

# THE PENDULUM

ELONNEWSNETWORK.COM

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22, 2025 | ELON, NORTH CAROLINA

VOLUME 55, EDITION 1

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THE PENDULUM

A PUBLICATION OF  
ELON NEWS  
NETWORK

ESTABLISHED 1974 | VOLUME 55, EDITION 1

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broadcasts Monday at 6 p.m.

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CORRECTIONS

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



ETHAN WU | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

La Habana is one example of a campus event funded through student activity fees. Attendees gathered Sept. 20, 2024, at the Taphouse to enjoy a live DJ, Hispanic cuisine and dancing.

# Activity fees fund various organizations, campus events and traditions

Semester tuition includes \$146 fee toward student life

**Trista Panagakos**

Elon News Network

As students prepare for the 2025-26 academic year, they might notice a \$146 fee for student activities as part of their fall tuition bill. This fee is charged every semester to full time students, providing funding for different events, traditions and organizations on campus. Part time students are charged \$73 each semester.

Vice President of Student Life Jon Dooley described funds from student activity fees as being separated into three categories: student organizations, student traditions and administrative support for student activities.

The Student Government Association receives a large portion of the fee — \$440,000 annually. They allocate this money to various organizations and activities through funding requests.

Student organizations can submit funding requests through PhoenixConnect. These requests then move to SGA's finance board, which is made up of nine voting members and the Vice President of Finance Ian Brecker, who only votes if the board needs to break a tie. Together, they approve or deny funding requests from Elon's more than 250 student organizations.

Brecker's position is to act as a bridge between organizations who are requesting funding and the rest of the finance board. He leads finance board meetings by informing other members which organization is requesting funding, what it will be used for and how much it is.

"My position is really just to display what is being asked, why it's being asked and by who, and if it's a split vote, say that we have eight members, like one is absent at the time, then I am a voting member there, but only for a vote split," Brecker said.

Once a club submits a funding request, the finance board reviews the request, and if the request is greater than \$5,000 it is brought to the Senate to review and approve.

SGA's budget is divided into a quarterly system, with a budget cap of \$80,000 per quarter. Brecker said SGA distributes funds to organizations and campus events, and leaves some money in a reserve fund. He said the cap — which was introduced in the last academic year — leads to funds being distributed more equitably.

"We have to allocate that amount of



VIRGINIA VANCE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

From left to right, then-freshmen Althea Muldrew, Lauren Nesbit and Jack DeLucco chat before Elon Day bingo March 6.

money equitably to all the clubs via the size, the activity and via the event itself," Brecker said.

In addition to SGA, the Student Union Board, Student Media Board, Liberal Arts Forum and Elon Volunteers also receive funding from the student activity fee.

Elon News Network is overseen by the Student Media Board and receives part of its funding from the student activity fee.

Campus traditions also receive support through the activity fees. These include Late Night Elon, orientation programming, "Burst the Bubble" classes, Elon Day and Homecoming activities. However, established traditions aren't the only campus activities that receive support from the student activity fees.

"In that additional campus activity programming is residential neighborhood programs," Dooley said.

Campus wellness initiatives, such as Elon Outdoors, and inclusive excellence initiatives, such as the Ripple Conference, also receive funding from the activity fee. Other parts of the activity fee funding go to what Dooley describes as administrative support. This includes the upkeep and maintenance of the transportation fleet, as well as staffing for different events.

Dooley also provides information to the Student Life Committee about how the student activity fee is being used. The Student Life Committee is made up of students and faculty who oversee the bylaws of campus



KATRINA HOLTZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Then-sophomore Jas Jackson sings "Almost There" from "The Princess and The Frog" at a Student Union Board Karaoke Night on Sept. 19, 2024, in Irazú Coffee.

organizations and the rules and regulations concerning extracurriculars on campus.

"What I'll do is I'll just share with them every year here's what we're projecting for the student activity fee, and just a reminder, here's how we're allocating that," Dooley said.

Dooley said the cost of student activity fees can be changed by the Board of Trustees, if SGA requests a change. Student activity fees last changed in the 2018-2019 academic year, increasing from \$136 to \$146.



