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THE PENDULUM



COURTESY OF SPECTRUM NEWS 1

“When is it going to end?”

From help wanted to helping existing employees, some Alamance County employers still feel the effects of the pandemic on their workforce two years into the pandemic

Kyra O'Connor | Executive Director | @ko_reports

WHEN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC first began, many employers faced supply chain shortages on personal protection equipment. Businesses had to close doors due to countrywide shutdowns. Staffing shortages plagued nearly every industry. Now, two years into the pandemic, some Alamance County employers only have one question: “We have worked throughout the two years to do what we can to maintain morale, and never dreaming along the

way that two years in we’d still be sorting through all this,” President of Twin Lakes retirement community in Burlington Pamela Fox said. “When’s it going to end?” From the town of Elon government to new businesses like local grocery store Carolina Sundries, not being able to find people to fill positions is a challenge exacerbated by the pandemic. Co-owner of Carolina Sundries Emily Lewis, a local grocery store that opened in downtown Burlington in January, said

the pandemic has impacted many aspects of their business — from supply chain shortages to a lack of candidates for open positions. Carolina Sundries offers wages starting at \$12 an hour — \$4.75 more an hour than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 — and markets open positions on Indeed and Facebook, but Lewis said candidates are few and far between.

See **STAFFING** | pg. 6

Student employee wages increase by \$1 per hour

The change will take place starting Feb. 12; supervisors can also elect to increase wages by 25 cents

Kyra O'Connor and Avery Sloan
Elon News Network

Starting Feb. 12, over 1,000 Elon University student employees will earn \$1 more per hour. The change comes two years after the hiring freeze that the university put in place due to the coronavirus pandemic, which did not allow for any student wage increases. According to an email from Human Resources Coordinator Donna Boggs, the \$1 wage increase will happen automatically

effective Feb. 12, which is the next student payroll period. Student employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis. Students are also eligible for a wage increase by 25 cents per hour if the student has worked in the same position or department for at least two semesters, prior to this spring semester. Requests for a 25 cent per hour increase are made by supervisors and must be requested before March 4. Rene Jackson, director of the PACE program, said students and supervisors felt disappointed not having the ability to receive or request a wage increase for the past three semesters, and she is excited for the opportunity to be available.

See **WAGES** | pg. 6



NYAH PHENGSIITHY | MANAGING EDITOR

Junior Radhika Tawade explores the SPDC’s website available to students. The SPDC is located on the first floor of the Moseley Center.



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Elon police chief tells goals for town and university



LIFESTYLE • PAGE 8
Work on the upcoming Into the Woods goes backstage



SPORTS • PAGE 11
Elon football players prepare to enter NFL draft

THE PENDULUM

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Elon News Network is a daily news organization that includes a newspaper, website, broadcasts and podcasts. Letters to the editor are welcome and should be typed, signed and emailed to enn@elon.edu as Word documents. ENN reserves the right to edit obscene and potentially libelous material. Lengthy letters may be trimmed to fit. All submissions become the property of ENN and will not be returned.

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EDITORIAL POLICY:

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

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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

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

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ENN Radio Podcast
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CORRECTIONS

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

February is Black History Month

The CREDE's theme for Black History Month 2022 is "A Black Joy Love Letter," and focuses on subthemes of love, joy and resistance.

FEB. 3, 10, 17, 24

Womanist Wisdoms on Black Joy

When: 6 p.m.
Host: CREDE
Location: Virtual via Zoom
Week 1: Radical Subjectivity as Black Joy
Week 2: Traditional Communalism as Black Joy
Week 3: Redemptive Self-Love as Black Joy
Week 4: Critical Engagement as Black Joy

FEB. 11, 12

SUBCinema: "Black Panther"

When: Friday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.
Host: Student Union Board
Location: Turner Theatre
Before the 8 p.m. showing of Black Panther on Friday, Feb. 11, there will be a Kahoot about Black History Month, prizes will be given out to winners.

FEB. 16

NPHC Panel

When: 6 p.m.
Hosts: Fraternity and Sorority Life and CREDE
Location: Moseley 215
Description: Information session about The Divine Nine and Multicultural organizations on campus.

FEB. 17

Film Screening: "Two Gods"

When: 5:30 p.m.
Hosts: Center for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society, CREDE and Muslim Life at Elon
Location: Turner Theatre
Description: This documentary features a Muslim casket maker and ritual body washer in Newark, NJ who takes two young men under his wing to teach them how to live better lives.

FEB. 18, 19

SUBCinema: "Queen & Slim"

When: 8 p.m.
Host: Student Union Board
Location: Turner Theatre
Description: SUBCinema will be playing movies that are relevant to Black History Month. Each movie is played on Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.

FEB. 22

Black History Month Dance Concert

When: 7 p.m.
Hosts: Department of Performing Arts, CREDE
Location: Turner Theatre
Description: Elon's Department of Performing Arts will do a screening of their Black History Month performance.

FEB. 23

Black Table Talk: Black Joy

When: 12 - 2 p.m.
Host: CREDE
Location: Moseley 217
Description: This is an opportunity for the Black student population to enter into a space and embrace the love for themselves and their community. A moment to reflect in a safe space, express a sense of joy and fulfill one's cup and passion.

FEB. 23

High on the Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America

When: 5 p.m.
Hosts: Office of Sustainability for Education and Outreach, CREDE
Location: Turner Theatre
Description: A joyful exploration of the rich history of Black heritage cooking and how it has influenced American cuisine.

FEB. 25

Black Solidarity Day: A Black Joy Love Letter

When: 12 - 8 p.m.
Hosts: CREDE, Black Student Union
Location: Moseley Student Center
Description: The Black Solidarity Conference aims to unite Black-identifying students, faculty and staff by providing an avenue through which Black identity, Black intersectionality and building solidarity are explored.

FEB. 25, 26

SUBCinema: "Just Mercy"

When: 8 p.m.
Host: Student Union Board
Location: Turner Theatre
Description: SUBCinema will be playing movies that are relevant to Black History Month. Each movie is played on Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m.



Darius Burford scores against William & Mary on Jan. 27. He would finish with eight points, four rebounds and one takeaway. The Phoenix beat the Tribe 61-54.

LUCAS CASEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Amber Smith, dressed as Snow White, interacts with children during the Princess Day parade in the Schar Center at Elon University, set during halftime of the Elon women's basketball game against Delaware University on Jan. 30.

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Elon senior Brie Perpignan (0) dribbles the ball during the first half of the game against Delaware. Elon lost the Jan. 30 game 65-87.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR



Students and faculty gather at Phi Beta Kappa Commons for the first College Coffee of the spring semester on Feb. 1.

ABBY REED | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



The Elon community gathered to commemorate Elon staff member Brent Smith, who passed away last October, at his memorial bench dedication ceremony held on Feb. 1.

ERIN MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon police chief shares goals for town and university



Town of Elon Chief of Police Kelly Blackwelder stands outside police station as Elon students walk to class.

EVERY SLOAN | POLITICS EDITOR

Police hope to increase understanding with Elon community, within the town and on campus

Avery Sloan
Politics Editor | @averysloan

The relationship between Elon University and the town of Elon has been strained for many years, according to the town of Elon Police Chief Kelly Blackwelder; Blackwelder said this is due to a difference in priorities and a lack of communication. Thus, she said her main goals as police chief are to further the neighborhood coalition and attend more student-run events. These goals have helped to begin to improve the relationship between the town and the university, yet Blackwelder would still consider this to be a work in progress.

