practices. Nienhaus said since this lawsuit she does feel like things have improved a little bit as this lawsuit helped bring attention to instances of racial profiling in the county.

"More people were focused on what they were doing, then they were not," Nienhaus said. "And little by little, I think things began to calm down."

For sophomore Edward Hernandez, racial profiling in Alamance County has been a longstanding issue. Hernandez, who grew up in Burlington, said he has had people call him slurs for speaking Spanish in public with his family.

"Even before politics, just in the state of the county we've lived in, that Elon is, it's always been just a thought," Hernandez said. "It's not something that it's always talked about, but it's always something that's in the back of our heads."

Hernandez is the president of Elon's Latinx Hispanic Union and said some of the goals of the organization is to showcase Hispanic culture, educate others and provide a safe space for members of the Latino and Hispanic communities.

Hernandez said as an organization he feels supported by Elon to be able to have both physical spaces to meet and funding for events, but he would like to see some kind of formal statement from the university on where it stands regarding federal news surrounding immigration.

"From what I've heard, Elon hasn't made any comments or anything specifically, to quote, unquote, support," Hernandez said. "They've just consisted with their

general SGA funding, generally giving us spaces to have our events. ... that may not be explicitly on the nose for politics, but do bring support to the communities on campus, nothing really has changed."

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EVEN BEFORE POLITICS, JUST IN THE STATE OF THE COUNTY WE'VE LIVED IN, THAT ELON IS, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN JUST A THOUGHT. IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT IT'S ALWAYS TALKED ABOUT, BUT IT'S ALWAYS SOMETHING THAT'S IN THE BACK OF OUR HEADS.

EDWARD HERNANDEZ
ELON SOPHOMORE

Speaker reconnects with faith after surviving Holocaust



Renée Fink speaks Feb. 6 about her experience surviving the Holocaust after her family sent her to live with a Catholic family in Holland. ABBY GRAVELY | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

SPEAKER | from cover

Despite their biological differences, Fink said she still considers the Van Den Brinks her family. She re-established contact with them in her adulthood, with her host father signing off letters as "your war daddy." Her honorary siblings visited her often, holding up the Chuppah at her daughter's wedding and attending her childrens' bar and bat mitzvahs.

"I was an only child, but I had five brothers and three sisters," Fink said.

The young age at which she was sent away and the surroundings where she spent her formative years caused Fink to feel disconnected from her Jewish faith. In her early years, she said she didn't even know she was Jewish.

"In those days, knowledge was so dangerous that you wouldn't tell a 4 year old these things," Fink said.

It wasn't until she went to college, years after moving to America, that she first went to temple. She worked throughout her adult years to reconnect with her heritage, and now describes herself as "ethnically, fiercely Jewish."

Initially, Fink did not often talk about her experiences, even to her own children.

It wasn't until 1991 when she attended a convention of childhood Holocaust survivors that she was inspired to speak on her experiences.

"It was our duty, our mission to speak so that it won't be forgotten," Fink said.

“

IT WAS OUR DUTY, OUR MISSION TO SPEAK SO THAT IT WON'T BE FORGOTTEN.

RENÉE FINK
HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

As part of what she feels to be her mission, Fink warned the audience about patterns she notices in the current U.S. government and across the world, encouraging young people to never forget the past and stand up for what is right.

Despite the hardships they have faced, Fink said she and other holocaust survivors don't often cry about their experiences.

"If we start, we may never stop," Fink said.

The Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition honors Black history education



The African-American Cultural Arts & History Center on Feb. 11. The center is open to the public and showcases Black history in the county. The center is located at 2381 Corporation Pkwy in Burlington.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

The coalition collaborates with the Equal Justice Initiative, Elon to honor victims of racial terror

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

As Black History Month continues, the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition works to acknowledge and educate the community about racial terror. Through historical projects, educational events and vigils, the coalition fosters conversation about race and justice, making sure that the victims of racial violence in Alamance County are never forgotten.