# Elon President discusses enrollment, campus wellness and growth



Elon News Network reporter Anjolina Fantaroni, right, interviews Elon University President Connie Book, left, on Aug. 18 in Powell Building.

VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Connie Book said Elon attracts more graduate, out-of-state students amid changes

**Anjolina Fantaroni**  
Elon News Network

Elon University President Connie Book sat down with Elon News Network to discuss enrollment, health and wellness initiatives and campus expansions.  
*This interview was edited for clarity.*

### Why did Elon University not reach its enrollment goal for 2025-2026?

We set ambitious goals, both for the undergraduate and the graduate programs. We far surpassed our goal. We have a growth of 25% in graduate students this year on the undergraduate side, because of the changes that started to occur with the new administration, the new presidential administration, and changes in public university funding.

Elon had to make a decision, and that was should we admit more students who would fall below our normal admission standard and make up the difference? Or should we just sit and hold out and say, ‘Look, you know, this year will be a little smaller.’ It’s not that dramatic, by the time you add our graduate students in. We made the decision just to hold and so we’re bringing in a really qualified great class, a very Elon-like class and we don’t think the competition is going to change.

We actually think this is kind of the new world of higher ed recruiting. So this summer, a group worked on updating some of the ways we approach our conversations with students who are trying to decide between a public institution like NC State. NC State was our number one competitor this year. Being able to offer our value proposition, the return on investment in attending Elon, and having such great outcomes from our graduates all across the country. Just to improve the way we talk about Elon, as people are considering a public choice or a private choice.

### How is Elon University battling the 2025-2026 demographics cliff?

So we have been preparing — this is coming. We have seen this coming, and that’s why you’re seeing more students from Colorado, from the Minneapolis area and Texas. And you can see it when you drive around campus on the license plates. We actually have students from South Dakota here, and that is an intentional recruiting extension farther west than we were. We have added lots of admissions outreach toward the west, and that’s all in response to the changing birth rates in the country.

We are also working very intentionally with international partners to grow international enrollment. We’ve been

adding international students as well here as part of that strategy. One thing that’s happening nationally is that we do have an upcoming birth rate decline of students headed to college, but generally fewer students are going to college. There is some debate out there about the return on investment, on paying for college, so we’re doing everything we can to combat rhetoric around that. The reality is — I always say — if you can excel, go to college, because the data is clear, it will benefit you and your family’s future for the rest of your life. There is a little bit of tension that even with fewer births and students going to college, you actually also have just people who are opting out of college.

### What should students look forward to with the building of HealthEU and new initiatives within the program?

I’m really excited about HealthEU, because the building is symbolic. It’s actually an integrated effort across our campus to put student well-being right at the center of an education. It will have very traditional things that you think of, like a workout space. It will also introduce students to a host of well-being initiatives that are part of the HealthEU initiative. Things like nutrition, outdoor education, financial literacy and how to build good social networks. These are the kinds of things that you want to make sure you have a toolkit in order to do.

### What sparked the idea to add neuroscience and digital content management as majors and will there be more added?

We had so many requests for neuroscience as a major, we had it as a very popular minor, so we knew we needed the major.

It’s an interdisciplinary degree, so you have faculty from biology, exercise science, and chemistry all working together to build that major.

They also approved a new degree in the School of Communications, which captures the world of influence and social media, so trying to provide a good education for pathways into that kind of employment.

In May, the faculty also approved a master’s degree in clinical mental health counseling. It’s a two-year degree. It’ll be offered here on the main campus and in Charlotte, beginning next fall. Many of our psychology students, but actually, public health and others go on to get a graduate degree in counseling. We’re really excited to be able to offer that for our students.

### How is the university adapting its strategic plan, Boldy Elon, to help students not just use artificial intelligence, but lead with it?

This is something at the heart of the Elon issue, right? It affects every major. It affects how we do business as an institution. It’s definitely a tool. Elon has distinguished

itself in higher education by writing the only undergraduate student guide to artificial intelligence, and in that, we just remind students about the human integrity, that it’s humans acting on it, so it’s really important that we act on it, using it as a tool with a lot of integrity, and that those values should drive how we use it. Otherwise it could be a dangerous tool.