“We’ve tried to shift gears and bring those together that want to,” Blackwelder said. “Instead of talking about change, actually identify what needs to change.”

Neighborhood Coalition

The neighborhood coalition combines the police department, students, full-time residents, landlords and university officials. This coalition is a committee that meets and has met for the last 10 to 12 years according to Blackwelder. Yet, as a part of her new goals Blackwelder has restructured this group within the last year to be more action-based. Instead of being a place for residents to air resentment, these meetings, which occur on a monthly basis, now have become more about giving Elon students and full time residents a place to be heard — as well as a place for town officials to grow their perspective.

“When you’ve had an issue going on in town for 16-17 years ... a year’s worth of monthly meetings probably isn’t going to have a tremendous impact. But I can see people’s attitudes and the way they’re approaching this committee changing,” Blackwelder said.

According to Blackwelder, there are generally two or three consistent students who attend meetings that represent Elon students. She said this has led to a greater understanding of students’ priorities and hopes this will lead to even more students feeling like they are a part of the Elon community, which is the key to helping relations between the town and students.

“Getting the students who are here part-time, and may not be permanent residents, getting them to feel a sense of pride in their community and a sense of belonging to the community,” Blackwelder said.

While Blackwelder feels the newly revamped neighborhood coalition is helping improve relations between the town and the university

of Elon, having more opportunities for dialogue between the town and the police is something that resident adviser and School of Communications Senator Nadine Jose said she feels is missing.

Jose said she hopes to see more opportunities for students to meet with the town of Elon police outside of something like a weekly town hall meeting, which many Elon students would not have time to attend.

“I feel like there are a lot of impassioned people and there are a lot of people who care about this, but I think oftentimes it’s the same people talking to the town of Elon police and campus police,” Jose said.

On-campus events, presence

In an effort to make sure that students’ first interactions with the Elon police is not confrontational, the Elon police has started going to student organization events with the purpose of being a friendly face, according to Blackwelder.

Nyah Britt, the vice president of community outreach and activism for the Black Student Union, has worked this year to build relations between students of color and campus police. Part of building this community has included Elon University Police Chief Joseph LeMire attending BSU events.

“We had a police panel and it was an opportunity to ask campus police, ‘what are their goals on campus?’” Britt said. “Just to show that they’re willing to have those conversations and that they’re listening.”

Britt has also been working with LeMire and other members of the town of Elon police to create more events, such as Coffee With A Cop.

The idea of an increased police presence at Elon is something that the town of Elon police are working to do, according to Blackwelder. However, Jose said she has mixed feelings about this.

According to Jose, an issue with increasing the town of Elon police presence is that while it could lead some to feeling more acclimated with the police, it can also make others feel immediately uncomfortable.

“I don’t really think campus police needs to, especially if they’re just talking about presence, come into offices with guns like that. If you’re walking into LaRose Commons at like nine in

the morning with guns on your holster, it just scares me personally,” Jose said.

Betsy Polk, director of Jewish life and acting associate chaplain, said Hillel has maintained a good relationship with campus police, and their presence has been appreciated.

According to Polk, LeMire in particular has been helpful in supporting Elon’s Jewish students. This support was particularly helpful after the recent hostage crisis situation in Texas, with four congregants taken from Beth Israel synagogue and released after an all day stand off. Polk said he sent out a letter to families showing his support, as well as offered to patrol near and support Hillel and Jewish families however he can.

“The recent event certainly made us, as we already are, all more aware of the need for security and safety ... I will say that I reached out to Chief LeMire and he was very responsive,” Polk said.

Polk also talked about the police presence at Hillel and how despite having a positive relationship with Chief LeMire, she is aware not all students share the same feeling towards police in general. In response, she feels having students build relationships with the police department is the best course of action, allowing students to have interactions with the police outside of a negative context.

“I’m not going to minimize the experience that I know some students have had or the feelings that they have,” Polk said. “We’re fortunate to have a police chief who I think is sensitive to those issues as well.”

While two of Blackwelder’s main goals are developing the neighborhood coalition and increasing police presence on Elon’s campus, she said that she is open to and enjoys suggestions from students on what else the police can focus on.

“If there’s something that the student body would like to see in their town police department — programs or interactions — reach out and let us know,” Blackwelder said. “We’re open to trying to build relationships in any way we can.”

The best ways Blackwelder can be reached are kblackwelder@elon.gov or 336-584-1301.

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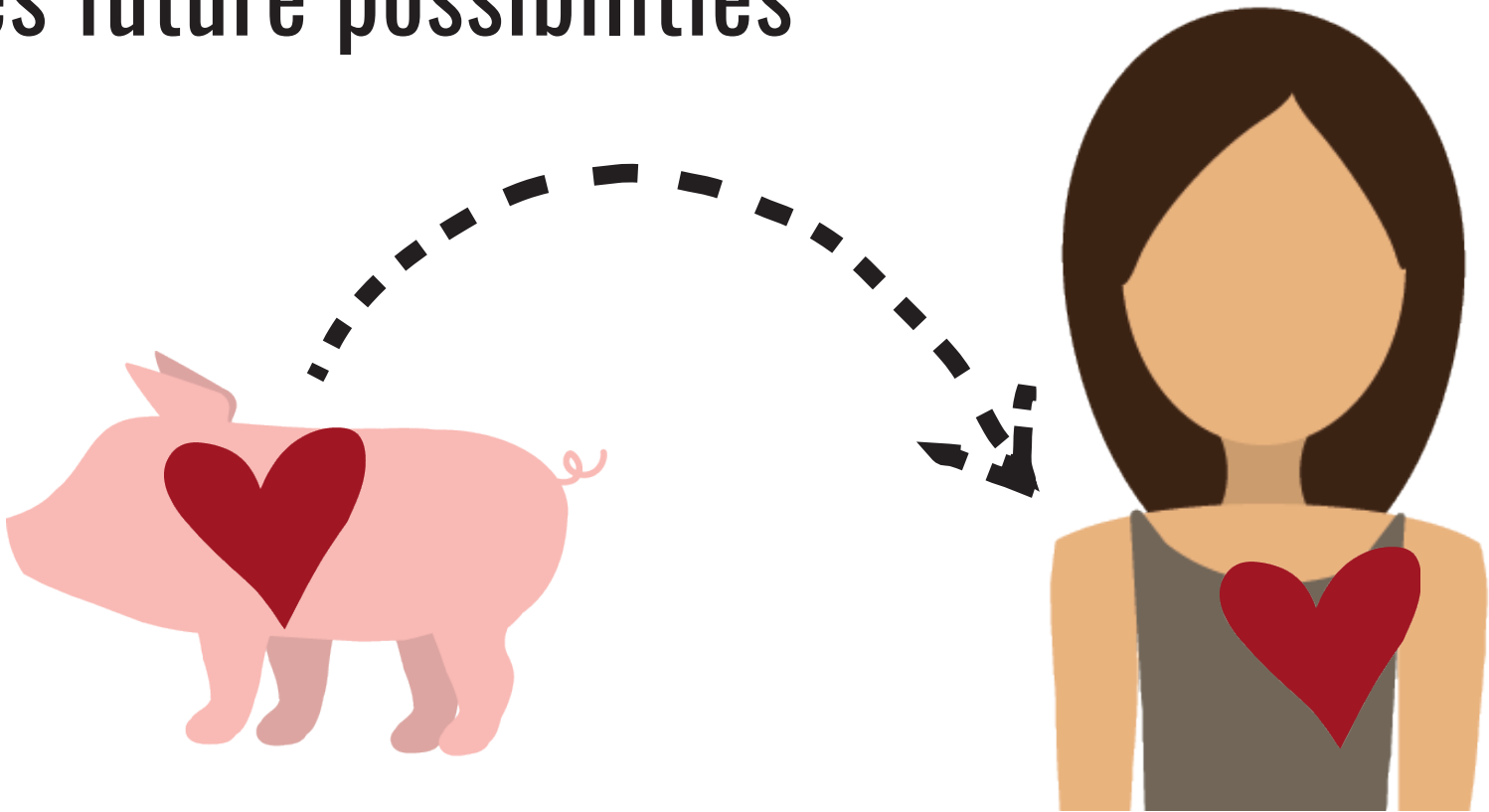
WHEN YOU’VE HAD AN ISSUE GOING ON IN TOWN FOR 16-17 YEARS ... A YEAR’S WORTH OF MONTHLY MEETINGS PROBABLY ISN’T GOING TO HAVE A TREMENDOUS IMPACT. BUT I CAN SEE PEOPLE’S ATTITUDES AND THE WAY THEY’RE APPROACHING THIS COMMITTEE CHANGING.