Loy Campbell, a co-leader of the coalition, said the group is multiracial and provides an important mission.

“We’re bringing the community together to provide education about our history of racial terror in this county,” Campbell said. “Specifically, we work in coalition and communication with the Equal Justice Initiative, which is a group out of Montgomery, Alabama, that’s working on commemorating our history, because we believe that if we don’t learn about our history, then we’ll never move past it.”

One of the coalition’s initiatives is the EJI’s soil collection project. This project included collecting soil from sites where documented lynchings occurred, honoring the lives of Wyatt Outlaw, William Puryear and John Jeffress. The coalition hosts vigils and works closely with the African-American Cultural Arts & History Center to showcase the soil collections and Black history.

Outlaw, Puryear and Jeffress are the three known documented lynching victims in Alamance County. Outlaw and Puryear were both lynched by the Ku Klux Klan in 1870, and Jeffress was killed by a mob in 1920.

“We had the opportunity to put our hands in that soil and to have sort of a ceremony around that,” Campbell said. “We’ve been

in partnership with the Alamance Cultural Arts and History Center, where our exhibit for Wyatt Outlaw is, and the soil for the three lynching victims is housed in that museum in Burlington.”

Sandra Reid, a member of the coalition and an Elon professor in human service studies, said there are ties directly from the coalition to Elon, as the Isabella Cannon Leadership Fellows travel on a two week trip to Alabama each year, as part of the civil rights tour.

“IT’S THE INTENTIONALITY DURING FEBRUARY THAT I THINK IS BEAUTIFUL — THE JOY.

LASHAUNA AUSTRIA
CO-LEADER OF THE COALITION

“We take that pilgrimage to Alabama, and that also brings this to life for me, as we travel in Montgomery, in Tuskegee, in Selma, in Birmingham, all those places,” Reid said.

LaShauna Austria, a co-leader of the coalition, said the group meets monthly to engage in remembrance and build community.

“Many of us have taken pilgrimages to Montgomery, Alabama, and other places in the United States to think about the history of this country,” Austria said.

Black History Month may be the shortest month of the year — but Austria said it is a time for people to bring awareness to a very important topic.

“It’s the intentionality during February that I think is beautiful — the joy,” Austria said. “And I think during a time like what we’re experiencing in this country, it’s really important that we don’t erase history but elevate it and continue to situate ourselves

around these stories — stories of resistance, joy and struggle — so we don’t repeat the same horrible things that have happened in this country.”

Reid said although the group is small, it’s full of people who want to make a change in the community.

“It’s people who really care about what is happening in this country and what’s happening in Alamance County. It’s people who want to tell these stories for the betterment of all,” Reid said. “It’s just good people. It’s good people.”



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

The African-American Cultural Arts & History Center has soil collections from the lynchings that took place in Alamance County. Wyatt Outlaw was lynched in 1870.

UPCOMING COALITION EVENTS

FEB. 23
WYATT OUTLAW VIGIL

6 P.M. | ALAMANCE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 1 COURT SQUARE, GRAHAM

AN ANNUAL EVENT FOCUSED ON PRAYER AND COMMUNITY TO REMEMBER THE LIFE OF WYATT OUTLAW, A BLACK MAN WHO WAS LYNCHED IN 1870.

MARCH 1
LEGACIES OF LYNCHING: AN INAUGURAL GATHERING - A GATHERING OF ALL COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE COALITIONS ACROSS THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

8 A.M. | FRIDAY CONFERENCE CENTER, 100 FRIDAY CENTER DR, CHAPEL HILL

A DAYLONG CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON HONORING THE MEMORIES OF THOSE LOST TO LYNCHING AND WORKING ON EDUCATION ACROSS THE STATE. REGISTRATION IS FREE AT [GO.UNC.EDU/LEGACIESOFLYNCHING](https://go.unc.edu/legaciesoflynching).

