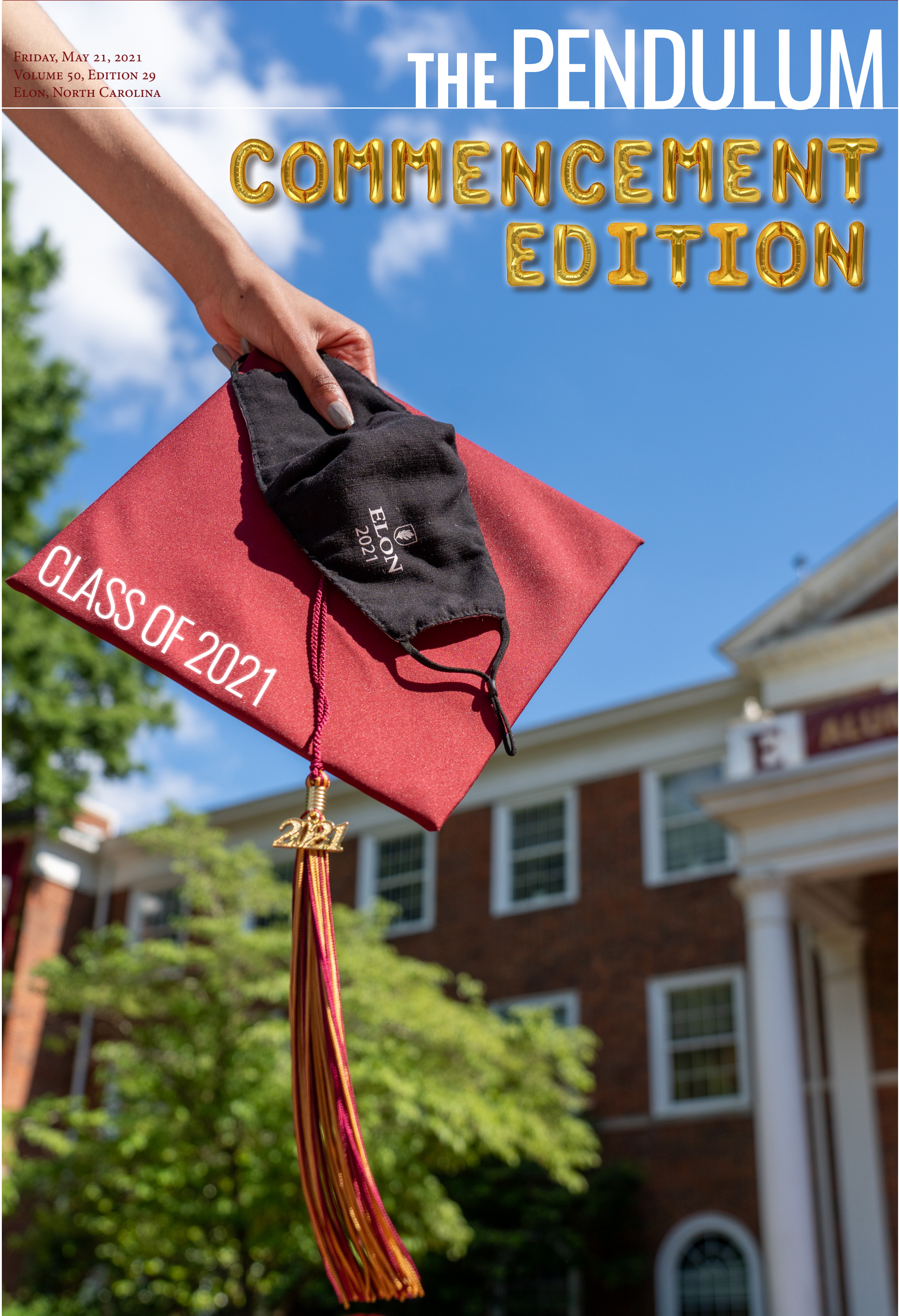


FRIDAY, MAY 21, 2021
VOLUME 50, EDITION 29
ELON, NORTH CAROLINA

THE PENDULUM

COMMENCEMENT EDITION



Elon University's class of 2021 celebrates graduation on Friday, May 21.

CLARE GRANT | VIDEO PRODUCTION MANAGER

CONVOCATION • PAGE 3
Looking back at graduates' New Student Convocation

INTERNATIONAL • PAGE 10
International students consider post-graduation futures

HOW WE'VE CHANGED • PAGE 12
Elon University's evolution from 2017 to 2021

THE PENDULUM

A PUBLICATION OF
**ELON NEWS
NETWORK**

Established 1974
Volume 50, Edition 29

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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Ted Thomas and Andrew Zagari contributed to the design of this edition. Madalyn Howard, Kyra O’Connor, Nyah Phengsiththy and Ellis Chandler contributed to the copy editing of this edition.

EDITORIAL POLICY:

ENN seeks to inspire, entertain and inform the Elon community by providing a voice for students and faculty, as well as serve as a forum for the meaningful exchange of ideas.

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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

Contact
corrections@elonnewsnetwork.com
to report a correction or a concern.

WHEN WE PUBLISH:

- The Pendulum**
publishes weekly on Wednesdays
- Elon Local News**
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- ENN Radio Podcast**
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CORRECTIONS

In the May 5 edition of the Pendulum, Sherea Burnett’s name was misspelled. Elon News Network regrets this error.

COMIC

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COMIC SAMS – SAM POROZOK

SCAN FOR MORE COVERAGE FROM ELON NEWS NETWORK
OR VISIT [ELONNEWSNETWORK.COM](https://www.elonnewsnetwork.com)



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

GAMES

How to Play: Guess the missing word in the five clues, then find them in the word search below. Words can be found backwards, diagonal, etc.