KELLY BLACKWELDER
TOWN OF ELO POLICE CHIEF

CHEAT SHEET

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

First successful animal to human organ transplants raises future possibilities



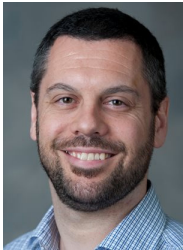
SOPHIE ROSENTHAL | CHIEF COPY EDITOR

After recent, successful xenotransplantation, humans might be able to source organs from animals for transplantation

Ryan Kupperman
Enterprise Story Coordinator | Elon News Network

The first successful organ transplantation between a genetically-modified pig and a human patient was recorded in January. The process of performing an organ transplant between two different species is called xenotransplantation.

David Parker, lecturer in biology and lab coordinator at Elon University, discusses the practicality and possibilities of sourcing genetically modified animals for human organ transplants. Parker worked in a lab in Cambridge from '94 to '97 that was interested in the xenotransplantation process looking



David Parker

at the human immune system and changing the genes of a pig. Although the concept has been around for decades, the medical community has reported significant progress within the last few months. In September 2021, surgeons at New York University Langone Health attached a kidney from a genetically modified pig to the outside of a brain-dead patient being maintained on a ventilator. Although the kidney remained on the outside of the patient's body, it functioned as normal — producing urine and creatinine. Months later on Jan. 10, surgeons at the University of Maryland reported that they successfully transplanted a genetically-modified pig heart into a patient with heart failure.

On Jan. 20, surgeons at the University of Alabama at Birmingham reported that they successfully transplanted kidneys from yet another genetically modified pig into one of their patients. As of Jan. 31, no known issues have been reported surrounding the transplant procedures.

How do you genetically modify a pig so that the human body doesn't reject it?

"They basically made 10 changes to the DNA of the pig. That's it and that's not very many. So they basically removed four pig genes. And those four pig genes that they removed, were genes that made proteins that are not present in humans. So these were four of the genes that cause a lot of that rejection of a pig organ. So you can kind of think about

that, as you know, there's these four genes that make kind of pig-specific proteins. And you don't want any organs making those proteins if you put it in a human because they will automatically read that as not human, must destroy basically. So they knocked out — that's the scientific term, if you make a knockout of a gene, you remove it — so they removed or knocked out four genes. And then they introduced into the pig six human genes. So genes that were taken from a human being and stuck into the pig.

There's no problem taking six human genes, sticking them in a pig. The pig doesn't care. Genes are basically instructions for making proteins, and the pig would basically make the human proteins. So there's six human genes in these pigs. And they make things that basically prevent the immune response happening on that tissue. So they removed four pig genes that caused an immune response, they put in six human genes that would prevent an immune response. And that's it. And then, you can get pig organs to work in humans."

Do [researchers] do that to the pig while it's still alive?

"You take some eggs from a sow and some sperm from whatever you call a male pig, and mix them together and you can fertilize those eggs. And then very early on, when it's just one cell big, you can make those genetic changes.

All of those pigs have those 10 changes that we talked about. They all had those four genes removed. They've all had the six genes added, and you just breed them like normal pigs and the DNA doesn't go anywhere. They probably did that over many years, right. You wouldn't make all those changes at once. So they would make a pig that has one of those changes, and then grow up. And then they do that same step on another pig and introduce a second change. Now you have a pig with two changes. And then you take another pig, you put in a third change and so on and so on until you end up with this pig that they wanted, which is a pig that has 10 changes."

How far before you start putting human genes in a pig before it's not considered a pig anymore?

"So I mean, these pigs, they're not normal pigs, right? They look like a pig and they oink like a pig, and they do all the pig stuff. But they do contain some genes from a human, so technically speaking, you would call that a transgenic animal — which just means an animal that has genes that are not normally there, put into it. I guess your question sort of rolls around the idea of what is a pig right? You would have to change a lot of genes in order to make it not look like a pig anymore, or not behave like a pig anymore. There are about 20,000 genes in a pig, and we're only changing 10 of them. So that's a pretty low percentage,

but I guess technically speaking, this is not considered like a pig. Now it's considered a transgenic animal. So it's still a pig, but it's just got these changes."

Do the human genes that [researchers] are putting into the pigs have to come from the person that they plan to put the organs into?

"No, so that's kind of the cool thing with human beings. If you take one of my genes and one of your genes, they're extremely similar. So me and you, at the DNA level, if you just look at a DNA sequence ... your DNA is made of basically four different bases and geneticists will call them G, A, T and C. And all DNA is, is a long string of those letters in a very specific order. So you know, G, G, A, A, T, etc, etc, etc. If you took all of my DNA, and all of your DNA, and you compare them, we would be 99.9% identical. So, out of all those letters, we would only differ one letter in every 1000, which is what that 0.1% is, right. So we're very, very similar. The six genes that they put into these pigs are essentially the same in every human."

Is there anything different about the patient who receives the organ because it's coming from a genetically modified animal?

"No, no ... There are some tests that they can do to make sure that you have a low probability of rejecting a pig organ. So they'll screen your DNA for certain things to make sure that you are unlikely to reject the organ. But apart from that, it doesn't make any difference ... It's true spare-part surgery, which has sort of been the dream of transplant surgery for about 100 years."

Is the next step [with this breakthrough] to commercialize it and have it available for everyone?

"I don't know what the timeframe is on it. But in a matter of years, I'm assuming this is going to be something that — as long as there's no problems — will be available to most people. Now, access to that technology, I don't know. That's a whole other thing, because I don't know how much it would cost to get these things done. The heart transplant was only authorized by the FDA on an emergency basis. They have this 'compassionate care clause' where they can basically allow companies to try things out in situations like this when it's a last resort. But that doesn't mean it's available to everybody yet — that's gonna have to go through a full FDA approval process which could take years to get through. But yeah, I think that's the idea is in the future, if your heart goes bad, just take one out of a pig and plug it right into you."

