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THE PENDULUM



EXPANDING PATHWAYS: FRANCIS CENTER CONTINUES PROPERTY RENOVATIONS

LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A construction crew at Elon University's Francis Center expansion project prepares to clean up on Feb. 7 after working in wet weather conditions for the majority of the day.

The School of Health Sciences is undergoing four phases of renovations to add cutting edge technology, lab spaces and more

Ryan Kupperman
Enterprise Story Coordinator

Born from a Smithfield ham factory outlet, Elon University's School of Health Sciences substituted conveyor belts and meat lockers for classrooms, office suites and state of the art health

labs.
Also known as the Francis Center, the building — located at 762 E. Haggard Ave. — is scheduled to undergo four separate phases of renovations in tandem with Elon's health science programs expansion.
According to the Dean of the School of Health Sciences Becky Neiduski, the school's renovations are predicted to be complete by fall 2023. Following the creation of the nursing program in fall 2021, the additions of the accelerated and four-year traditional Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs will

grow the School of Health Sciences from approximately 220 physical therapy and physician assistant studies students, to a combined total of over 600 students in the Physical Assistant, Physical Therapy and nursing programs, according to Neiduski.
"They've changed the way we think about healthcare education in the School of Health Sciences, and that will have benefits not only for our students today, but for our students of the future as well as healthcare providers from our community," Neiduski said.
Since opening in January 2012,

Neiduski said the Francis Center property was never completely renovated, which left room for the school to continue expanding. This also means that construction is not starting from scratch, as they are working with pre-built structures. After all renovation phases are complete, the square footage of usable space will have doubled to 100,000 square feet, said Neiduski.

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SGA leaders set goals to incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion

Elon University's Student Government Association shares spring semester initiatives as it plans for community changes

Ryan Kupperman
Enterprise Story Coordinator

Class of 2024 President Britt Mobley said going into the spring semester, he is writing legislation that will put funds towards a monument on campus immortalizing the experiences of people of color at Elon — both past and present.
"We passed a statement, or proclamation, last year that Black lives do matter — but that's a statement," Mobley said. "It's not to say that it was not significant, because it really was. However, this is something that is tangible, that we will be able to see, that will take a lot of different campus partnerships and obviously a

lot of different voices."
Mobley said the inspiration for the monument came to him during his global experience course freshman year taught by Vandorn Hinnant, a Black artist from Greensboro.
Mobley is one of many student leaders in Elon University's Student Government Association who are making plans for the upcoming semester. With SGA elections approaching in March, the organization will also prepare for a new student constitution, new SGA bylaws, a new judicial process and a new adviser — once the current SGA adviser, Jana Lynn Patterson, steps down from her role in April.
According to SGA Executive President Jack Corby, the new constitution, bylaws and judicial behaviors were all voted on by the student body and ratified last election cycle.



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Class of 2024 President Britt Mobley said he is writing legislation that will put funds towards a monument on campus. This was inspired by his global experience class.

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Women's lacrosse prepares for opening weekend

THE PENDULUM

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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

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CORRECTIONS

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

SGA follows initiatives, prepares for change



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Liam O'Connor, the class of 2022 president, sits in Koury Alumni Gym on Feb. 8.

SGA | from cover

Pertaining specifically to the class of 2024, Mobley said much of the sophomore student body's current excitement stems from their planning of the Elon Mardi Gras festival on March 1. Mobley said he is excited to help bring the Mardi Gras culture to the Elon community.

"It's really just a celebration of what Elon is and what it can be," Mobley said.

Class of 2023 President Chase Solomon said his main focus for the junior class is planning events that will bring everyone together.

"I think class unity is always something that we might have in the back of our mind, but it is somewhat important," Solomon said. "It's not just about what goes on day-to-day, but what sticks with you throughout your Elon experience."

Solomon also said he received some student feedback about wanting later dining hall hours during finals week — something in the works, according to Solomon.