1. The Class of 2021 sat Under the _____ four years ago at Convocation. *See Page 3 for answer.*
2. From 2017 to 2021, _____ increased by 10.64%. *See Page 12 for answer.*
3. Senior Chandler Vaughan originally tried to mirror their _____ organizational involvement, but realized she had outgrown her interests. *See Page 7 for answer.*
4. Senior Nikki _____ has not seen her parents in almost two years. *See Page 10 for answer.*
5. Elon’s LGBTQIA communities gathered in person on Friday, May 7 to host _____ Graduation. *See Page 11 for answer.*



GRADUATION CAPS EXPERIENCE

FOR THREE CHOSEN SENIORS



CLARE GRANT AND JAKOB REUTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

From left to right, seniors Lucia Lozano Robledo, Elliot Rivette and Samantha Casamento were recognized for their pre-collegiate accomplishments at New Student Convocation in August 2017.

Students highlighted at the fall 2017 New Student Convocation look back on their time at Elon

Miranda Ferrante
Lifestyle Editor | @ferrantemiranda

Almost four years ago, the class of 2021 sat Under the Oaks at New Student Convocation, gathering with their peers and families to hear words of encouragement and learn about the university’s traditions.

During the August 2017 ceremony, Randy Williams, vice president and associate provost for inclusive excellence offered profiles of three members of the Class of 2021 and spoke about their variety of experiences and accomplishments.

Now, as they prepare to walk across the stage on May 21, the three seniors Williams highlighted look ahead to the future and reflect on their individual Elon experiences.

Lucia Lozano Robledo remembers sitting with her freshman year roommate when Williams started to speak about her achievements. The three students highlighted are not made aware beforehand, and it is a complete surprise.

“I left the Earth,” Robledo said. “I had no idea. It was kind of a crazy way to start college with that special mention. It was definitely really special and surreal.”

Robledo, who is a native of Bogota, Colombia, has lived in North Carolina for nine years and was the 2017 recipient of Elon’s highest academic award, the William R. Kenan, Jr. Honors Fellows Scholarship. She said despite facing many uncertainties though her undergraduate years, she has learned to embrace adversity, especially

amid a global pandemic.

“I think college is such an intense growth period,” Robledo said. “You don’t know where you’re going and the person you’re becoming until you’re in it. I think developing open arms for uncertainty is helpful in adjusting, and being flexible and going with the flow of changes. It’s definitely extremely hard.”

Following graduation, Robledo will join the Elon Year of Service Fellows Program, where she will be placed with a local nonprofit organization and work there for a year.

Looking back at her four years at Elon, Robledo said one of the most impactful experiences has been the mentoring relationships she has formed with her professors and supervisors.

“I think that’s definitely something that I’m thinking about now in my last week of college,” Robledo said. “Just wanting to honor, pay my respects and thank these people that have seen you go through it all.”

Elliot Rivette, an anthropology and journalism double major who has previously reported for Elon News Network, said these relationships are something he is thankful for.

“Over the course of the entire four years, I would say that I had a lot of really helpful mentorship experiences with professors, staff and faculty members,” Rivette said. “It’s just been really nice, and I like the kind of personal relationships and opportunities for learning one-on-one with people.”

Rivette said he once wanted to learn more about the difference between the traditional book publication process and self-publishing online, and a professor whom he never had in class sat with him

for two hours to explain it.

“That’s the kind of thing that you don’t really get. It seems like that’s very unique to Elon, so I’ve enjoyed that,” Rivette said. “I’ve had issues with trying to get things done when it’s advisors or administration members, but I’ve loved all my professors.”

Rivette said convocation is indicative of the Elon experience.

“In convocation, when they line everyone up, you really get that first sense that I’m one of a huge amount of people,” Rivette said. “You’re very much just a person lost in a crowd, so to then also be highlighted in the presentation reinforces this culture at Elon, where professors and faculty know who you are as an individual, even if you’re just a face in the crowd — somebody knows you and cares about you.”

Looking back on his four years, Rivette said he noticed how easy it is to lose track of time.

“This has gone by at sometimes what feels like a snail’s pace when you’re in it,” Rivette said. “But looking back, it feels like this has been very fast. And it’s gone by way too quickly.”

Rivette said he doesn’t regret anything he has done at Elon but wishes he could have done even more.

“My advice is to value your time and realize that it’s going to be over way faster than you expect it to be,” Rivette said. “Be sure to spend every second that you’re here doing whatever it is that you care about, because you’re only gonna get the one shot.”

Samantha Casamento remembers the exact moment at convocation, surrounded by her peers, that she heard a name that sounded similar to hers. When she realized Williams was talking about her accomplishments in high school, she was

shocked.

Casamento, who has previously reported for Elon News Network, said it’s hard to believe that just four years ago, she was sitting at convocation. She came from high school with a clear idea of what she wanted to study — journalism. But Casamento said she’s used her time at Elon to try many things and is leaving college having changed her plans.

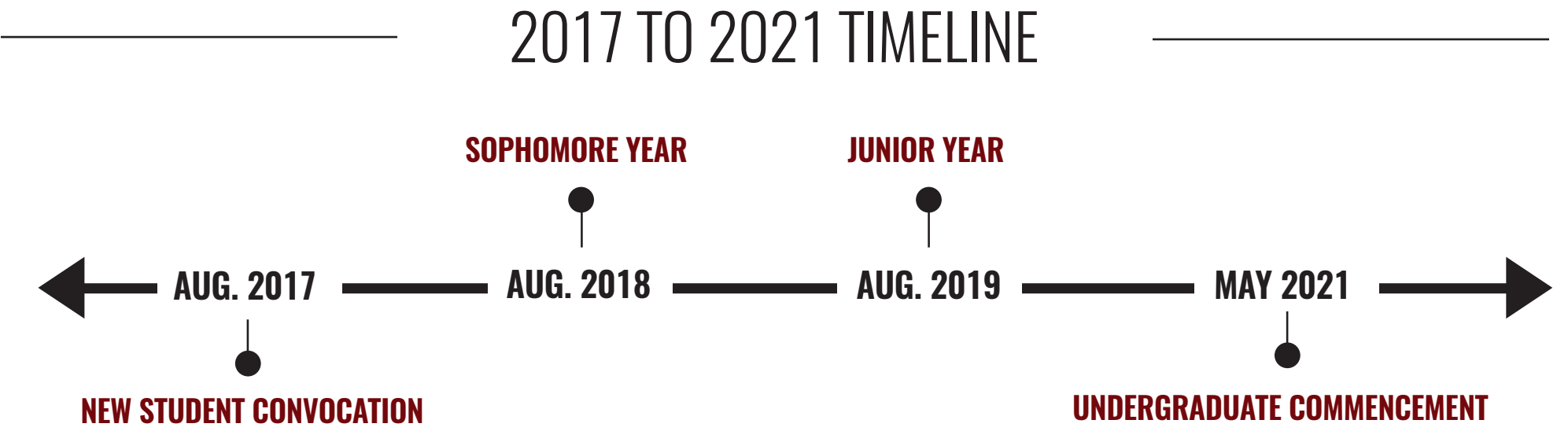
“I kind of noticed that I was starting to not love journalism as much as I used to, which was super hard for me,” Casamento said. “I kind of put all my eggs in one basket, and I basically came to Elon for ENN. My entire everything was just journalism.”