### Are there any plans to expand Elon University’s Greek life on campus after adding Alpha Epsilon Phi just last semester?

We continue to have requests, which is really exciting. We’ve added Jewish, Latino and Asian fraternities and sororities. We take our lead from students and work to support them. Each of the organizations has different requirements, so when students come to us and they have a group interested in starting a new fraternity or sorority, we always work to support that — and sometimes that process can take two or three years — but we’re here to help, and we want to respond to the student interest.

### What is the goal that you’re looking forward to meeting this year?

We’re at the halfway point of Boldly Elon, and so much has changed. We adopted that two weeks before the pandemic hit, and we’ve had just a series of so much change. We need to prepare all of our systems to be able to respond to those swings.

We’re going to continue to be an undergraduate-focused institution, but I am excited about some of the new work we’re doing in the graduate student space. Now they can think, ‘Here is something I want to do at Elon.’ Our work on our national campus, of bringing Elon into these urban settings — like D.C. and New York and now Charlotte, L.A., like all of that — to me, is a really powerful way to extend the value of Elon University. I’m excited about that work too.

### What is your biggest piece of advice for the class of 2029 or any transfer students coming to Elon?

Research shows the three most important things that should happen to you in college are, one is that you find a sense of purpose. The second thing is that you figure out how to pay for your life, and that sometimes your pay is connected to a sense of purpose, but not necessarily. Some people have jobs, and then there’s their purpose-driven work is in the evening, and on the weekend, but purpose pays. And then the third thing is that you find who you’re going to partner with in life. The relationships you’re forming in college are the people who will be with you in the highs and lows of the rest of your life. It’s a good reminder. Those are the three essential things that are about to unfold for the class of 2029 and I want them to embrace that, but also know we’re here to support them, then our community will be here to help.



# Familiar faces across

## Student Life



ETHAN WU | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Jon Dooley, vice president of Student Life

Elon's Division of Student Life facilitates a wide range of events and initiatives for the university community, including College Coffee and Take a Student to Lunch.

## Elon Dining



ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Cora Johnson, Elon Dining employee

Elon Dining has three dining halls and a variety of retail locations across campus where students can use their meal swipes, meal and food dollars.

## Town Council



NIA BEDARD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Emily Sharpe, town of Elon mayor

Elon's town council consists of six elected officials and manages local initiatives and policies, including town events and noise ordinances.

## The Oak House



ETHAN WU | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Phil Smith, The Oak House owner

A popular coffee shop, bar and study spot in downtown Elon, The Oak House is open seven days a week during the academic year.



# oss town, campus

## Campus Safety & Police



ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Joe LeMire, chief of Campus Safety & Police

Lock-outs and parking permits are some common reasons students might contact Campus Safety & Police.

## Carol Grotnes Belk Library



FIONA MCALLISTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Brian Mathews, dean of Belk Library

Home to both research materials and recreational reads, Belk Library has a variety of print and digital resources.

## Farmer's Market



ETHAN WU | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

### Sarah Bass, Elon Farmer's Market manager

An array of vendors offer fresh produce, baked goods, and more at the Farmer's Market, which runs from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays through Oct. 31 in the Elon Community Church parking lot.

See more people to know  
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# Incoming students make Elon a ‘different town’ each year after quiet summers

Town of Elon mayor encourages new students to settle into ‘second home’

Alex Nettles  
Elon News Network

As summer comes to a close in the Town of Elon, migratory freshmen will burst into town with new rooms and new questions. Town of Elon Mayor Emily Sharpe witnessed the seasonal turning of the student population since 2021. She said she has hopes for the new Elon students to plant roots here.

Many students go four years without really interacting with the town, Sharpe said. Her daughter romps restlessly around a chair in the Town Hall Annex on North Williamson Avenue. The town is quiet. Downtown is washed with rain, empty before the student rush.

“I think it is easy to come here and think, ‘Oh, it’s just little Elon.’ But if you don’t care about this you won’t make this your home. You won’t see all of the opportunity that is here,” Sharpe said.

As the class of 2029 rolls in, Sharpe said students could improve their time at Elon by getting involved beyond campus.