Alexa Morrissey, the class of 2025 president and member of Elon News Network, said she would like to pursue

legislation for the spring semester that addresses some of the cons of Greek life and the dominance it has on campus. Specifically, Morrissey said she wants to establish new programs on campus that deal with helping girls who don't find the rushing process as rewarding or beneficial.

Along with Mobley and Solomon, Morrissey aims to create connections within the class of 2025 — specifically with the surrounding community outside of the "Elon bubble."

"I think it's really special what we have around campus," Morrissey said. "I don't think a lot of students realize that, so just forming that connection and forming those relationships will be really special."

Both Mobley and Morrissey said they will be focusing on finding ways to promote diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives within the Elon community.

"We put a lot of emphasis on our history," Mobley said. "However, on campus, we never have really put notice or put as an importance on the experience that persons of color — specifically Black folk on campus — have felt throughout Elon's time. And that's not only students, that's faculty and staff as well"

Class of 2022 President Liam O'Connor

also expressed an extreme focus on class unity as the seniors begin their final semester at Elon. Especially with the COVID-19 pandemic occurring in the middle of their four years, O'Connor said the senior class has had a lot of obstacles connecting. Thus, O'Connor said he is continuing to plan events in an attempt to bring the class of 2022 together.

"I think that we were truly severed in our time here at Elon," O'Connor said. "We've learned so much about ourselves that we haven't learned about each other, and that's the entire point of having these spaces for connection."

Corby, Solomon, Mobley and Morrissey all said they welcome and encourage student feedback and participation as SGA prepares for the next election cycle.

"I have seen that SGA has struggled in the past when it comes to getting the word out there, getting folks excited for elections and folks running," Mobley said. "So I hope that folks will just come out and really play an integral role in who they want to be their representative, because once we're in, we're in. We're representing you and we want to make sure that we're accurately representing the student body."

Elon alumni work behind Winter Olympics 2022

Elon graduates associate themselves with the international sports event

Naomi Washington

New Member Coordinator

For Elon alumna Ellie Whittington '18, reporting on the Olympics was a childhood dream. When she found herself working for NBC Sports, that dream was finally within reach.

Whittington started as a freelancer for NBC Sports in 2020, but her plans were disrupted when the Olympics were canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Her first experience covering an Olympic Games was remotely in the U.S., covering the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Now, she is covering the Olympic Games in Beijing.

"Sometimes I have to pinch myself and think 'at 25 years old, I've worked two Olympic Games,'" Whittington said.



COURTESY OF LAUREN BRZOZOWSKI

Lauren Brzozowski '19 is on the USA Olympic bobsled development team. Brzozowski trains with her teammates every day in New York for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina.

Whittington said.

Whittington currently serves as the social media team manager at the NBC Sports headquarters in Connecticut where she reports on winter sport events such as the Olympics and the Super Bowl.

"As an athlete growing up, but obviously not an Olympic athlete, I've always loved sports," Whittington said. "Being at Elon and wanting to work in sports, this is kind of the dream and being my age and being young and working two Games is really incredible."

While Whittington is behind the scenes covering the games, another Elon University graduate is preparing for the podium.

Lauren Brzozowski '19 is on the USA Olympic bobsled development team, hoping to make it to Milan in 2026. During Brzozowski's time at Elon, she was on the women's track team, but switched sports after graduation.

"It's a very hard lifestyle, but it's a very rewarding one as well," Brzozowski said. "What I'm most looking forward to is trying to just get on a podium. I want to

get on a podium, I want to get a medal, I want to get a trophy. I feel like that's when I'll know I made it and I really want to become like a big name in this sport."

Brzozowski trains with her teammates every day in New York for the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina and said the biggest challenge is covering the expenses, since bobsledding is not a government funded sport. In order to cover some of her sports expenses, Brzozowski is a marketing consultant in her spare time.



Junior guard Hunter Woods scores a basket on a reverse layup against College of Charleston on Feb. 5 in Schar Center. The Phoenix lost to the Cougars 66-64.