After returning to her hometown and hearing everyone tell her they couldn’t wait to see her on television after college, Casamento said she realized that was not what she wanted to fully commit to. Casamento is graduating as strategic communications and journalism double major with a Spanish minor and said Elon gave her the opportunity to pursue different interests.

“The comm school set me up for so much success with all the skills we learned,” Casamento said. “My portfolio has videos, it has photography, it has everything, and I’m so proud of all of it.”

Casamento said she feels grateful for the time she was able to spend at Elon and has no regrets. She is in the process of applying for jobs and hopes to find work in New York City following graduation.

“It’s definitely bittersweet,” Casamento said. “It’s going to be super sad leaving Elon for the last time, driving home to Pennsylvania seven hours away, knowing I likely won’t be coming back for a while. But I’m just excited to see what the future holds.”



GRADUATION CEREMONY INFORMATION

Undergraduate Commencement will be held in three in-person ceremonies in Schar Center and will run approximately 90 minutes each.

Ceremony #1 – 9 a.m.

Doors open at 8:15 a.m.
Graduates of the Love School of Business

Ceremony #2 – 1 p.m.

Doors open at 12:15 p.m.
Graduates of Elon College, the College of Arts & Sciences, with degrees in: Arts & Humanities
Graduates of the School of Communications
Graduates of the School of Education

Ceremony #3 – 5 p.m.

Doors open at 4:15 p.m.
Graduates of Elon College, the College of Arts & Sciences, with degrees in: Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Sciences
Engineering
Natural and Social Sciences

Hearing Assistance/ Language Interpreting

Elon Commencement is equipped with a limited number of hearing assistance devices and Spanish interpretation devices that are available on a first-come, first-served arrangement. Headsets may be picked up at the table at the East Entrance (near Section 101).



Seniors Nicole Amelio, Anita Harkov, Kendra Holland and Roberta Marsh sit by the fountain at Senior College Coffee on May 19.
DELANEY DANIELS | PHOTO EDITOR



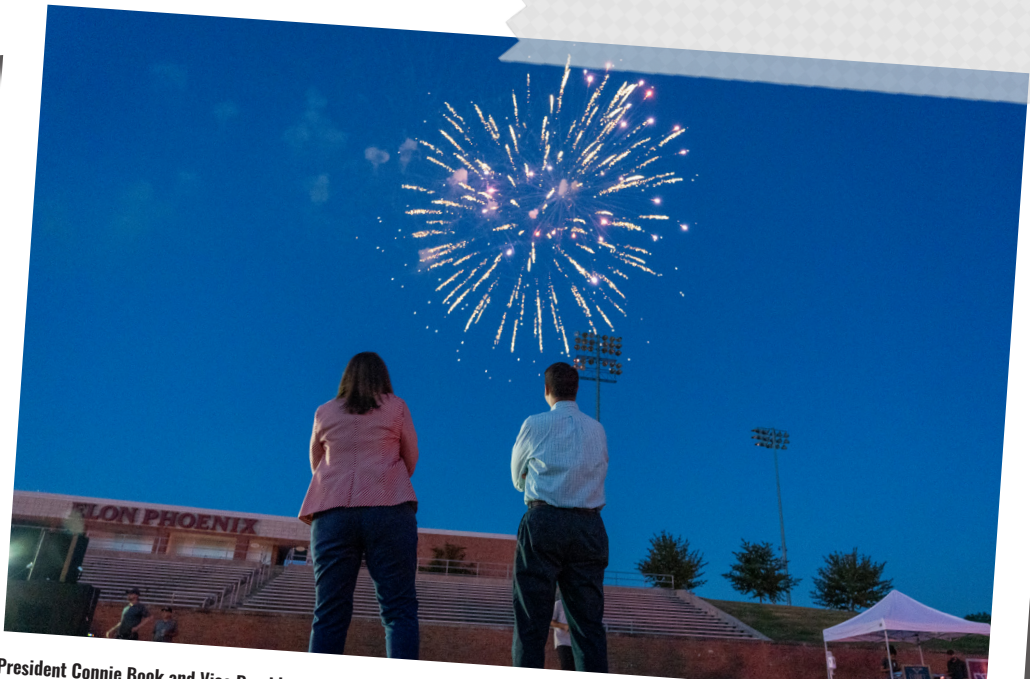
At Senior Celebration on May 19, Senior Class Giving Committee Communications Chair Jack Haley (left) and Co-Chair Ryan Vu (right) announced 616 senior donors made donations to 80 different funds, totaling \$50,040.
KYRA O'CONNOR | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Senior Lauren Memory holds her award for her research titled "They Told Us We Were Girls," which won Research Project of the Year at Lavender Graduation on May 7.
KYRA O'CONNOR | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A chalk board at Senior College Coffee on May 19 dedicated to special people at Elon University.



President Connie Book and Vice President for Student Life Jon Dooley watch fireworks over the Senior Celebration in Rhodes Stadium on May 19. The celebration was the first large, mask-less event Elon had this year.



President Connie Book presents diplomas to twelve graduates of Elon's Master of Arts in Higher Education program.