Why should people care?

"Yeah, basically, because this is the bottleneck. When it comes to organ failure in America, you've got all these people that need organs — that have kidney failure or heart failure — and there's just no organs to give them. Even if you're an organ donor, you have to die under very specific circumstances in order for them to harvest your organs and give them to somebody else. Because those organs have to be very freshly harvested and all that. But with the pig stuff, it's essentially as easy as just plucking something off a shelf and plugging it into somebody. I guess the surgeon said it was a little tricky putting the heart in, because some of the plumbing was a little bit weird compared to human anatomy. But it was nothing they couldn't work around ...

You could save hundreds of thousands of lives. And take a lot of stress off the health industry."

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

"Using pigs as spare parts for humans is not new. For like 30 years, we've been using heart valves from pigs to transplant into humans, and corneas from pigs to transplant into humans. So the idea is not new, and that's been happening for decades. The big difference is those types of tissues do not contain living cells, which is where you get the rejection. So basically a heart valve is made up of a cartilage-type tissue, which is not cellular in nature the way that a fully functioning organ is. That's been happening for ages, so that's nothing that people should worry about as sort of a general concept. The one thing that I see as potentially being a problem is that we all contain viruses in our DNA. Because for millions of years, humans have been passing viruses between each other. Some of those viruses, like COVID, just exist in your cells and that's it.

Some viruses, and HIV is one of these actually, are called retroviruses. They insert themselves into your DNA. So that's why if you get an HIV infection, all of the HIV genes basically get inserted into your DNA and they're there permanently. And so there are certain pig viruses that are present in pig DNA that have just been there for a long time, and people are worried about those causing infections in humans. So you get a pig heart, but along with that comes a viral infection. And so pigs that have been used in this latest round of experiments have been bred specifically to remove some of those from their DNA. So there's one (virus) I guess, in particular that we were concerned about, that has been bred out of these pigs. But that's the only thing. Over the days, weeks and months of this guy, living with his heart, we'll have to see if he catches any infections from the pig cells. But so far, it looks like it's still good."



As co-owner Emily Lewis and the staff at Carolina Sundries prepare for the grand opening on Feb. 5, Emily said she is looking forward to becoming a downtown meeting spot and making Carolina Sundries part of the community. From left to right, co-owner Emily Lewis, General Manager of Grocery Becca Chavis and Assistant Manager of Grocery Terry Miller stand at the deli counter in Carolina Sundries on Jan. 25.

Alamance County employers face labor shortages, challenges as pandemic nears two years

STAFFING | from cover

“We are still looking for five more positions. We are definitely feeling the effects of the labor shortage,” Lewis said. “We’re having a hard time but I’ve heard it across the board from a lot of my other friends who are business owners. It’s just difficult.”

Town of Elon Town Manager Rich Roedner said when looking for candidates to work at the town of Elon, the time in between a job posting being listed and a candidate responding to the posting has grown longer since the pandemic started. The number of applicants has also diminished in the past two years.

Roedner said four or five years ago, when trying to fill a police officer position, the town would see 25 to 30 applicants. Now, the town may have four or five applicants. Demand changes for certain jobs, such as law enforcement, may also be due to popularity or the cyclical nature of demand, Roedner said.

“We’re always looking for new part-time firefighters. But with the way the economy has been ... a lot of firefighters, because of the type of schedule they’re on, they have second jobs,” Roedner said. “Their second jobs frequently are quite profitable right now, therefore less of a desire to take on another permanent position in another department.”

For Twin Lakes, while some jobs have taken longer to get filled, the two main issues the retirement community faces now are weariness and vulnerability due to COVID-19 variants.

“The Omicron variant has taken more staff out of work for chunks of time than we have experienced at any time during the first few years,” Fox said. “Our staff are fully vaccinated and boosted, but even so, if somebody has a positive in their household or they themselves test positive or they have symptoms, there is a period of time when they’re not at work.”

Twin Lakes mandated the COVID-19 vaccine last year, including the booster, but even with the mandate, Fox said about 10% of the Twin Lakes workforce is unable to work for COVID-19 related reasons.

Executive Vice President and Chief Nurse Executive at Cone Health Dr. Kenneth Rempher said for Cone Health, and many hospitals around the country, a lack of people in the nursing field as a whole is causing a ripple effect for healthcare providers. According to Rempher, North Carolina is positioned to be one of the top states impacted by the shortage, and within the next 12 months, could be short anywhere from 15 to 20 million registered nurses.

“I just don’t think the public is truly aware that we are short over one million registered nurses,” Rempher said.

If a hospital does not have enough staff, it is not able to keep every section open, Rempher said.

“That’s really the biggest ... this downstream and upstream bottlenecking that occurs as a result of not

having sufficient certified, licensed and credentialed employees,” Rempher said.

The nurse shortage is impacted by the traveling nurse profession, as well. Traveling nurses originally started out to supplement staffing for different hospitals that had shortages for small periods of time. However, since the profession took hold, it has grown significantly, Rempher said.

“Now it has become a major, multibillion dollar industry that is recruiting nurses and paying very high salaries that most healthcare systems cannot compete with,” Rempher said.

As healthcare workers head into year two of the pandemic, the emotional toll of the pandemic is also impacting staffing. Rempher said Cone Health is offering

“

WE ARE DEFINITELY FEELING THE EFFECTS OF THE LABOR SHORTAGE WE’RE HAVING A HARD TIME BUT I’VE HEARD IT ACROSS THE BOARD FROM A LOT OF MY OTHER FRIENDS WHO ARE BUSINESS OWNERS. IT’S JUST DIFFICULT.

EMILY LEWIS
CO-OWNER OF CAROLINA SUNDRIES

bonuses to acknowledge the sacrifice nurses and their families are making, as well as worker fatigue policies to ensure nurses are not working over a certain number of hours per week — even if the hospital is short-staffed.

“We have to draw on other sources when we get to that point, which includes bringing our leaders into staffing,” Rempher said. “We find a lot of ways to make sure that we maintain the high level of quality and safety, but we also honor and recognize the need for time away and respite for the nurses.”

The psychological and mental impact of the past two years are apparent on Twin Lakes employees, Fox said. From simply working through the day-to-day challenges the pandemic presents to working extra hours to fill in for those who are unable to work due to COVID-19, it has been hard to maintain morale.

“It’s tough to give people a little pick me up when we just don’t know when it’s going to end,” Fox said.

Student worker wage increase approved



Freshman Alli Barnett working as a student assistant in the Student Professional Development Center as a part of the PACE program.

WAGES | from cover

“Moving the starting salary to \$10 is something that I’m very happy to see because our student employees contribute a lot to the university,” Jackson said.

The PACE Program, which began in 2011, is a student employment program for prospective students. Eligible students are identified through the financial aid process and invited to apply for the program prior to their arrival on campus. Once a student applies for and accepts a position, they have the ability to remain in the job for four years.

PACE employment is one of the opportunities students have to apply for a job on-campus. Other on-campus student employment positions are in departments across campus, from athletics to admissions, and there are over 1,000 student employees on Elon’s campus.

Elon freshman Alli Barnett, who works as a student assistant in the Student Professional Development Center, said she is excited about the raise. While \$1 may not seem like a lot, Barnett said she knows it will add up over time, and impacts her Elon experience as a whole.