ANA LUISA SCHOLTES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Emily and Casey Lewis cut the ribbon at the front of their new store, Carolina Sundries, during its public opening on Feb. 5, in Burlington. Carolina Sundries is a specialty grocery store with a grab-and-go deli offering local products.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior Vanessa Taylor guards Towson University's Kylie Kornegay-Lucas in the final four minutes of the game. Elon lost the game 67-52 on Feb. 6 in Schar Center.



JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR

Ellie Dent, an artist based out of Atlanta, Georgia, speaks inside Arts West on Feb. 7. Dent's work focuses on abject experiences in today's health industry. Her exhibition will remain inside Arts West Gallery 406 until March 10.



JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR

Elon University students sit in upstairs LaRose Commons on Feb. 6 for the 2022 Omicron Delta Kappa induction ceremony. ODK is a national honor society recognizing leadership and service in students.

Francis Center continues to implement healthy upgrades

HEALTH | from cover

The first phase, started in fall 2020 and completed in spring 2021, centered around kicking off Elon's nursing program in fall 2021, as well as the Interprofessional Simulation Center — a space for health science students to train with real people hired to act as patients.

As of January 2022, Neiduski said the nursing program has three full-time faculty, a department chair and a program assistant. She also said they will be hiring three additional faculty in fall of 2022.

“

ESPECIALLY BEING THE FIRST COHORT OF NURSING STUDENTS, I'M REALLY EXCITED TO BE ABLE TO GET THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE NEW LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACTUALLY BE ABLE TO USE ALL THE EQUIPMENT THAT THEY HAVE.

SOPHIA TIAGO
FRESHMAN

Neiduski said the School of Health Sciences is also working on adding a Bachelor of Science in Nursing completion program, as well as a master's level program in nursing.

The school is currently in phase two of renovations, which began in fall 2021 and is expected to finish in April 2022. The total cost of construction is estimated to be \$3,392,700, according to the remodeling's commercial permit issued by the Alamance County Inspections Department.

According to Neiduski, phase two renovations will add an Anatomical Gift Program Memorial garden on the side of the building, as well as another entrance into the building through the garden so students and



Mitchell Harrel walks while on the phone from the construction site at the Francis Center on Feb. 7 as the construction crew begins to clean up from a days work in muddy conditions.

faculty can walk through it on their way into the building.

In fall 2021, the Golden LEAF Foundation provided Elon with a \$100,000 grant in order to help pay for an augmented reality, virtual reality and mixed reality lab.

"I might put you at the scene of an accident on the side of the highway, I may put you in an emergency room or in a surgery or maybe I'll even put you in the human heart," Neiduski said. "You will actually be immersed ... the Golden Leaf grant has helped us access the technology we need to make that a reality, and we intend to not only educate our students, but also healthcare providers from the community."

Phase two will also rearrange and add classrooms, lab and research spaces and new student common areas.

Freshman Sophia Tiago is a part of the nursing program's first cohort. According to Tiago, she was told about the Francis Center's renovations in her Nursing Healthcare Relationships class. Although she said she does

not currently have any classes in the building, Tiago said the freshmen nursing class will transition there next academic year.

"Especially being the first cohort of nursing students, I'm really excited to be able to get the opportunity to have new learning experiences and actually be able to use all the equipment that they have," Tiago said.

Both Tiago and Neiduski said they are excited to see the expansion of the health science school.

"I think it's great. We were talking during our class a couple days ago about how there's already so many new nursing applications," Tiago said. "It's crazy how small it was at first ... and how big it got over just like not even a full year. It's been a semester and a half, almost."

Phase three is scheduled to occur during the 2022-23 academic year — with phase four being scheduled for the summer of 2023.