MARCH 10, 17, 24, 31
APRIL 1
WHAT LIES BETWEEN US STUDY

6 TO 7:30 P.M. | FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 508 W. DAVIS STREET BURLINGTON

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACISM FOCUSED ON HISTORY AND HOW FAITH MAY INFORM RESPONSES TO RACISM. REGISTER AT [HTTPS://BIT.LY/WHATLIESBETWEENUS](https://bit.ly/whatliesbetweenus).

Q&A: Search committee for new dean of students plans to interview candidates in March or April

Jana Lynn Patterson plans for new role in HealthEU, to retire from Elon in 2026

Nia Bedard
Elon News Network

Jana Lynn Patterson first arrived at Elon University in 1986 and has served many roles throughout her career. Originally hired as an assistant professor and the assistant dean of student affairs, Patterson has taken on many roles throughout her career including assistant vice president for Student Life, associate dean of students and dean of student health and wellness.

Patterson has worked at Elon University for 39 years and serves as associate vice president for Student Life and dean of students.



Jana Lynn Patterson

She announced that she will be leaving the role as dean of students at the end of the year and retiring in September 2026 — leaving Elon searching for a new dean of students. Before she retires, Patterson will oversee the development of HealthEU until September 2026.

This interview was edited for clarity.

What do you oversee as dean of students?

I oversee Student Conduct, emergency response, behavioral intervention, Student Care and Outreach, and then I also oversee the health and the current student health and wellness areas, Campus Rec, health promotion, counseling services, Student Health Services. So this is the way that the dean of students position has been envisioned or has operated here for the last several years is a much more comprehensive title.

What is the timeline for finding a new dean of students?

The search consultant reports that it is a very robust applicant pool, which we would expect. There's a search committee that's kind of going through that now. We will probably interview candidates on campus toward the end of March first week of April and then navigate that part of it with hopefully the start date of early June. The two co-chairs are Dr. Jason Husser and Dr. Randy Williams. And then there is representation from Student Life, from the faculty, from our partners in business and business finance and top knowledge. So it's a broad based search committee, and there's students. There's two students on that committee as well. It's because the dean of students interacts with every facet of campus at some point during the time you interact with every facet.

What will you be doing in your new role for HealthEU?

I'll really work on working with Dr. Räisänen, who is the director of HealthEU initiatives, and works to really make sure that we've got a good strategic plan for HealthEU for the next five years, making sure that we're providing good joint leadership around now that we've kind of got the building plans together. We're beginning to think about, 'What do we think about operations?' 'What are we thinking about equipment?' Those kinds of pieces that are going to make the building kind of come alive once the contractors get in there and build it. I'll begin to do some things with planning with our directors around you know what their strategic plans are going to look like in those areas in the next five years. So, I'll still have plenty to do.

Why did you decide to transition out of dean of students and eventually retire?

Well, Elon has been my home for 40 years. I'm ready, and I think the institution will be ready. We've got great leadership here. Now it's nice to think about retiring in

a place where I think there are just so many talented and committed folks in student life, in my reporting areas. Dr. Dooley is probably the best vice president in the country. And being able to really have the pleasure of being able to be a strategic thinker at a time when the institutions are doing well and while institutions are struggling right now, we're not. Our students want to be here. There are staff who want to be here too, because it's just an exciting place to be.

How do you feel about your transition and retirement?

It's very surrealistic when that's been your identity all the time. It's wonderful and it's exciting, but it's also a little bit like, 'What do you mean somebody else is going to be dean of students for a while?' I don't think you can get here and love the work that you do and not grieve at least a little bit about what that's going to look like, and how things are going to continue after it.

Do you have any advice for the incoming dean of students?