“Being a PACE student, anything is better than nothing, and so I love that we’re being paid for the quality of work that we do,” Barnett said. “It releases some of the financial burden that I’m under as a PACE undergraduate student, and so I’m excited to be able to enjoy my time at Elon more, have more experiences, without having to worry so much about how I’m going to pay for those expenses.”

Jackson said when the student wage rate was increased to \$9 per hour, it was done to keep students on-campus for employment opportunities. As a residential campus, it is important to the university community as a whole to have students work on campus, Jackson said.

“We have a lot of competition in the community for people with people who would like to hire Elon students to come and work, and then they’re offering more money,” Jackson said. “They’re not ‘just student workers’ ... they are contributors to the university, and so I think it’s important that that be recognized.”

BY THE NUMBERS

\$10

is the new minimum wage for student employees at Elon University. Previously, it was \$9.

Elon University faculty union hopes for contracts by fall



Marah Caidin (left) who is a junior at UCG and Trinity Dixon (right) who is a senior at Elon, hold up a “recognize the union” banner during Boldly Elon Solidarity Collective’s protest at the special Elon Day college coffee on March 2, 2021 in front of Alamance.

The faculty union and administrators have met throughout the fall 2021 semester to bargain for contracts

Kyra O'Connor
Executive Director | @ko_reports

When Susan Ladd first arrived at Elon University three years ago, the process of creating the part-time faculty union Elon Faculty Forward was already underway. The instructor in journalism was a lifetime newspaper writer, and saw firsthand the importance of unions.

“Coming off the experience of being a longtime newspaper person in North Carolina, I could certainly see the benefits of being part of the union we had because the industry was undergoing such tough times. We have not had a raise at the newspaper for 10 years, maybe, and I’m talking about cost of living,” Ladd said. “That’s what happens when you don’t have representation.”

That’s why Ladd decided to join Elon

Faculty Forward and now is part of the bargaining unit between the faculty union and the Elon University administration. Ladd, along with other part-time instructors in the union, is hopeful that after bargaining this year members of the union will have contracts establishing the terms of employment of part-time, limited term and visiting faculty at Elon for the upcoming semester.

“We’re part of the life of the university and we just want some assurance that we’re going to continue to be a part of it,” Ladd said.

Bargaining, or the process of determining terms of employment, can include a number of aspects, according to Elon Law professor Eric Fink. Fink, who teaches employment law and has taught labor law previously, said there are mandatory subjects of

bargaining and other terms and conditions of employment. Mandatory subjects of bargaining include wages and hours, which are required to be bargained over if either the union or administration demands. Other terms and conditions of employment, however, can cover much more, and are not required to be bargained for. Additionally, the union being in an academic setting makes drawing the distinction between mandatory subjects versus other terms and conditions of employment difficult, Fink said.

Class sizes, course load and opportunities for advancement are all unique to academia and could be considered other terms and conditions. But, because class sizes and loads directly impact working conditions of professors, they

could be considered a mandatory subject of bargaining.

“Whether it’s faculty or for graduate research and teaching assistants, that line between what are academic issues and what are employment issues, or the nature of the job as teachers and professors,” Fink said. “That line is not a clear, bright line, always.”

At the end of bargaining — a process that can take years — the labor union will have a contract of employment. The contract of employment establishes the rights and responsibilities of both the union members and the Elon administration.

One issue that Adjunct Instructor in Music Jim Roberts said he is pleased with the negotiation for is mentoring. Adjunct, part-time, limited term or visiting faculty guidance on mentoring varied from department to department, and often, part-time professors were unable to officially mentor students due to the limited nature of their employment contracts. Mentoring, while it impacts employment, is an issue Fink said could be mandatory or could be part of other terms and conditions.

Heading into the next bargaining sessions, Ladd said she hopes to tackle issues such as job security and longer term contracts, as well as pay. Roberts said he is looking forward to talking about the financial aspects of the contract.

“There is a culture of downplaying the importance of adjuncts. It’s national, this is not just Elon,” Roberts said. “A person that’s living from contract to contract, they can’t apply for a loan on a house because they can’t show employment or guaranteed employment, and there’s a lot of things in a person’s future that is up in the air because they don’t know if they’re actually going to be working or not.”

Adjunct Assistant Professor of Art Mark Iwinski said he hopes to also tackle equity and hiring among adjunct faculty at Elon. As the union and the Elon administration continue to bargain, Iwinski said he hopes the administration and the Elon community will come to see the union as a benefit, just as many part-time employees in the union have.

“When you’re not even invited to the discussion, then it’s really hard to feel included. And in this respect, it’s really finding a means by which we’re part of the conversation in a meaningful way that adds to the university,” Iwinski said. “It will play to the university’s advantage. They may not see it that way yet ... they have the possibility of becoming a leader with regard to this kind of thinking.”

Elon Law alumnus named 17th Clerk of Court for Supreme Court of North Carolina

Grant Buckner L’13 will assume the position in February

Kyra O'Connor
Executive Director | @ko_reports

Grant Buckner, a 2013 graduate of Elon Law, will now serve as the top executive position for the Supreme Court of North Carolina. Buckner was appointed as the 17th clerk of court by Chief Justice Paul Newby and will step into the role in February, taking over for former clerk Amy Funderburk.

Buckner has served within the Supreme Court since his graduation, from providing legal counsel and drafting rule amendments to his role as clerk for Robert N. Hunter Jr. at the North Carolina Court of Appeals and for former Supreme Court of North Carolina Chief Justice Mark Martin.

“Serving the Supreme Court of North Carolina is a great honor and privilege for me,” Buckner said in a press release. “The history, the

people, and the work inspire me every day. I am so grateful the Court has entrusted me to be its next Clerk of Court, and I look forward to doing my very best in this new role.”

The Supreme Court of North Carolina is the state’s highest court, which means cases sent to the Supreme Court of North Carolina have no ability to appeal from the decisions made over matters of state law. The court is made up of Chief Justice Newby and six additional associate justices. Newby serves as the head of the judicial branch and the six associate justices each serve an eight-year term.

In his new role, Buckner will manage evidence related to cases filed with the Supreme Court, develop and execute plans for Supreme Court outreach efforts and oversee the operations of archiving records — among many other duties. The clerk of court role was established by the first U.S. Congress in the Judiciary Act of 1789, which also includes two other non-judge positions. The duties of his role at the state level

are written in the North Carolina General Statutes.

“We look forward to working with Grant in his new capacity as clerk,” Newby said in a press release. “I am confident he will continue to serve the Supreme Court and North Carolinians with the same fervor he has demonstrated in his previous roles.”

“I AM SO GRATEFUL THE COURT HAS ENTRUSTED ME TO BE ITS NEXT CLERK OF COURT, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO DOING MY VERY BEST IN THIS NEW ROLE.”