Graduating seniors pose in front of the 2021 sign at Senior Celebration on May 19.

Graduation Parking

Guests are asked to park at Schar Center only for the ceremony they are attending. After the first and second ceremonies, parking is needed for guests arriving for the next ceremony. No tailgating or full-day parking will be permitted. Accessible parking at Schar Center is first come, first served. In the event that the accessible parking areas fill, passenger drop-off will be used, and drivers will be directed to the nearest space. An accessible ramp is located at the east and west guest entrances. Guests who need assistance to reach the entrances and within Schar Center should bring a personal mobility device. There could be a walk of 100-200 feet or more to the entrance.

Schar Center Seating

In Schar Center, accessible seating is located on the concourse level. The event (stage) level of Schar Center will be closed for all guest seating. All areas of the event (stage) level will be secured for candidate check-in, ceremony staging and for the entire run of each ceremony. Those without guest tickets may watch the ceremonies online (on or off campus) at www.elon.edu/live or may gather, wearing a mask and physically distanced, in the following locations:

- Great Hall in the Global Neighborhood Commons
- Alumni Gymnasium in Koury Athletic Center

Security

Security officers will conduct bag checks when guests arrive at Schar Center. Items not allowed include:

- Weapons
- Explosives
- Alcoholic beverages
- Artificial noisemakers
- Food and beverages
- Smoking/tobacco products including e-cigarettes
- Umbrellas
- Containers or coolers
- Flags on poles
- Bicycles, skateboards or rollerblades
- Family pets

ADVICE FROM FACULTY



PAULA PATCH

Senior Lecturer in English

“Give yourself some slack — and I don’t necessarily mean this in terms of self-compassion. Rather, I mean build in more space than you need for everything: buy or rent LESS housing than you qualify for, drive a cheaper car than you can afford, live in a cheaper city, ask for more vacation time than you need, work fewer hours than you need to and, when you have kids, pay for more childcare than you need to. This way, you have money and time to spare or use and resources to stay afloat when the going gets tough. It’s always been true but only very apparent during the pandemic: The tighter things are, the more they are liable to break when stressed. Trust me: keep some slack in your line.”

T.J. BOWIE

Associate Director of Auxiliary Services

“Remember to stay in touch with the staff and faculty you have encountered during your time at Elon. We do this work to support you in your education and growth and love to get random updates of how you’re doing, where you landed and how our interactions may have helped you along the way.”



NAEEMAH CLARK

Professor of Cinema and Television Arts and Director of Assessment and Accreditation

“My biggest piece of advice is to save a little bit of money each paycheck. Do it automatically, and then promise yourself to not dip into it. That \$20 or \$50 a month adds up over time. Also, don’t put food, a night at the bar or non-work clothes on your credit card. Trust me. Those aren’t good investments in your future.”

CASEY DIRIENZO

Professor of Economics

“I think that an Elon education is a great privilege, and I encourage the seniors when they go out into the world to think about how they can use that privilege to make their world, whether it’s their society or their community, a better place. How they can leverage their education to make positive contributions.”



ADVICE FROM THE

SENIORS

Graduates of Elon’s class of 2021 give their final advice to undergraduates

RACHEL CIFARELLI

FORMER DESIGN CHIEF OF PHI PSI CL

“One piece of advice I have for underclassmen is to get to know the people around you. I’m about to graduate, and I’m still meeting awesome people I wish I’d met years ago. So don’t be afraid to reach out and spark a conversation with someone you want to know better.”



CHANDLER VAUGHAN

FORMER PRESIDENT OF ELON UNIVERSITY NPHC

“The first semester of my first year, I could’ve sworn I was going to transfer. I couldn’t find my niche, or as Residence Life would say, where I ‘bELONged.’ I tried to mirror my high school organizational involvement but quickly realized I had outgrown the version of myself that enjoyed those activities. However, I couldn’t understand why I wasn’t adjusting to my new environment.

If you’re reading this and can relate, know that you are here for a reason. No matter your year or age, we all have to experience a level of discomfort and uncertainty at some point in our journey, sometimes referred to as growing pains. Rest assured knowing that you will find your groove, your people and your purpose.

Start with setting priorities and ambitious goals for what you want to achieve while at Elon. Remember why you choose Elon in the first place! After evaluating your goals, locate the resources

and people on campus that can help you begin your journey to achieving those goals. Do you want to apply for a national fellowship that allows you to do research abroad? Contact the Fellowships Office. Have you ever thought about seeking counseling to deepen your relationship with yourself? Make an appointment with Counseling Services. Are you ready to take your financial health to the next level? Connect with the Center for Financial Literacy. Want to start a business? The Doherty Center has all the support!

Don’t let temporary negative feelings about a few experiences define your whole collegiate journey. There will be hard weeks, months and, sometimes, whole semesters, but always return to the bigger picture. You are here for a real purpose. You’d be doing yourself a disservice to let go of all that Elon has to offer just because you hit a few walls in certain spaces.”



RYAN VU

FORMER CO-CHAIR OF SENIOR CLASS GIVING COMMITTEE

“Take advantage of as many opportunities as possible during your time here, get out of your comfort zone and enjoy it: four years goes by quickly.”



TOP 10 ARTICLES

Multiple marchers arrested, pepper sprayed in Graham at march for voting rights and justice



GRAHAM — A MARCH to encourage people to vote in the 2020 general election started off peacefully until law enforcement asked the protesters to disperse and began pepper spraying the crowd of over a hundred people, including Alamance County residents, Elon University students and children.

The Alamance County Sheriff's Office confirmed that two Elon students were arrested at the "I Am Change Legacy March To the Polls" in downtown Graham. As of 6:45 p.m. both students have been released on a written promise that they will show up to court, according to the Sheriff's Office.

The Graham Police Department arrested eight people for different offenses including: resist, delay and obstruct, failure to disperse and one count of assault on a law enforcement officer.

Around 1 p.m. law enforcement used pepper spray to disperse the crowd that was gathered in front of the Alamance County courthouse. Five Elon News Network reporters were among those pepper sprayed.