I hear a lot from people that I would never have because I deal with emergencies and things like that. But there is nothing

more humbling than to sit with students and families sometimes when things are not going well, and you help move them to a place where there's hope and where they understand and they gain perspective. And I mean, that's really an honor and a pleasure. Elon is a relational place, and in order for a dean of students to be successful, they're going to have to be willing, not that they have to be a big extrovert like I am but you have to be willing to build relationships. And that is just key. And that's really, really important, and you have to be willing to engage with people and to love your work.

The other thing about Elon is that Elon is not a place that's going to sit still. And that's one of the things I tell anybody who comes in here as a candidate for any position that I work with or that I interview is that anyone is a place that's on the move, it's always on the move, and so you have to build both. You have to balance both this sense of introspection and reflection and kind of stability with this. What are we going to do next? How are we going to plan for next? Where are we going to be here? Because Elon is a quite different institution than when I started 1986.



ENN FILE PHOTO

Jana Lynn Patterson talks with members of Student Government Association during a business meeting on Sept. 2, 2021.

Students with accommodations will no longer receive pre-placement

HOUSING | from cover

Last year during housing selection, Jordan and her roommates ended up in Danielely Center, and despite being 50% sophomore housing, she said it wasn't her first choice.

The housing selection times are completely randomized unlike other selections such as course registration, which is determined by your completed credits, Carrier said.

This is not the only change happening to housing selection. With the return of lease renewals, students with accommodations will no longer be given a placement prior to housing selection to meet their accommodations.

Due to the decision to stop lease renewals last year, Carrier said students with accommodations went through a pre-placement process to ensure that their accommodations were met.

With students being allowed to renew their leases, Carrier said rising juniors and seniors who have housing accommodations can renew their lease on their current housing location.

Elon transfer student Sylvie Swerdlow was able to renew their lease on their apartment in Park Place, which already meets their housing accommodations.

"I'm fortunate enough that I have all my documentation, and my doctors are willing to fill out the paperwork for me," Swerdlow said.

Despite being able to renew their lease, Swerdlow said they are worried about there

being enough housing available for students who have accommodations.

"I think the disabilities resources here is really good," Swerdlow said. "The issue is maybe there not being enough ADA accessible places for students or students who don't need accommodations being in those apartments already."

Elon sophomore Katie Pescatore, who lives in an eight-person flat in Danielely Center said she will be moving off-campus into apartments that is being passed down to her by a graduating member of her sorority.

"It was just easy, I didn't have to think anything about it," Pescatore said. "I'm taking all of her furniture too, it's all just settled for me."

Fellow sophomore Alyse Pelletier is also moving off-campus to the Abellion and Provincetown homes to be closer to her classes for her major.

"It's right across the street from the nursing building, and I'm a nursing major, so most of my classes will be right there," Pelletier said.

Proximity is the same reason why Jordan wants to continue to live on-campus.

"It's really convenient and close to all my classes," Jordan said. "I really like the benefits that you get from Elon, like we still have the FIXit service, and it's just easy to be connected with campus."

Carrier said the decision to allow students to renew their leases is due to the construction of East Commons and the EcoVillage.

"We have literally created more than 100 new bed spaces for our student body

generally," Carrier said. "I'm able to provide more housing to upper class students because our first-years didn't need more beds."

In addition to adding 102 bed spaces, the class of 2028 — rising sophomores who are required to live on campus — have 70 less students than the class of 2027 meaning that those 70 extra spaces can be used for rising juniors and seniors who wish to live

on campus.

The housing selection process includes filling out the housing application and matching with roommates. Carrier said that the application is rolling and can be submitted after Feb. 10, however students who completed the application after the deadline will have the last choice in housing selection.



NIA BEDARD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon transfer student Sylvie Swerdlow in their Park Place apartment. Swerdlow was able to renew their lease on their apartment in Park Place, which already meets their housing accommodations.



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Cast members rehearse with the live orchestra and test onstage audience interactions during a dress rehearsal for “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812” in McCrory Theatre on Feb. 4. The play ran Feb. 7 through 9.