Phase three focuses primarily on the two-story space located in back of the Francis Center. After completion, the space will include a skills lab where students will learn

BY THE NUMBERS

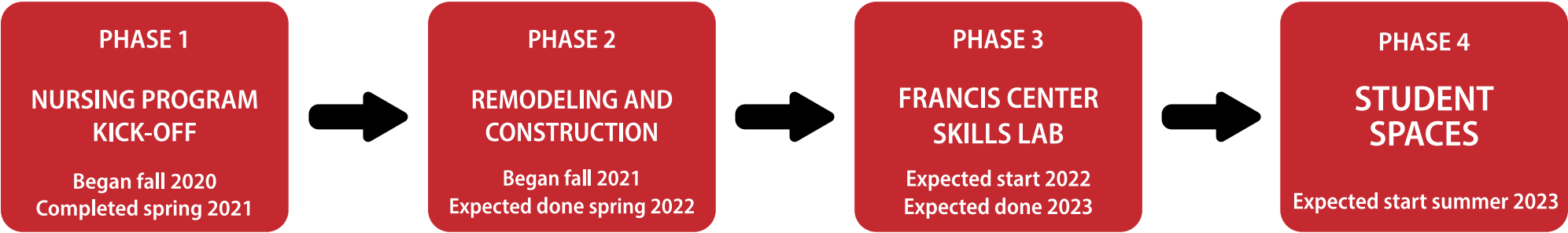
\$3,392,700

is the estimated total cost for the constructions of Elon University's School of Health, according to the remodeling's commercial permit issued by the Alamance County Inspections Department.

how to do anything from moving a patient, to taking vital signs to working with a patient at their bedside, according to Neiduski.

Phase three and four will also add a handful of study rooms, more student lounge and gathering space, another conference room and more office suites.

"It's been absolutely an amazing experience, to not only learn, but also to collaborate and really think about the ways that we can advance engaged learning and create incredible learning spaces for our students," Neiduski said.



Elon University School of Health's renovation phases. Renovation and remodeling occurs in all phases, as well as creation of classrooms, student spaces and labs.

CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGNER

Over 97% of Elon University students are booster compliant

Booster compliant includes receiving the booster, being approved exempt or deferring for medical reasons

Kyra O'Connor
Executive Director | @ko_reports

Elon University reported 97% of students are in compliance with the COVID-19 booster mandate as of Feb. 8. According to Dean of Students Jana Lynn Patterson, the term compliant includes both students who received the booster dose of the vaccine and those who have exemptions — whether medical or religious — as well as deferrals.

Consequences will take effect in the next few days for students who are not compliant, such as Phoenix card deactivation and disenrollment, Patterson said.

"We worked through things last fall so that we ended up not having to disenroll anybody, and that's certainly what we anticipate this time," Patterson said.

The process for students uploading their booster documentation was similar to uploading their primary vaccine dose series.

However some students who tested positive in the last 90 days were advised by medical professionals to wait to get the booster. These students were granted deferrals and make up roughly 6.5% of the students considered compliant, Patterson said.

"We encourage students to get the booster as soon as it's medically safe and they have their providers and families feel comfortable," Patterson said. "The CDC ... guidelines are that you might want to think about waiting up to 90 days to get it."

There are 303 "true exemptions" to the booster out of all of the compliant students, Patterson said. While the majority of exemptions granted are students who applied for an exemption in the fall, some students did apply for exemptions specifically for the booster dose.

Only a few days into the spring semester, the university has seen the impact of the booster shot on campus — particularly with quarantine and isolation of close contacts, Patterson said.

"We had very few close contacts that had to go into quarantine last fall because they were vaccinated," Patterson said. "Now unless you're boosted, you can be vaccinated but not boosted and have to do that."



CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGNER

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

ELON UNIVERSITY POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR BREAKS DOWN GERRYMANDERING



CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGNER

Some lawsuits in NC around gerrymandering occurred after districts were redone. The maps are drawn every ten years based on census data and determine where citizens in particular areas vote.