GRANT BUCKNER
ELON LAW ALUMNUS

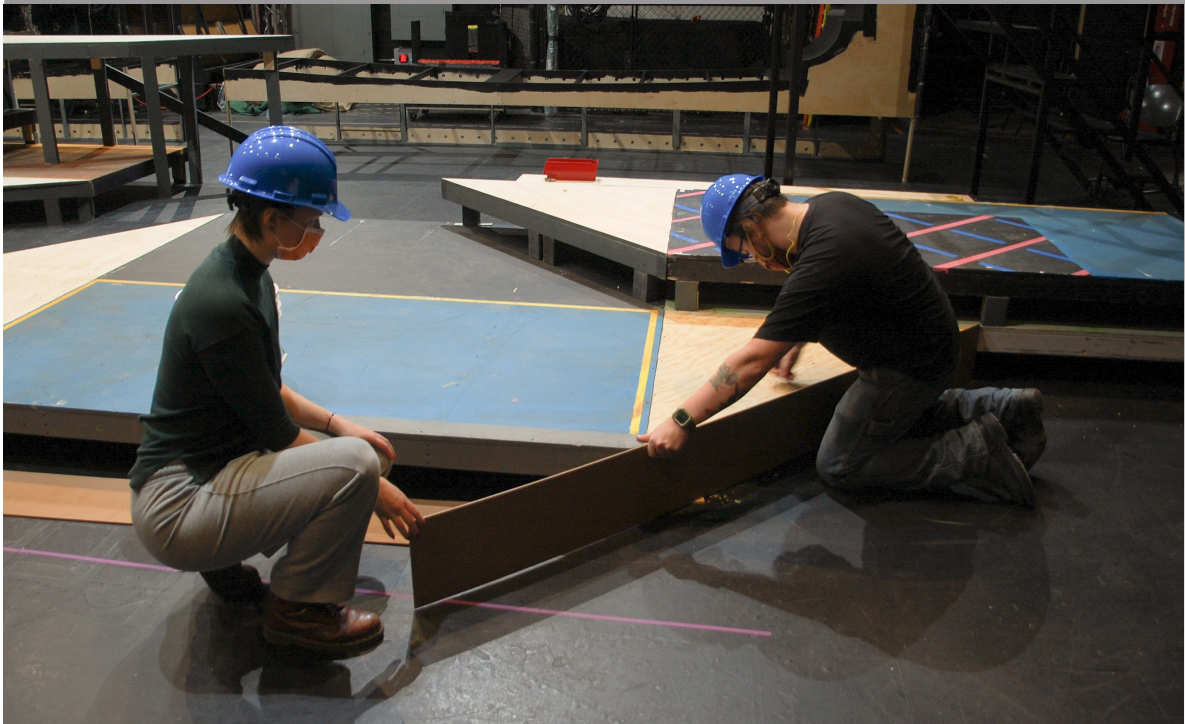


Grant Buckner L’13

COURTESY OF GRANT BUCKNER

LIFESTYLE

TECH takes the spotlight



ABBY REED | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

How the technical side of theater makes imagination a reality

Samantha Sussman
Lifestyle Editor | @Samanthasussma

As the stage lights up in McCrory Theatre, the audience can see the story come to life with the sets, costumes and designs. According to senior stage manager for Elon University’s production of *Into the Woods*, Sydney Bell said this is due to the months of hard work by the crew prior to the performance. Bell said that although the technical side of theater is often overlooked by the audience, it is what makes the magic happen.

Into the Woods is a musical written by Stephen Sondheim where a baker and his wife travel to different fairy tales throughout their quest to become a family. The production will take place Feb. 11 to 13 in McCrory Theatre.

Tickets can be purchased in the Box Office or through elon.universitytickets.com.

“Having a show that’s so steeped in escapism and reality, provides audiences with a time to really self-reflect,” Bell said. “I think the technical aspects really bring to life the magic of theater.”

When thinking about musical theater, what comes to mind

for most is acting, directing and helping with props or lighting. But, according to Bell, the building of sets and creation of costumes are crucial for a production, especially one like *Into the Woods* that is centered around fairy tales.

According to Bell, the magical aspects of the piece itself were heavily considered when designing elaborate costumes, time-century specific sets and more.

“Because of all of these stories mixing we wanted to create a ... mix of the world in a shell, but also making it magical,” Bell said. “Because it’s all fairy tales, there’s a lot of magical elements to it.”

Bell said that as stage manager she has three main roles: being an advocate for both the cast and crew, communicating between all different teams and running the technical aspects during the performance. The latter part of this role will begin the first week of spring semester.

“Currently, as the scenery is being built, we are in rehearsal and figuring out how the show is gonna look,” Bell said. “But the real technical process of *Into the Woods* will happen the first weekend of spring semester with our tech rehearsal, and that is when the lighting designer, the senior designer, all the costumes — every technical aspect of the show, gets rehearsed.”

Since *Into the Woods* is a winter term show, the process and

preparation looks different than for a fall or spring show. Though shows are decided a year in advance, production started in September 2021 — with designers pitching ideas, trying to source materials and preparing for the show. However, no action can be taken until there is a cast.

“The technical side of rehearsal starts a lot earlier than the cast does and is essentially from September to December. It’s a lot of talking and collaborating and figuring out what will work best for the show,” Bell said. “Once we get into rehearsal for J-term, it’s more of the true process of actually building everything and making sure everything can get done on time.”

The design and set proposals are brought to their respective department heads so that they can decide what is possible within the budget. Senior and technical director Eric Kanzinger said his job is to turn these ideas into reality. Kanzinger receives the initial designs which he redrafts until it is possible to be built and in budget.

According to Kanzinger, most of his job is done earlier in the process, so at this point he is jumping in wherever he is needed — like helping to build the set.

“In most cases people will shoot for the moon and then we kind of draw everything back in,” Kanzinger said. “But then a couple of weeks after those initial estimates, we then sit down and cut back

on some things either get rid of pieces entirely, or maybe we’ll swap materials.”

According to Kanzinger there are some reusable stock pieces that are prebuilt and designers incorporate them when they can. For most shows, especially ones like *Into the Woods* with multiple settings, the majority of the set consists of fresh builds.

Bell believes theater is important now more than ever because it provides an escape from the COVID-19 pandemic and the real world.

“*Into the Woods* could not have come to Elon at a better time, given the pandemic and everything that is going on in the world,” Bell said. “At least for me as a theater maker it’s really nice to have back because, I’ll speak for myself, but the past two years have essentially been kicked to the curb for most theater makers of our industry going through so many loops.”

Top left: Brianna Boucher creates a costume piece for the production of “*Into the Woods*” debuting on Feb. 11.

Top right: Caitlin Duncan works in the costume studio backstage at McCrory Theatre as the Department of Performing Arts prepares for their production of “*Into the Woods*.”

Bottom left: Katrin Hauksdottir helps build a set piece on stage at McCrory Theatre for the Department of Performing Arts production of “*Into the Woods*.”

Bottom right: Sarah Parks helps with set construction as the Department of Performing Arts prepares for their upcoming production of “*Into the Woods*.”

Clohan strays from plant-based focus, deli station returns

New deli station changes plant-based focus of Clohan Dining Hall

Avery Sloan
Politics Editor | @averylsloan

Clohan dining hall began the year fully plant-based, but as of the start of semester, Clohan has now added a second non-plant based option, a deli station. Early into fall semester, Clohan added their burger bar, a station that was previously available last year. Freshman Ashley Josey, pescetarian and frequenter of Clohan dining hall, is hopeful that the deli station will increase options for students who eat meat without decreasing the range or quality of plant-based options. “I’m fully OK if they keep integrating in different meat,” Josey said. “But where I would take issue with it is if they were slowly dwindling the plant-based options.”