Moments before the clash with

police, hundreds were kneeling in front of the courthouse, where a 30-foot tall Confederate monument stands. The site has been a center for controversy, but has seen increased tension from recent protests against racial injustice.

According to a statement from Graham PD, "a crowd control measure that consisted of spraying a pepper-based vapor onto the ground" was used after marchers were told to clear the road.

The department said "the assembly reached a level of conduct that led to the rally being deemed unsafe and unlawful by unified command."

Graham PD said that officers gave a five-minute warning on an order to disperse and then gave three subsequent warnings, which prompted them to use pepper spray when people did not disperse after the final warning.

The Alamance County Sheriff's Office and the Graham Police Department were both present at the scene. The organizer of the event, Rev. Gregory Drumwright, was detained and arrested following the order to disperse off the county courthouse property.

Pro-Trump parade drives through Elon University's campus



A PARADE OF ABOUT 200 vehicles supporting President Donald Trump's re-election campaign attended a rally at ACE Speedway and drove through the Elon University campus Saturday.

Many of the vehicles carried Trump 2020 flags as they drove along East Haggard Avenue during a nearly two hour parade route.

The convoy was organized by Gary Williamson through a Facebook event. Williamson is a member of Alamance County Taking Back Alamance County, ACTBAC, a neo-Confederate group previously designated as such by Southern Poverty Law Center . The parade began at ACE Speedway with approximately two hours of speakers, according to the event. At about noon, the caravan began driving around Alamance County and drove through the campus of Elon University.

ACE Speedway gained national attention over the summer for failing to adhere to orders from Gov. Roy Cooper on mass gathering limitations.

After driving through campus, the parade continued on University Drive and to other parts of Alamance County including the Confederate monument in Graham.

Multiple students crossed Haggard Avenue several times in an attempt to disrupt the parade. They were later asked to stop by town of Elon Police because they were impeding traffic, according to Lt. Lyle Anibal.

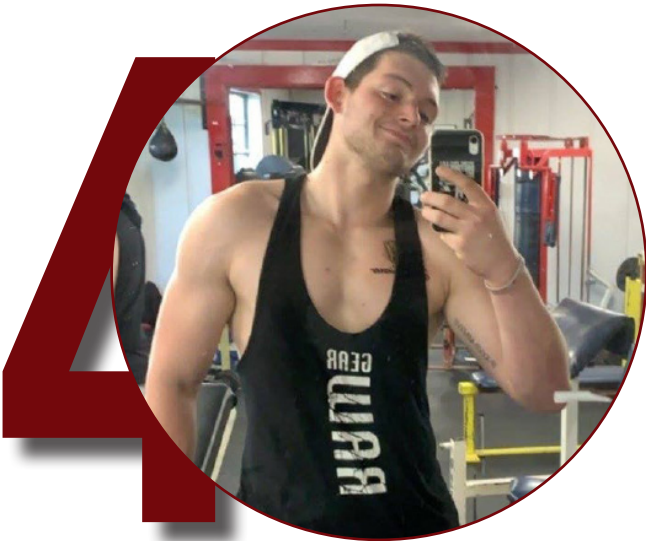
Alamance County, North Carolina election results



ELON NEWS NETWORK COVERED local state and national races in the 2020 election. Here are the races we followed:

- Alamance County Board of Commissioners
Bob Byrd, Dreama Caldwell, Kristen Powers, Bill Lashley Jr., John Paisley Jr. and Pamela Thompson
- North Carolina House of Representatives District 63
Ricky Hurtado vs. Stephen Ross
- North Carolina House of Representatives District 64
Eric Henry vs. Dennis Riddell
- North Carolina State Senate District 24
Amy Galey vs. JD Wooten
- North Carolina Governor
Roy Cooper vs. Dan Forest
- U.S. House of Representatives — NC District 13
Ted Budd vs. Scott Huffman
- U.S. Senate — North Carolina
Thom Tillis vs. Cal Cunningham

Elon student remembered as 'someone to rely on'



JAMES MARKLEY'S MOTHER MONTE remembers the thin smile that would stretch across his face as he told jokes and made silly faces and noises.

"Nice, goofy, good-hearted and cared about people, silly — he was a goofball," Monte said in remembrance of her son.

James, an Elon University sophomore, died at the age of 20 at his home in Burlington.

He was known for his athleticism and love of fitness. James was a Burlington resident and graduate of Western Alamance High School, where he played football.

He would go to the gym twice a day — once in the morning for himself and in the afternoon to train others. It was at the gym where he would often connect with others.

Josh Lim, an Elon senior, remembers James as "hard-working" from their time at the gym together.

"He knew his goals and always strived to overcome his limits. He never was the type to show off what he could do," Lim said. "We'd always hype each other up when we needed it, and I knew he was someone to rely on if I ever needed it."

James was majoring in adventure, health and physical education, and he was a member of club rugby. According to his mother, he wanted to pursue a career as a personal trainer — either in sports or rehabilitation.

OF THE YEAR

Elon School of Education has hosted ‘white caucus’ since fall, now faces backlash

Faculty motion regarding postmaster general passes

Where to vote early in Alamance County



ELON UNIVERSITY’S SCHOOL OF Education planned to host, for the second semester in a row, a “white caucus” for “white-identifying” education majors or minors. As of Feb. 10, the program has been canceled. The program, which had the goal to explore race and systemic oppression in education, comes after a summer of protests against racial injustice.

“White caucuses allow white-identifying allies to have these conversations in a way that does not burden or re-traumatize people of color,” an email sent about the program to School of Education students Tuesday reads. “White caucusing is one part of a lifelong and multifaceted commitment to antiracism for white-identifying people who are passionate about racial justice, and who want to begin taking concrete and direct action.”



ELON UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS VOTED in favor of a motion asking Postmaster General and Board of Trustee member Louis DeJoy to commit to improving the service provided by the United States Postal Service and absolve his personal conflict of interests or step down as trustee to the university at the Sept. 4 faculty meeting. Jeff Clark, professor of mathematics, proposed the motion.