NC Supreme Court struck down GOP-drawn political maps last week, forcing legislatures back to the drawing board

Kyra O'Connor
Executive Director | @ko_reports



Thomas Kerr

The Republican-drawn political maps intended to be used for the next decade in North Carolina were struck down by the state supreme court. The maps, which are drawn every ten years based on census data, determine where citizens in particular areas vote. The town of Elon and Elon University are located in the 64th district of North Carolina. Southern Alamance County is represented by the 63rd District.

This interview has been edited for clarity.

How would you explain gerrymandering to someone who may not have much background on it?

"It is a process where legislatures, because congressional district mapping is left to the state legislatures, a political process where one party tries to redraw distribution maps, so that it would benefit their own party. So, you look at demographics, mostly. You can look at voting behavior too, things of that nature, and draw maps that would maximize the number of seats that you're going to win.

With the rise of analytics ... there's people out there that make a living to know

exactly what street to stop the district at. It's become a science of, in essence, making the playing field slanted one way.

There's two ways you can do it: it's called cracking or stacking, where you either look at the population of a district, and you can spread out your political opponents' vote base among these multiple districts, so that it's diluted. Or you can do stacking, meaning that you recognize that there are certain areas that you just aren't going to win, the demographics are against you. So, you try to consolidate as many of those votes into one district. So, you just forfeit that one district, but the other districts around it are safe.

With North Carolina, we are the poster child of gerrymandering in the United States. ... We redraw the maps in North Carolina, even though our voting electorate is roughly split — we're a purple state, we're 50/50 — but some of the maps would make it so that it would be an 11/3 split. Obviously, that is not representative of the public's political sentiment. It seems like every time we redraw the congressional maps in North Carolina, there's lawsuits because it's so gerrymandered.

One of the reasons why North Carolina can get away with it is because the Voting Rights Act was ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court ... meaning that prior to that, any change to electoral law in the South — pretty much the old Confederate, the Jim Crow states — had to be approved by the federal government. That went away, so now there's no oversight on the legislature redrawing these maps except for the courts."

How did it get to this point, of being so gerrymandered that there's lawsuits practically every time the districts are redone?

In increments. It's a science. It's how analytics have invaded sports, analytics have invaded politics. So, the Republicans — because that's who it's been, it's been a Republican led legislature for a very long time in North Carolina — they just keep pushing the envelope. Let's try this and let's see if it makes it through the courts. So, that's where it's at. Just push the envelope, okay, we got away with this, we're going to try this.

The last time they really tried to do a major gerrymandering, it was struck down, or they had to temper it, because ethnicity was a part of their calculation, which is illegal. You cannot do it based upon ethnicity. You can do it upon party affiliation. So, that's where that voting data is becoming so important. Now they can draw lines based upon voting data, which in theory is completely legal, because it's not based on ethnicity, even though there's a strong correlation between ethnicity and party affiliation."

Do you think it's too late for people to get involved and to do something about this process?

Every time a congressional map is drawn, it goes up for public debate. So, there is a direct mechanism that people can get involved to express their, either support or displeasure, with the proposed maps.

They don't have to listen to the public though. So, there was quite some outrage when the current map was announced, and during that public hearing, but it didn't change anything. So, really, there's not a whole lot that the individual voter can do. Awareness is one thing ... Most politicians don't make that part of the platform, but you know if there is a politician that says gerrymandering is an issue, I'm going to tackle that, then vote for that person. Most people don't pay attention to down ballot

candidates. Pay attention to justices, to when you're electing court officials, that's, again, really the battleground in politics right now. So pay attention to those.

It's so odd to think that the courts are the battleground, isn't it?

"That hurts me personally, because, again, it's probably being naive, but I still would like to think that the courts are independent and nonpartisan. That's not true. That's not reality. But I would like for that to be the truth. The courts seem pretty hesitant to get involved, especially after the Supreme Court Voting Rights Act repeal. They're taking the cue from the Supreme Court that it's not the court's job to monitor what an elected body does when it's fulfilling its duty of electoral mapping."