According to past statements from Elon Dining, Clohan went fully plant-based at the beginning of the school year to accommodate students’ different dietary needs, yet the change was unsustainable as it led to other dining halls becoming overcrowded. Elon Dining has previously said that they have frequently changed their menu items based on what students are asking for.

Josey said that Clohan is her favorite dining hall, as it allows her to have more than one option that meets her dietary needs. She also appreciates the focus

on health that Clohan promotes. Josey also said that she felt the addition of the burger bar earlier this year was a good idea, as it increased traffic at Clohan but did not take over its plant-based focus.

Sophomore CJ Kovalsky said that the deli station is an aspect that he had been missing at Clohan. As a business fellow, Kovalsky said the location of Clohan is convenient for him because of its proximity to the Koury Business Center. The location, along with a range of options, is what made Clohan a frequented dining hall for him

“

WHERE I WOULD TAKE ISSUE WITH IT IS IF THEY WERE SLOWLY DWINDLING THE PLANT-BASED OPTIONS

ASHLEY JOSEY
FRESHMAN

last year. Kovalsky said Clohan changing its focus to plant-based food caused him to go less.

“I also felt bad for other people because Clohan is located right next to Colonnades neighborhood and is the closest dining hall to Danielely,” Kovalsky said.

While Kovalsky himself does



The newly reopened Clohan deli station on Jan. 31, the first day back since last spring.

AVERY SLOAN | POLITICS EDITOR

not have dietary restrictions, and does not classify himself as a picky eater, he said he does understand that it must be difficult to navigate dining halls with these problems.

“I can see the benefit or the idea behind having it all located in one location, because it would suck to be vegan and have not that much diversity at the dining hall,” Kovalsky said. “Having to walk

between all three of them or just choose and settle for whatever one had,” Kovalsky said.

While it was disappointing at other dining halls to possibly only have one option, Josey said there were occasional issues of contamination that occurred at the beginning of the year, making it difficult to not have a solely plant-based dedicated dining hall.

“There was one or two times where I had gotten a salad and asked for an ingredient and there ended up being chicken in my salad,” Josey said. “For students, especially those who have allergies or who maybe have a religious obligation with that, I think that it’s important to have a high standard against cross-contamination.”

ELON EATS IS A COLUMN THAT REVIEWS RESTAURANTS AND FOOD VENDORS IN THE LOCAL AREA

Harusaki Sushi’s chicken is perfectly sweet and savory



Eddie Keefe
Freshman

IF YOU GO

Harusaki Sushi
Where: 1449 University Drive H, Burlington, NC 27215
When: Monday: 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday - Thursday: 11 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Friday - Saturday: 11 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Sunday: 12 - 9:30 p.m.

When I walked into Harusaki Sushi and saw the image of the Honey Chicken on their TV, I knew that I had to try it. Harusaki Sushi specializes in Japanese cuisine, specifically sushi, with over 40 items on the menu.

As an entree, the Honey Chicken came with an order of miso soup and fried rice. The miso flavor in the soup was too strong. Though I usually love fried rice, I was sadly disappointed with this version. The rice tasted as if it was soaked in soy sauce, which I have never experienced before, and I didn’t like it. It also had no protein or vegetables in it. Neither item was something that I would order again.

The Honey Chicken, however, did not disappoint. I was shocked by the low price point and large portion size. I really felt like I was getting good bang for my buck. The chicken itself tasted delicious because of the sweet yet tangy sauce that was the perfect amount of savory paired with the crunch of the chicken. It was served with steamed broccoli that tasted amazing. The dish felt well-rounded and complete with all of its elements. My friends and I shared the dish, and by the time we left it was all gone.

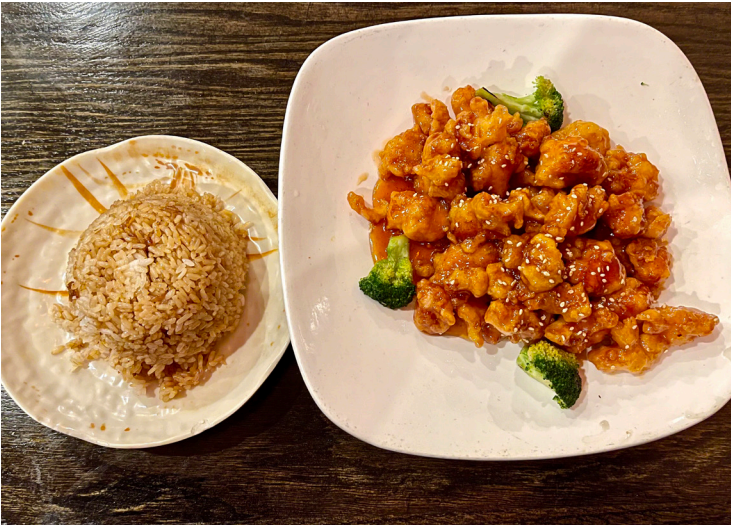
I also got the Crab Stars, which came with eight Crab Rangoons. Since Crab Rangoon is one of my favorite foods, I am very particular about this dish, and I loved them. The crab to cream cheese ratio in the wontons was spot on, and when paired with the duck sauce made the best bite.

Lastly, I tried their North Carolina Signature Roll, which came with eight pieces of shrimp tempura, crab salad and tempura flakes wrapped with soybean paper in spicy mayo, eel sauce and honey wasabi. This is compared to their classic rolls which only have six pieces. I was

happily surprised with how good this roll was. I could tell every ingredient chosen for this roll was well thought out, as all the flavors came together in every piece. The shrimp tempura was cooked perfectly and added the crunch the dish needed. It was my first time having crab salad — made of imitation crab meat, mayonnaise and celery — and it was an amazing combination. The way it was so neatly rolled just makes the flavors blend together without flaw. As a person who doesn’t like too much spice, the spicy mayo was able to pull every bite together with just the right amount of kick.

I would rate Harusaki Sushi an 7.8/10 because although every item I got was delicious, minus the miso soup and fried rice, none of the items blew me away except for the Honey Chicken. If I went there again, I would reorder the Honey Chicken, but I would explore the menu more to see if I missed any hidden treasures the first time around. I would recommend it to anyone, considering it has great prices, is a nice family environment and is only ten minutes away from the Elon University campus.

If you have any questions or a review idea, please reach out to me at ekeefe5@elon.edu.



EDDIE KEEFE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



EDDIE KEEFE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Top: Honey Chicken and fried rice from Harusaki Sushi.
Bottom: The North Carolina Signature Roll from Harusaki Sushi.

EDDIE’S SCORE

7.8 of 10

Every week the restaurant reviewed is given a score out of 10.



Senior Kellyn Trowse digs the ball at a game on Sept. 27, 2019.

THOMAS DENOME | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon volleyball player Kellyn Trowse pivots to basketball

Trowse, who earned a walk-on spot for her senior season, calls the change a “dream come true”

Luke Jackson
Elon News Network | @lukebjax

In her time as head coach of Elon women’s volleyball, Mary Tendler never had a player on her team elect to play a second sport. This year, Kellyn Trowse, outside hitter from Tampa, Florida, has become the first one.

Described by Tendler as having “no fear on the court,” Trowse spent four years giving her all to the Elon volleyball program. As a senior, the team finished 17-11 and 11-5 in the Colonial Athletic Association, the team’s best mark in the eight years the program has been a member of the CAA. The Phoenix fell short in the CAA championship, losing in five sets to the top-seeded Towson Tigers.