She also said she wants students to know she wants to get more involved with helping their organizations. Sharpe mentioned that Elon students work on the town’s Sustainability Committee and the Skatepark Steering Committee, as well as interning

for the Town Council. Many Elon students are also babysitters, Sharpe said. This helps them gain ties to the local community that often slip by.

“Some students become like members of our family, and some who were babysitters and have graduated and have moved on are still very close,” Sharpe said.

Sharpe said learning to love a town starts with a commitment to live there. At first, she didn’t feel the urge to live at Elon, then she started to love it here. Now, Sharpe said she can’t imagine living anywhere else.

Building relationships with the surrounding community is a way for new students to see Elon as a “second home,” Sharpe said.

Being a small town mayor is not a full-time position in the town of Elon, but the position of being Emily Sharpe is a full-time job. Sharpe works as the wellness program director at a financial services organization. She balances her time between Charlotte, Elon and her daughter.

“A lot of times people will say, ‘How do you do it all?’ The answer is that I don’t,” Sharpe said. “I’m going to have to miss part of her school event this evening because I have a meeting.”

Sharpe’s daughter ran around and to duck and whisper in her ear, urging her to mention Taylor Swift. As summer closes and families drop their students off at Elon for move-in, Sharpe will also have to drop off her child at school.

Sharpe said she understands the



Traffic is light in downtown Elon on Aug. 19. Elon Mayor Emily Sharpe said she is excited to see students back on campus and around town again.

FIONA MCALLISTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

shock of moving somewhere new. She is from Gallipolis, Ohio, and spent some of her professional life in Charlotte. Elon University’s class of 2028 data shows 21% of students are from North Carolina and an equal 21% of students from the more densely populated Massachusetts and New Jersey. Class of 2029 data is not available yet, as of Aug. 19.

“I think that when people move here from a city, it’s easy to see or maybe feel like there’s nothing to do,” Sharpe said, “but I always tell people that we are a small town with big city amenities.”

While she runs unopposed this election cycle, Sharpe said some students aren’t aware that Elon even has a mayor. Sharpe said she wants students and newcomers to know Elon is unlike a common outside perspective of a small town. It has a population of 11,282 and, according to Sharpe, a permanent

group of educated high earners. Sharpe said Elon does not follow the misconception that a “small town is small minded.”

“It’s quiet. I understand why a young, single professional may find it a little too quiet. It’s a great place to raise a family, it’s safe,” Sharpe said.

As students are moving in for the fall, the town will change. Sharpe mentioned that Elon becomes a “different town” for a couple of months each fall. The town of Elon will always be a college town, Sharpe said.

It was still raining outside the Town Hall Annex and her daughter now sat quietly in a chair with her head on the table. Sharpe looked out the window and said she is excited to see the students hugging on the sidewalks after not seeing each other all summer.

“It’s like a day when the sun comes out after a day of rain. It just feels fresh. It’s exciting,” Sharpe said.

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# ‘First Gen’ memoir inspires class of 2029 to share first-generation college stories

Common reading book centers first-gen stories, opens dialogue on identity and belonging

Liya Rike  
Elon News Network

Every year, Elon University picks one book to help incoming students start important conversations. This year’s pick is “First Gen: a memoir” by Alejandra Campoverdi — and it’s already got people talking.

The book, chosen as part of Elon’s Common Reading Program, dives into Campoverdi’s experience as a first-generation college student. She writes about identity, family expectations and the pressure of being the “first and only” in spaces that weren’t made for her. Associate Director of First-Year Initiatives Paula Patch is the chair of the Common Reading Committee, and said she believes the book is helping freshman students think differently about what it means to start something new.

“We all recognized that it was a great opportunity to highlight the important work of the Center for Access and Success, and of the first-gen student services, and to make sure people are aware that we have a lot of first gen students on our campus, and we have a lot of first gen faculty and staff, and to celebrate that population,” said Patch.

The Common Reading Program is part of Elon’s First-Year Experience, which aims to help students feel connected and supported from the moment they arrive on campus. The program brings together students, professors, advisors and staff around a shared story to spark conversation.

Each year, the committee in charge of selecting the book reviews a list of recommendations. They’re not just picking a light summer read, they’re choosing something they think will matter to students.