“I move that the faculty of Elon University do hereby ask Trustee DeJoy to commit, through word and action, to improving the service provided to the entire nation by the USPS and to resolve his financial conflict of interests, or failing these actions, to step down as a trustee of Elon University given his conflicts with our espoused values,” Clark wrote in an email to faculty and staff Aug. 29.



ELON NEWS NETWORK HELPED make sure community members were aware of the times and locations of nearby early voting stations in Alamance County.

Elon University moves to Level 3 alert level

Elon students, others released from custody after being pepper sprayed during march

Elon University students concerned for safety after pro-Trump caravan



ELON UNIVERSITY IS MOVING to Level 3 — High Alert due to the increase of COVID-19 cases on campus, according to an email from Jeff Stein, chair of the Ready & Resilient committee.

Stein said the committee and the data analysis working group is responsible for making the decision to move levels.

This decision comes after the university moved to Level 2 just four days ago after an outbreak among student-athletes lead to the suspension of athletic practices.

Since the move to Level 2, 79 students have tested positive for COVID-19. As of Sept. 20, there are 88 active cases of the coronavirus, according to the university’s COVID-19 dashboard.

The move to high alert level has prompted the university to increase testing. According to the email, Cone Health’s mobile testing lab will be on campus today, conducting tests of 300 people who have had indirect contact with people who have tested positive.



GRAHAM — TWO ELON University students are out of police custody after being arrested during a march for voting rights and justice.

The event was civil until members of law enforcement began pepper spraying marchers. Members of the Alamance County Sheriff’s Office and Graham Police Department were present on scene.

Supporters of those arrested gathered outside of the Alamance County Detention Center in Graham chanting and clapping as the detainees were released one by one over the course of a few hours.

Elon junior Tim Olson attended the event and was arrested for failure to disperse.

“[The march] just kind of erupted into chaos. There was pushing and shoving but nothing violent,” Olson said.



SENIOR CAMERON MULLINS SAID their mom is concerned about them going out past 6 p.m. Mullins’ mom fears for their safety after a convoy of vehicles in support of President Trump drove through campus — with one person yelling “white power” and others profanities. Mullins said they no longer feel safe coming to campus or going out in the surrounding city of Burlington.

“I actually haven’t been on campus for a while. I’ve basically just transferred over to doing mostly online classes,” Mullins said. “I don’t even really feel safe going into Burlington, like I’m absolutely dreading going to get groceries because I don’t know if I can get back safely.”

It’s been one week since the convoy drove through campus, and many Elon University students are still feeling unsafe and are unhappy with Elon’s response.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

✈️ LOOK TO POST-GRADUATION FUTURE

Some graduating international students are unable to celebrate with their families due to pandemic travel restrictions

Graysen Shirley
Politics Editor | @graysenshirley

Senior Nikki Gupta has not seen her parents in almost two years. When she graduates, her parents, who moved to India from China last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, will not be able to attend. India is currently under lockdown due to a rise in cases of COVID-19.

Kristen Aquilino, director of International Student Services, said Gupta is one of many international students at Elon University who will not be able to celebrate with their families because of the pandemic.

“With the way travel has been, either flights have become incredibly expensive, or there are travel restrictions, or it’s simply not in everyone’s best interest to do so,” Aquilino said.

Despite not seeing her family for graduation, Gupta, a strategic communications and cinema and television arts double major, is looking forward to celebrating graduation with her best friend, senior Kelsey Manzano.

Manzano was Gupta’s roommate freshman year, and they have lived together for the past four years. Gupta has been able



COURTESY OF NIKKI GUPTA

Graduating senior Nikki Gupta stands in her maroon and gold graduation gown on Young Commons.

BY THE NUMBERS

445

international students were enrolled at Elon University in 2017-18 out of the 6,791 total student enrollment, according to the Elon University Fact Book.

463

international students were enrolled at Elon University in 2020-21 out of the 7,117 total student enrollment, according to the Elon University Fact Book.

“

I’VE ALWAYS ENJOYED VOLUNTEERING IN NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. DOING VOLUNTEER WORK AND HELPING PEOPLE, IT JUST BRINGS ME SO MUCH JOY TO BE ABLE TO KNOW THAT I’M HELPING MAKE SOMEONE’S LIFE, LIVES, BETTER.

THIDA KIM
CLASS OF 2021

graduation. Gupta said she and Manzano are planning to live together in Charlotte after graduation while they search for jobs. Gupta hopes to find a remote position working in the communications industry.

Thida Kim, a senior studying project management and human services studies, said although she will not be celebrating graduation with her family, she will return to her home country of Cambodia to work at an international school as a high school advisor.

“That is something I’ve been interested in doing for a while,” Kim said, “While studying here, I had been doing some internships, and some of them has involved me working with nonprofit organizations and helping students prepare for college, apply to college, find internships and stuff, and I enjoyed the work.”

Kim said the school she is planning to work at in Cambodia experienced a decrease in funding during the pandemic because of the school’s transition to online learning and lower tuition rates. Despite these challenges, Kim said she is looking forward to returning home and helping high school students in Cambodia.

“I’ve always enjoyed volunteering in nonprofit organizations,” Kim said. “Doing volunteer work and helping people, it just brings me so much joy to be able to know that I’m helping make someone’s life, lives, better.”

However, Kim said she will not be able to begin working until at least October because of the current outbreaks of COVID-19 in Cambodia. The country experienced a rapid rise in cases within the last month, according to the WHO, but cases are starting to fall.

“Not a lot of places are hiring, and even with the school I got a job at, they were like, ‘Oh you won’t be able to start work until probably October because right now there’s a big outbreak in Cambodia,’” Kim said.

Gupta said she hopes to one day return to China and reunite with her family.

“I still consider China my home, and I still have a soft spot for it,” Gupta said. “I still have an apartment in China, but my parents weren’t there. I’m just waiting to have a family reunion in China.”



COURTESY OF THIDA KIM

Graduating senior Thida Kim leans against a brick wall in her cap and gown in the Historic Neighborhood.



Lavender Graduation

HONORS ELON'S GRADUATING LGBTQIA STUDENTS



Students pose at the end of the Lavender Graduation ceremony, hosted by Elon's Gender and LGBTQIA+ Center, on May 7.