And why do you think that is? Has it always been that way that it's not the courts job to get involved in that elected body process?

Pretty much, yes. They do get involved when there's things that are strictly unconstitutional. According to the 14th Amendment, you can't discriminate based upon ethnicity, sex, gender, all of that. So, again, at one point, the North Carolina map was struck down because it did take ethnicity, so that's where the courts feel comfortable getting involved. But when it's based purely on politics, then they don't seem to be ready to get that involved in the democratic process.

Which you can see on both sides. Yes, you don't want the courts being the drivers of electoral outcomes and you don't want courts to legislate from the bench, but you also have to deal with something you know, a 50/50 split in the electorate in North Carolina yet, possibly 11 to three, congressional split. That's red flags, sirens ... that's not right. That's going against the spirit of democracy."

ZOINKS! BURLINGTON’S VERY OWN “SHAGGY” SELLS HIS MYSTERY MACHINE

The classic cartoon car is moving to Florida where a new owner will keep it on the road

Ellis Chandler
Elon News Network | @ellis_chandler

Kevin Allen Coombs collects and fixes up cars as a hobby. Of all the cars the Burlington resident has repaired over the years, one stands out: Coombs’ very own “Scooby Doo” Mystery Machine.

“You go to Walmart, or Lowe’s or anywhere like that, don’t expect it to be a five to a 10-minute trip,” Coombs said. “Because even going to Walmart just to pick up a bottle of water is going to take you a couple of hours to get out of the parking lot.”

The 1966 Ford Econoline E100 was painted like the iconic van from the CBS show “Scooby Doo” by its original owner in 1969. The original owner sold the van at age 92 because he couldn’t drive it anymore due to arthritis in his knees. Coombs purchased it in 2003, and now he’s passing it on once again.

Coombs is better known as “Shaggy” to his family and friends because of his beard and how he used to dress.

“I drove it as an everyday vehicle,” Coombs said. “It wasn’t parked for any amount of time. It was on the road constantly.”

Coombs said people would follow him as far as 30 miles to ask questions about the van, and one time, nine state troopers pulled him over in his home state of Texas — just to take a picture with the van.

Parting with the van after 20 years of memories was not something Coombs wanted to do. He calls the van his pride and joy and said it’s a great conversation piece. It was originally purchased for \$1,200, but Coombs now listed it with an asking price of \$10,000.

Coombs sold the van because he can no longer drive it due to his chronic illnesses, but he originally intended to pass it on to his daughters. After serving 18 months in Iraq and Kuwait, the van was a project to help him cope with post traumatic stress disorder, Coombs said.

“When I bought the van, my daughters would ride my lap and drive. I would run the gas and the clutch and everything, but they would drive the van, and we drove around in a circle driveway all day long,” Coombs said. “So yeah, both my daughters know how to drive three speed on the go.”

Because Coombs can no longer drive the van, it’s been sitting in his garage for three years. The Mystery Machine is now making its way to its new home in Florida. It was purchased by Kyle Raymond, who drove up to Burlington on Feb. 5 to inspect and help repair the van.

Raymond said a friend sent him the Facebook Marketplace post as a joke, but Raymond’s intention to purchase the car

was entirely serious.

“I saw it was still available so I messaged at 1:54 a.m. like a crazy person, and the exact same minute that I sent it, at 1:54, his wife replied and said it’s available,” Raymond said.

“YOU GO TO WALMART, OR LOWE’S OR ANYWHERE LIKE THAT, DON’T EXPECT IT TO BE A FIVE TO A 10 MINUTE TRIP. BECAUSE EVEN GOING TO WALMART JUST TO PICK UP A BOTTLE OF WATER IS GOING TO TAKE YOU A COUPLE OF HOURS TO GET OUT OF THE PARKING LOT.”