Show focuses on themes of meaning, hope, empathy, importance of human connection

Megan Walsh
Elon News Network

The lights go down, the room fills with the sound of the accordion as the stage begins to lighten and the melodic voices of the cast join in, telling the story of “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812.”

The show, based on a section of Leo Tolstoy’s “War and Peace,” is Elon University’s winter musical, which had performances Feb. 7 through Feb. 9 in McCrory Theatre.

With the complicated nature of the text that bases the show, programs were printed with a family tree of the characters explaining the connections between them. The family tree featured portraits drawn of the Elon cast by Lillian Chen.

Featuring only one line of spoken dialogue, the show is almost completely portrayed through song. Senior musical theatre major Sitare Sadeghi, who played Natasha, said the show takes a different approach to an opera with the music choices.

“It’s a techno, electro pop fusion of what is considered opera music,” Sadeghi said. “You will hear a lot of groove and R&B funk and techno pop influences in the show.”

Director and professor of the performing arts Alexandra Warren said the

show also included a few special features for audience members including placing tables of audience members on the stage as well as integrating the orchestra into the environment of the show.

“The spirit of the show is really created to help the audience to feel a part of this experience,” Warren said. “We, in different ways and different points of the show, really incorporate the audience into the show as well.”

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THE SPIRIT OF THE SHOW IS REALLY CREATED TO HELP THE AUDIENCE TO FEEL A PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE.

ALEXANDRA WARREN
DIRECTOR AND PROFESSOR OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

As the winter musical, the show was rehearsed over Winter Term, and Warren said that meant the actors had a very short amount of time to learn the show.

“Normally our other musicals happen after the end of the day or in a class period, but this is a full day schedule, so by the first week, we really had a good draft of the whole show,” Warren said. “They had to run the whole thing, and they were mostly off book that very first week.”

For freshman music theatre major J.T. Loveless, who played Pierre, while the

transition to such a short schedule was hard, he enjoyed the experience, he said.

“It’s been honestly amazing because Elon, especially with J-Term shows, tries to adopt the same rehearsal process as an equity show or a union show would do,” Loveless said. “I’m really blessed and fortunate to be a part of it, because I feel like now I’m prepared for a process in the professional world.”

During opening night, Loveless received a several-minute standing ovation during the first act at the end of his solo song “Dust and Ashes.”

In addition to the physical experiential elements connecting the audience to the show, Loveless said he hopes audiences can learn from the characters and appreciate real human connection.

“So many people these days can’t connect with other people without being on their phone or turning to some sort of substance, or turning to some sort of outside stimulation, rather than focusing inside and just having a simple conversation,” Loveless said.

Loveless said the characters of the show find the connection at the end of the show watching the Comet of 1812.

“One of my favorite parts of the show is looking up into the sky with the rest of

the cast and seeing this vast comet that’s full of awe and wonder, but also horror and skepticism,” Loveless said. “It’s cool because everybody is on the same page at the very, very end, and realizes and connects with one another through the comet, which is a first in the entirety of the show.”

A message Sadeghi finds important is the importance of showing empathy. Sadeghi said all the characters in the show have their own issues and audience members should come in with a sense of empathy for them, the way Pierre does for Sadeghi’s character.

“Pierre is the only person at the end of the show to show her that kindness and the empathy I was talking about, and that’s what gave her the strength to keep going and not just fall back because of one mistake she made,” Sadeghi said.

For Warren, the main message of the show through her perspective is finding and keeping hope.

“Tolstoy’s message, really at the end of the day, is to not give up on hope,” Warren said. “There’s always something else to reach out for, or someone who needs you, or some meaning to find in life. It’s just really something that I feel really helps me and what was so moving to me when I was preparing to direct the show.”



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Cast members lift senior Sitare Sadeghi during a scene in dress rehearsal on Feb. 4 in McCrory Theatre for “Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812.”



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Senior Sitare Sadeghi sings as her character, Natasha, in a dress rehearsal.