KYRA O'CONNOR | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Elon's LGBTQIA communities gather and celebrate 2021 graduates' accomplishments in person

Cate McCahill
Elon News Network

After over a year of limited opportunities for Elon's LGBTQIA communities to gather together, Lavender Graduation was held in person on May 7 to honor graduating LGBTQIA seniors and recognize their achievements and contributions to the university.

Elon is one of over 100 other campuses to host Lavender Graduation for seniors and other students, faculty and staff who have supported LGBTQIA identities, according to the Gender and LGBTQIA+ Center's website. Unlike previous years, only lavender graduates, professional staff and the staff of the GLC were in attendance to adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols.

Director of the GLC Luis Garay said the ceremony is an opportunity for lavender graduates to gather and reflect on their time at Elon.

"For these graduates, though they might've spent the last year and a half [during] COVID, they started their Elon journey building connections with folks in person," Garay said. "Lavender Graduation is an opportunity for those graduates to be in community, see each other in person and conclude their time at Elon in the way that they started it, trying to make it as much full-circle as possible."

Because of limited in-person attendance, the ceremony was also livestreamed. However, the link was not available to the entire Elon community, according to Garay.

"We're only going to be sharing the livestream with the graduates and LGBTQIA+ faculty and staff, but we're really going to leave it up to the graduates that they can decide whom that they want to invite and share that livestreaming link

with," Garay said.

Garay said it is especially important that Lavender Graduation was held in person this year.

"I think Lavender Graduation is going to be an important time, if not the first time, that the LGBTQIA+ graduating class has gathered in person and seen each other. It's exciting," Garay said.

Garay said the GLC had to get "creative" to plan Lavender Graduation so the community could safely gather together. To limit physical contact during the event, lavender graduates received their lavender caps, stoles and tassels ahead of time in reusable tote bags. In lieu of the pre-pandemic sit-down dinner, there was an outdoor reception following the ceremony at the Center for the Arts tent with to-go

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LUIS GARAY
DIRECTOR OF THE GLC

meals provided.

During the event, four Lavender Graduation awards were given out: Outstanding Graduate, Employee of the Year, Event or Initiative of the Year and Research Project of the Year.

Elon senior Riley Bradford, a nominee for the Outstanding Graduate award, said he looked forward to Lavender Graduation and "secretly wished" for the distinguished honor since his first year at Elon.

Bradford also said Lavender Graduation acknowledges the differences that come with identities and celebrates the accomplishments and shared life experiences of the LGBTQIA communities.

"Everyone who [goes] to Lavender Grad had the courage at some point, and maybe they haven't yet, but will have had the courage to say, at least to themselves, 'I am this, and I am proudly this, and this is who I am' and claim an identity," Bradford said. "I think being able to do that and then stand alongside other people that have had the struggle of doing that too, I think is really empowering."

Compared to Elon's collective commencement ceremonies, Bradford believes Lavender Graduation is more personal, as it signifies growth in identity during his time at the university.

"Lavender Grad, that's a ceremony that's just for me," Bradford said. "I think that's the difference is it lets me and so many people specifically reflect on, 'Hey, look at your four years here, look at where you were when you began, and look at where you are now. That's kind of amazing.'"

Garay said they are excited to provide LGBTQIA students with a Lavender Graduation ceremony that celebrates their four-year journeys.

"I hope that we're doing well by their graduates and giving them a space to celebrate and be in community with one another," Garay said. "I'm looking forward to just seeing them in that excitement, celebrating and being in spaces together. I think any space that has trans people, LGBTQIA+ students is really powerful."

- LAVENDER GRADUATION AWARDS
- Outstanding Graduates
 - Jubitza Figueroa
 - Kamal Lado
- Employees of the Year
 - Libby Coyner, archivist and assistant librarian, Belk Library
 - Brooke Lombardi, adjunct instructor, Department of Human Service Studies
- Event of the Year
 - "The Moment" by Kamal Lado
- Research Projects of the Year
 - "The Reclamation: Stories from the margins and the LGBTQIA+ communities in El Salvador" by Trinity Dixon
 - "They Told Us We Were Girls" by Lauren Memery

HOW WE'VE CHANGED IN FOUR YEARS

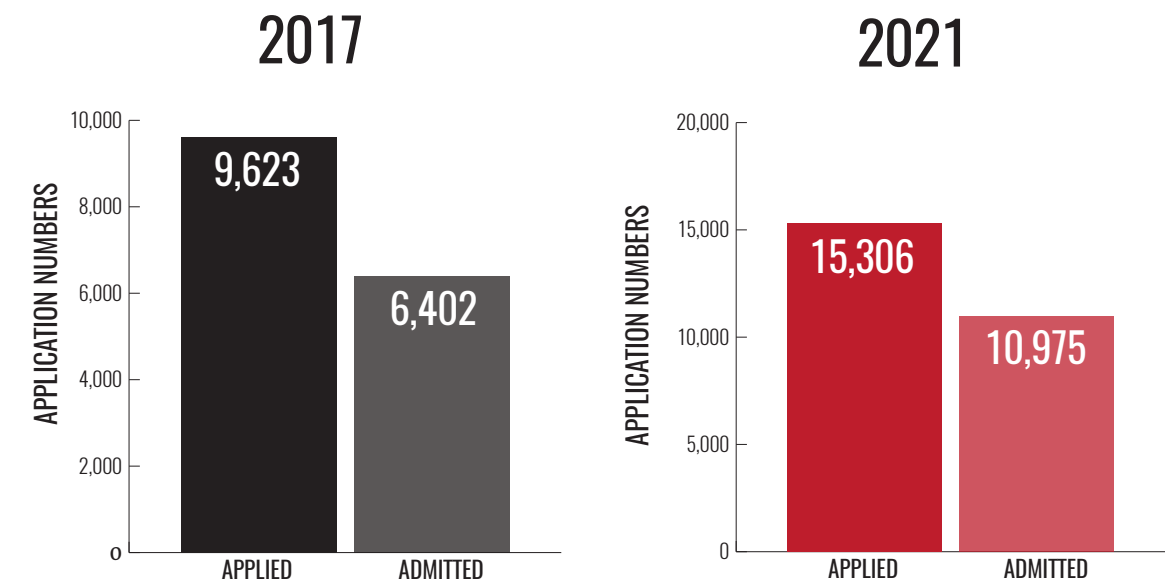
In the four years since they sat Under the Oaks for New Student Convocation in 2017, the class of 2021 have watched the Elon University community evolve. Between expansions on campus, fluctuating demographics and challenges brought on by a global pandemic, each semester of graduating seniors' Elon experience has brought its own changes, challenges and triumphs. This visual column studies the numbers from the annual Elon University Fact Book.