KEVIN ALLEN COOMBS
BURLINGTON RESIDENT

Coombs said there was a lot of interest in the van from potential buyers as far away as Arizona, but there wasn’t much local interest, which was surprising to him. But

now that someone has finally purchased it, he’s thrilled that the van will be taken care of and running on the road for years to come.

Raymond’s first plan for the van is to “get it back to its former glory” by making minor cosmetic repairs.

“One of the things Kevin didn’t want to do is change that originality,” Raymond said. “So it’s cracked, it’s rusted, you know, everything since 1969. So we’ll go over that and try and see what we can do, try and fix some things, repair some things.”

He plans on using the van as a promotional tool for his soap company, and he wants to register the vehicle with the Make-A-Wish Foundation for anyone who comes up with a wish that kids want to do that involves the Mystery Machine.

“I only see up from here, maybe add some new shag [carpet] but other than that, Kevin did a great job maintaining what this is and what it was,” Raymond said. “Hopefully what it will be, you know, will just live up to the reputation that it’s had since 1969 when the original owner painted it this way.”

As the van made its way out of the garage for the first time in years, Coombs said he was happy there was someone new to take care of it.

“I’ve had a lot of fun with the van and have seen a lot of joy and a lot of people have fun with the van, or will come just to see how you know people react to it,” Coombs said.

1 Kyle Raymond, the new owner of the Mystery Machine, drove from Florida to North Carolina to pick up the van. Raymond and his business partner, Jason Pickett, worked in telecommunications together for many years before embarking on their latest business venture, Lovely Suds, an eco-friendly, handmade soap company.

2 Before Raymond brings the Mystery Machine back to Florida, he will need to repair portions of the vehicle. Before it was pulled out of the garage on Feb. 5, the Mystery Machine sat for nearly three years.

3 Kevin Allen Coombs has owned 20 to 30 cars throughout his lifetime. His hobby of fixing cars is what led him to the Mystery Machine. While Coombs has said goodbye to many cars, he said it was difficult to see the Mystery Machine go.

4 The inside of the Mystery Machine is outfitted in green shag carpet, complete with multiple nods to the beloved children’s program “Scooby Doo.” Coombs said the vehicle draws looks from everywhere he goes. Even a quick trip to Walmart can take hours as people stop to look at the iconic vehicle.

5 Raymond began working on soaps during his time on the road for his telecommunications job. Now his company, Lovely Suds, sells 100% USA made organic, eco-friendly, handmade soaps.

6 Coombs stands at the door of the Mystery Machine just after it came out of the garage. Even though he can’t drive the van anymore, he said saying goodbye to the iconic car was difficult to do. Coombs remembers driving the van around with his daughters and showing it off whenever he went for a drive.

7 After serving 18 months in Iraq and Kuwait, the van was a project to help him cope with post traumatic stress disorder, Coombs said. Coombs sold the van because he can no longer drive it due to his chronic illnesses, but originally intended to pass it on to his daughters.

8 Nicholas Allen Coombs, age seven, remembers watching his dad drive the Mystery Machine. Nicholas said he loved watching everyone work on the van, and while he is sad to see it go, he said when he grows up he is going to build a model of the van to remember it forever.





PSYCHOLOGIST LOOKS INTO SEASONAL DEPRESSION

Dr. Bilal Ghandour, a psychology professor, gives advice on seasonal depression

Abigail Hobbs
Elon News Network | @abigailhobbs

Dr. Bilal Ghandour is an assistant professor of psychology with expertise on anxiety disorders and self-harm behaviors. He is a licensed clinical psychologist and adviser to Active Minds, a club revolving around mental health stigma.

Can you explain what seasonal depression is in your own words?

“It’s a disorder that impacts our moods that is closely connected to change in weather patterns. The potential disorder, that can develop when we have less light, is pretty similar to what happens when we shut down when it’s dark; when we have less activity, when it’s not the time to be about and active. It causes certain persons to be particularly afflicted by that when there is insufficient amount of daylight.