Art exhibition highlights gender identity, representation



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Junior Justin Allen looks at Melissa Wilkinson's art exhibition "Queens and Monsters" after the artist talk Feb. 10 in Gallery 406 in Arts West. The exhibition will be displayed until March 13.

'Queens and Monsters' plays on gender identity using inspiration from '80s, celebrities in Arts West

Abigail Hobbs
Elon News Network

Growing up, a common — yet insulting — phrase Melissa Wilkinson grew up hearing from her mom was, "Queer as a \$3 bill." Wilkinson reclaimed the phrase for one of her first art pieces of this type, a collection of paintings of spliced images of old Hollywood queer icons.

The series — "Three Dollar Icons" — included celebrities who were not necessarily gay but had made progress for LGBTQ+ communities, including Rob Hudson, Judy Garland and Bette Davis.

"Three Dollar Icons" was the beginning of Wilkinson's experiment with this type of art, leaning out of the comfort zone. In her collegiate art training, Wilkinson was taught that painting based on images was "cheating" and said it took a while to untrain herself from that notion.

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ULTIMATELY, QUEER CULTURE HAS NOT CHANGED. I PICKED UP ON THAT, AND I CHOOSE TO FOCUS ON WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GAY WOMAN WHO PAINTS.

MELISSA WILKINSON
ARTIST

Wilkinson talked through her latest art exhibition being shown Feb. 10 at Gallery 406 in Arts West. About 50 spectators watched as Wilkinson described her inspiration for "Queens and Monsters," which features celebrities, roller skates and

classic '80s motifs. The exhibition will be displayed in Gallery 406 in Arts West until March 13.

The exhibition is made up of a few collections, including "Flash Cocotte," "Queens and Monsters" and "Chimera." The exhibition looks at gendered gaze, noting how the surveyors are typically masculine and the surveyed is feminine. Wilkinson said she wanted to change the dichotomy in this work.

"We see it everyday, and its origins are in art," Wilkinson said.

Wilkinson kept her own experiences in mind as she worked on displaying the gendered gaze. She said she can feel when people look only at her feminine presenting wife because that is what they are more comfortable with.

In this collection, Wilkinson used photos — mostly of celebrities — and spliced it in Photoshop. She then traces the work and paints using watercolors — sometimes using 10 to 12 layers of paint in a square inch.

"It's a labor of love, but it's ultimately luminescent because of the inherent transparency of watercolor," Wilkinson said.

Wilkinson now works as an art professor at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth, and has been displayed at galleries across the country and internationally.

Wilkinson's works are inspired by Greco-Roman sculptures, as well as body-building magazine Physique Pictorial from the '80s — which aren't as different as they may seem.

"Ultimately, queer culture has not changed," Wilkinson said. "I picked up on that, and I choose to focus on what it means to be a gay woman who paints."

Freshman Margo Pegram said she thought the context of the paintings made the exhibit.

"I like the feminist roots of her work," Pegram said. "If you look at it and it's really interesting, and then you hear her talk about it, there's such a story behind her work."

Junior Justin Allen said this was the first Elon exhibition he can remember based on LGBTQ+ communities.

"As an art student, I'm so caught up in the technique and the skills that it's hard to

put meaning to art," Allen said. "But I think she's just given me hope, essentially that the skill and the technique will come along and then eventually you'll get comfortable with it, and then you'll be able to focus on what matters, which is the meaning and that, I think, is the main subject."

IF YOU GO

The exhibition will be open until March 13 in Gallery 406 in Arts West at 406 W. Haggard Ave.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

A student looks through Melissa Wilkinson's "Queens and Monsters" on Feb. 10 after the artist talk.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Melissa Wilkinson introduces her exhibition "Queens and Monsters" on Feb. 10 in Gallery 406 in Arts West. The exhibition looks at gendered gaze by splicing images, usually of iconic '80s celebrities.