“We just look at a broad range of books and then figure out which one seems to make the most sense for the campus community, and particularly the incoming students at any given time,” Patch said.

Kenneth Brown Jr., assistant director of First-Generation Student Support Services, said the book’s selection was both meaningful and long anticipated. He works directly with Elon’s first-gen student population and said he sees the challenges they face every day.

“My first reaction was excitement,” Brown said. “Excitement that ‘First Gen’ was selected as a book and excited for this population of students on campus to be a little more elevated in the spotlight and just more awareness about some of their experiences.”

Brown said he believes the book doesn’t just describe the pressure of being the first in your family to go to college. It also reveals how deeply personal that journey is, especially

when family dynamics, culture and financial stress intersect.

“Alejandra talks about being a trailblazer, and both the negatives and the positives of it. Connecting to this idea of being the first person to kind of set that bar when they didn’t have much guidance to help them along,” Brown said. “There can be some kind of unspoken expectations, or spoken expectations, which can cause a student to maybe not reach full potential. It just adds a lot of weight to their experience.”

Committee members and staff emphasized that all students can find something to connect with in Campoverdi’s memoir. Patch believes the emotions in the book — self-doubt, pressure, feeling out of place — are things most students feel at some point.

“Even students who aren’t first gen will be surprised that there’s something in there that they recognize,” Patch said. “They’ll be expecting something difficult or more like a textbook. And I think they’ll be surprised that, no, we can also take seriously someone’s life and lived experience.”

Brandy Propst, director of Elon 1010, assistant director of academic advising and another member of the selection committee, said the book works well in freshmen courses because it opens the door for honest conversations not just about academics, but about students’ real lives.

Propst first discovered the book while attending a student affairs conference, where Campoverdi was the closing speaker. Propst said she was so moved by her story that she pushed to add the book to Elon’s consideration list, even though the official deadline had already passed.

“I got emotional in the audience when she talked about the breakaway guilt,” Propst said. “It hit me when she said it, because I never thought about it that way. It was just something that was a lived experience but never had a name.”

Breakaway guilt is the feeling of leaving family or community behind while pursuing new opportunities, a pressure that many first-generation students may experience when they step into spaces that their loved ones have not.

Patch also connected with the book on a personal level. She describes herself as “semi first-gen” and said parts of Campoverdi’s story brought back powerful memories from her own life. Patch said she calls herself “semi first-gen” because one of her parents finished college later in life as a nontraditional student while the other earned only a high school diploma.

“I identified a lot with her experience. There were moments when I would read her descriptions, and it wasn’t so much about going to college. It’s about just forming your identity,” Patch said. “I would read things and have to put it down. I was very moved. Almost like I wanted to cry, because I was like, ‘That feels like I could have written that.’”



SARAH T. MOORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Each year, Elon University’s Common Reading Committee picks one book to help incoming students start important conversations. This year’s Common Reading book is Alejandra Campoverdi’s “First Gen: A Memoir.”

Students can access a digital copy in the “Welcome” module of the “An Introduction to the 2025-2026 Common Reading” course on Moodle.

In addition to being available through Moodle, the book will be discussed in orientation sessions and is encouraged for use in Elon 1010 classes. Peer educators and instructors are being encouraged to support discussions by telling their own stories, according to Propst.

“Sharing your stories helps students understand, like, ‘Hey, I know that these are things that you may be struggling with,’” Propst said. “Here are some things that worked for me.”

Brown said creating safe spaces where students feel seen and heard is one of the most important goals of his office and of the book.

“Creating spaces where first gen students

can talk about, ‘This is how I’m feeling about this. This is what I’m experiencing.’ And that’s important,” Brown said.

Campoverdi is expected to visit Elon on Sept. 18 for a campus talk and Q&A with students. Members of the faculty and staff said they’re excited to welcome her and even more excited to keep the conversations going.

“Most people can find something in there that will help them feel like they aren’t alone,” Patch said, “and that there are ways that they can then navigate that experience.”

Brown said this year’s Common Reading book will help spark conversations and personal reflections on the college journey.

“Your diploma doesn’t mean anything if you didn’t do anything in between the time you came to Elon and the time you graduate,” he said. “‘First Gen’ helps us all think about that journey.”