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UNDERGRADUATE TUITION & FEES



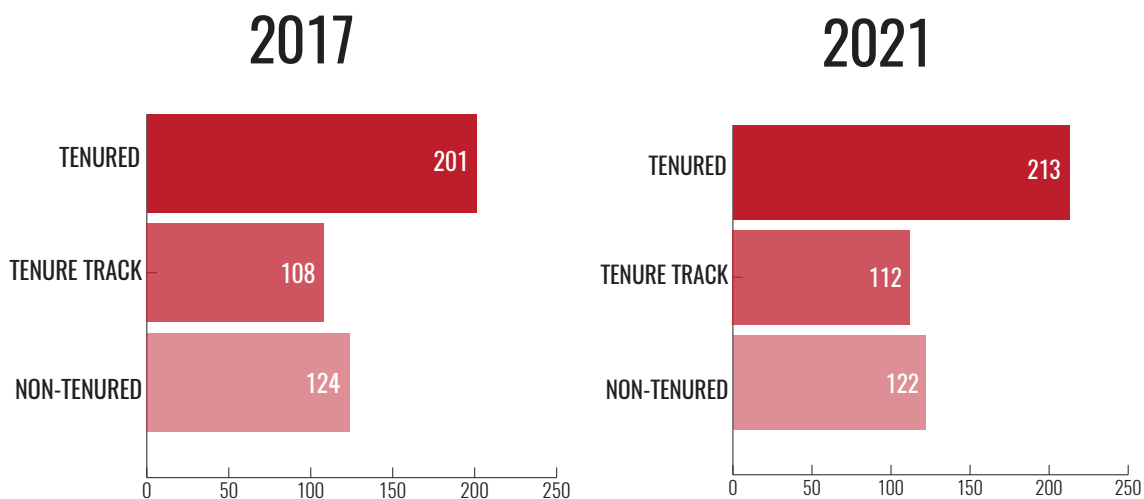
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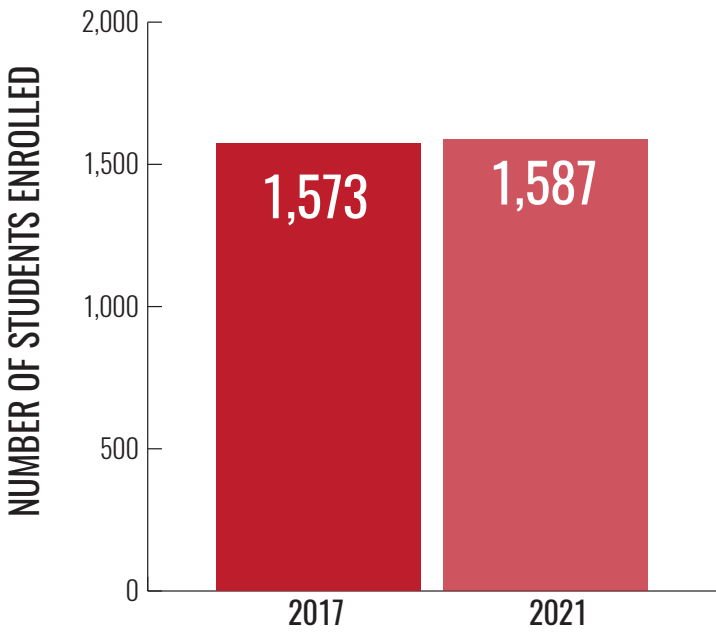
FULL-TIME FACULTY NUMBERS

	PROFESSOR	ASSOCIATE PROF.	ASSISTANT PROF.	INSTRUCTOR
2017	77	149	143	64
2021	87	150	150	60

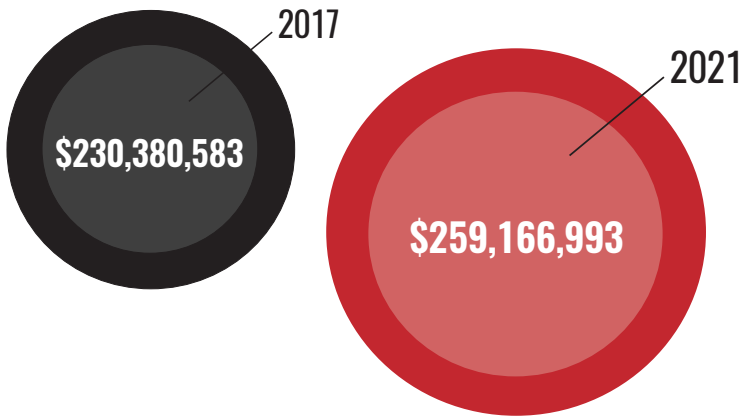
TENURED FACULTY NUMBERS



TOTAL FIRST-YEAR ENROLLMENT



UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENT



RACE/ETHNICITY NUMBERS

2017	
Asian American: 151	2 or more races: 195
African American: 329	Nonresident: 137
Hispanic American: 386	Unknown: 21
American Indian: 8	White: 4,817
Native Hawaiian: 1	
2021	
Asian American: 148	2 or more races: 181
African American: 358	Nonresident: 119
Hispanic American: 407	Unknown: 50
American Indian: 8	White: 5,020
Native Hawaiian: 0	

For more information on
Elon University statistics,
visit bit.ly/3f5xJ91
or scan the QR code.