“The fact that we made it farther than we ever have in Elon volleyball history, means a lot to me,” Trowse said. “However, we didn’t win the finals, which was our ultimate goal. I’m really, really competitive, so the mindset is always to win, or at least do the best I can.”

According to Trowse, her competitive nature has been part of her life for as long as she can remember. A three-sport athlete in high school, she participated in volleyball, basketball and track and field. She captained her high school basketball team her senior year and also played on an Amateur Athletic

Union basketball team through her junior year.

“Basketball has definitely been part of my life for as long as I can remember. It’s always been my first love in terms of sports,” Trowse said.

As soon as Trowse was on campus for her freshman season of volleyball at Elon, she told her volleyball coach that she had a serious interest in getting involved with the basketball team.

“She was a little bit not super excited to hear that at first,” Trowse said. “But I just kept telling her every year that I wanted to play basketball.”

When Trowse heard from a friend that Elon University women’s basketball head coach Charlotte Smith was holding open tryouts for a walk-on spot, she was hesitant. It had been nearly five years since her senior season of high school basketball, during which she captained her team. Trowse said she felt like she hardly had a shot. However, Smith was impressed and Trowse was offered the spot on the team.

“I knew when she was trying out that she would be the perfect addition to our family,” Smith said. “I can’t imagine this team without her.”

Though Trowse’s role has been mainly as a practice player for the Phoenix, she said she has worked just as hard as her teammates. As a player joining the team long after preseason workouts had ended, Trowse had a lot of catching up to do.

“On the first day, they told me I had 24 pages of sets to learn,” Trowse said. “I’m about six pages in and I still don’t know the rest.”

Smith said that her competitive nature has inspired her to be tough

and she has been able to contribute tremendously to the team.

“She has done it with a lot of grace,” Smith said. “At this point in her college career, she could be relaxing and enjoying a lot of freedom in an offseason, but she chose to do more and be more. It speaks volumes about who she is as a person.”

According to Tendler, the biggest piece that stands out in Trowse’s career is her attitude and effort — making her the ideal teammate.

“She does all the right things. She comes to practice every day ready to go. She makes the people around her better players with what she’s able to do and how she encourages them,” Tendler said.

Smith said she’s had the same effect on the basketball team, even though she’s only had a few months to spend with them.

“We love Kellyn. She is a beautiful person inside and out and only enhances our chemistry. The girls absolutely love and adore her,” Smith said.

According to Trowse, regardless of her stats or the team’s record at the end of the season, making herself and her teammates better is her ultimate goal. Trowse said she considers making the basketball team her senior year a remarkable achievement.

“When they told me, I was in tears,” Trowse said. “It’s been my dream to play on this team since before I got to Elon, so this is a dream come true. I keep saying it over and over, and sometimes I wake up in the morning and can’t believe that I get to be a part of the team.”

TROWSE’S VOLLEYBALL 2021 STATS

167 Kills

21 Assists

21 Aces

216 Digs

ELON UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL PLAYERS PREPARE FOR NFL DRAFT



Quarterback Davis Cheek passes the ball.

LUCAS CASELJ STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Four players are looking to make NFL roster this summer, have already started to prepare

Jacob Kisamore
Sports Director | @jacobkisamore

Elon will host a pro day on March 30 that will be open to NFL scouts to observe the four players run drills. The players could also be invited to the NFL Scouting Combine from March 1 to 7 in Indianapolis, Indiana, where approximately 300 players will participate in drills in front of scouts and front office personnel from all 32 NFL teams.

Marino said the goal for the players leading into the team’s pro day is to get into the best physical shape possible, but also to be prepared mentally to play their position at the next level.

“You want your body peaking around pro day and what you do in these two months is along with your body peaking, you are really fine tuning your performance on the whiteboard, so to speak,” Marino said. “Schematically mastering your job and all the details a scout might ask you in a private visit.”

Cheek said he underwent a surgery in December following the team’s finale against the University of Rhode Island to clean up a lisfranc injury he suffered during the season. Cheek said the recovery is going well and that he expects to be ready for Elon’s pro day and for additional workouts with teams.

Building an NFL culture

Since the first NFL Draft in 1936, just 17 players from Elon University’s football team have been selected by NFL franchises, and only three have been taken since 1992. Seven other Elon players have made NFL rosters as undrafted free agents.

The last Elon player drafted was offensive lineman Olisaemeka Udoh, who was selected by the Minnesota Vikings in the sixth round in 2019. Marino said that because the program has had recent success with sending a player to the NFL, he expects that scouts will pay more attention to Elon prospects in the near future.

“Now that we’ve had a couple NFL guys, they’re gonna keep coming back and they know the type of people we’re sending, which is most important,” Marino said. “They know it’s going to be a good person coming into the organization, going to be on time for meetings, going to be a smart football player, going to work hard.”

Cheek said the group of players looking to make it to the NFL this season are looking to blaze a trail for future Elon players who want to play professional football.

“It’s a new standard for the program and it’s going to be just about sustaining and continuing it,” Cheek said. “There’s guys that paved the way for us and then we’re paving hopefully a different path, a better path for some other people.”

DAVIS CHEEK

QUARTERBACK

- 51 passing touchdowns, 21 interceptions
- 8,548 passing yards
- 147 rushing yards, 6 touchdowns
- 40 starts

When Davis Cheek arrived at Elon University in the fall of 2017, he knew his goal was to someday play in the NFL. After five years with the team and 40 starts as quarterback, Cheek’s goal is finally in sight.

Even though no Elon quarterback has thrown a pass in a regular season NFL game, he said he has viewed his professional future as more of a reality than just a possibility throughout his college career.

“I’ve kind of built my life around football and I take it very seriously,” Cheek said. “I’m still a realistic person and understand that this is a tough business but I’m not going to sit here and say it sounds like a long shot. No, I think that I am 100% going to make it and stay around and have success and hopefully be the starter of an NFL organization in the coming years.”

With the 2022 NFL Draft set for April 28 to 30 in Las Vegas, Nevada, four Elon players are preparing for a potential career in the league and hoping to get an opportunity. Cheek, along with wide receiver Kortez Weeks, tight end Donovan Williams and defensive tackle Tristen Cox, are looking to make NFL rosters this summer.

Draft preparation

When Elon’s season ended in November, the four players began preparing for the draft. While the players will train on their own for the next few months, they have received help from Elon throughout the season.

Elon assistant coach Andy Marino serves as the team’s professional liaison. In this role, he communicates with NFL teams about Elon prospects and works with players throughout the season to prepare them for the draft process.

Last summer, Elon started an NFL Ready program, which is open to players who have completed their third academic year. Marino said the goal of the program is to teach players about the draft process and what they need to do to prepare throughout the season.

“What we’re just trying to do is give them a pathway, and some light at the end of the tunnel,” Marino said.

KORTEZ WEEKS

WIDE RECEIVER

- 195 catches
- 2,213 yards
- 12 touchdowns

DONOVAN WILLIAMS

TIGHT END

- 31 catches
- 302 yards
- 2 touchdowns

TRISTEN COX

DEFENSIVE TACKLE

- 117 tackles
- 2 sacks
- 4 fumble recoveries
- 4 pass deflections

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