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# Freshman football players embrace life at Elon

VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Freshman defensive back Tyler Hart, no. 24, lines up across from redshirt freshman wide receiver Cord Yates, no. 83, during practice Aug. 18.

Players describe preparation for opening game, expectations for upcoming semester

**Benjamin Berfield**  
Elon News Network

As the Elon University football team prepares for its season opener against Duke on Aug. 28, freshman athletes are starting to navigate life on the team as well as the campus. Defensive back Tyler Hart and offensive lineman Sean Tanner arrived at training camp with different expectations, but they are each beginning to get a sense of not only being on the team, but students at Elon.

For Hart, his first experience with the football team actually came before the summer. Since he graduated high school in December, he began participating in team activities starting this January.

Hart said offseason segments such as spring ball — a period of scrimmages that occur outside the season — were helpful in becoming accustomed to the faster pace of college football.

“When I came here in January, I knew it was gonna be high intensity,” Hart said. “I used spring ball to help me get used to it.”

Those practices have also given Hart the opportunity to study the playbook. He said he knows what his assignments are, and that now it’s just a matter of executing his responsibilities whenever he’s on the field.

“It’s just time to know stuff such as down and distance, and when I should play up or drop back,” Hart said. “It’s knowing things like that within the game.”

Meanwhile, Tanner’s Elon experience started during summer, like most freshman athletes playing a fall sport. He said there were mixed emotions when he arrived on Elon’s campus for the first time.

This was Tanner’s first time in a whole new area away from his home in Red Lion, Pennsylvania. He said it felt strange to be in a brand new setting, but has since started to welcome his new surroundings.

“I was really excited, but I was also really nervous,” Tanner said. “It’s the first time living on my own, but I have embraced it. The people are very nice.”

While both players may have initially started at different times, one thing that surprised them both is the schedule surrounding team activities. Hart and Tanner each said they didn’t expect there to be a high number of different team periods, but have been impressed by the amount of structure that’s involved.

“It’s definitely more organized than when I was in high school,” Tanner said. “You have workouts at a certain time and then after that, you go to your event, and then there’s meetings. If you give me a choice to have an organized schedule, I’m gonna do it.”

Another common experience each player shares involves getting to know teammates whether they are freshman or upperclassmen.

Hart said he immediately felt accepted by most of the veterans when he first arrived in January, and credited them for helping him get up to speed.

“When I got here in January, the players welcomed me as one of their little birds,” Hart said. “They were teaching me the playbook, helping me out, and even showing me around campus. I’ve also hung out with a lot of freshmen after a few of the practices. It’s been



VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Freshman offensive line Sean Tanner, no. 68, participates in team drills Aug. 18 on the practice field.

good.”

Tanner said he lives on the same floor with two other freshmen on the team, including his roommate. He enjoys getting to interact with them on a regular basis even when the team isn’t practicing.

“My roommate is a freshman offensive lineman and the other freshman is right down the hall from me,” Tanner said. “We always pop in each other’s rooms just to say hi and mess around with each other. We’ve really been getting along.”

With the season opener on the horizon, Hart and Tanner are looking to be prepared for any time that the team will need one of them to step in.

“You never know when your number will be called,” Hart said. “I just gotta stay ready because you don’t know when your teammates are gonna be counting on you to make a play.”

The only thing that’s closer to starting than the season is fall term on Aug. 22. Both players said they are anticipating a fun start to their first college semester. Not only are they excited for their first college gameday, but they’re looking forward to their first semester at Elon.

“I’m just looking forward to friends and just the campus life,” Hart said. “Some of my teammates were telling me how it’s different in the fall, so I’m just excited to see how it is.”

## Elon fall sports Coastal Athletic Association preseason rankings

### Football

Elon is projected to finish eighth out of 14 CAA teams.

### Men’s soccer

Elon is projected to finish first in CAA South Division.

### Women’s soccer

Elon is projected to finish first in the South Division.

### Volleyball

Elon is projected to finish eighth out of 11 CAA teams.

The Coastal Athletic Association’s preseason polls indicate season favorites, as voted on by the league’s head coaches, according to the CAA website.