It’s called seasonal affective disorder, but it affects mostly mood in the depressed state. You start feeling more incapable of engaging in activity, you get withdrawn, you feel more sad, and that’s usually what that is.”

Can you discuss some of the symptoms of seasonal depression and how this differs from major depression disorder?

“It’s still a tricky one because it doesn’t have the same kind of confident manifestation as depression, where it’s pretty clear with major depression what goes on. Although the symptoms are very similar, it’s hard to determine why they occur, and the times that they do, because there are other factors that go along with that.

It could possibly be that you may not necessarily connect to the lack of daylight, but it could be with the lack of social activity in general. It could be perhaps that you end up working too many hours, and then you leave feeling a little depressed because you don’t have much possibility to engage when there’s light. It’s kind of difficult to determine whether it’s literally a chemical change as a result of certain neurotransmitters that don’t function as well anymore, or it’s an environmental change as a result of less activity being engaged in.

It’s the same thing to think about why, for example, alcoholism is more common, or certain disorders are more common in northern parts of the world where they have less light. It’s not so much that there’s something chemically that makes them depressed, but there’s less to do with this less light, less possibility for involvement. And so then you start feeling differently and make different choices.”

What are your suggestions for coping with seasonal depression?

“The most important thing is to be prepared ahead of time because many, many folks have this impression that, ‘OK, I still feel good. It’s going to be



ANNA TOPEL | DESIGNER

Seasonal depression, also known as seasonal affective disorder, is a disorder that can affect an individual's moods that is closely connected to change in weather patterns.

fine. Oh, maybe it’s not going to hit me this time, so I’m alright.’ But if you’ve seen this pattern occur at least a couple of times, or a couple of years, then you got to be ready with specific coping skills. And what I mean by this is don’t wait until it happens. When it happens, it becomes too late. The reason why it becomes too late is that your mood drops to such a point, and then our mind can’t think clearly anymore — can’t think of alternatives, or to reach out or to talk to a friend, or read a book, or do a hobby, go to the gym. We stopped doing that.

But if you have prepared ahead of time, you already have your toolbox ready. The advice that I would give is to have more than one because it could very well be that on one particular day — even if it’s your favorite thing in the world to go to the gym and run a couple of miles on the treadmill — maybe on that particular day you just don’t feel like it. What’s the alternative? Is it to talk to a friend, to reach out to a family member, to do a puzzle, solve problems?”

In terms of getting more light, do you suggest a sun lamp or getting outside more? What do you recommend?

“It’s a tough one because a lot of people think that it really helps, but in this context, it is very hard to determine how much of this is placebo. Now, that is not to say that it’s a problem if it’s placebo if it has the effect of lifting your mood. First, placebo effects are real. What we mean by this is that maybe you can change the way you think about certain things so that you gain energy, gain trust in your ability to confront some difficulty. So there isn’t any real overwhelming evidence

that the actual light changes things at a neurochemical level, but certainly if one feels that it may make a difference, it definitely can.”

Do you have any final words?

“Try as much as you can. One approach is to be prepared. The other approach is not to be afraid of it, meaning that if you start feeling something is off, try as much as possible not to already catastrophize about what’s going to happen next. And this is it because I know, I have my own practice as a clinician. I know that a lot of people, for instance, when the holiday hits, they already know that it’s been a bad experience with them and it’s always going to be taking place, so sure when something feels wrong don’t immediately jump to the conclusion that it’s got to be because the weather has changed. It could be the case, but feel more empowered to say, ‘Alright, what’s my alternatives? What could be going on?’ That’s different.

If you’ve exhausted those resources, and you figure out that there’s really no trigger except that the weather has changed and there’s less light, then remind yourself of what are the tools that you can use, one of the things that you can engage in, because when you isolate then it becomes this spinning and the snowball effect becomes harder and harder to get out of.”

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Out-of-state Alternative Break options return

Alternative Breaks allow students to dip their toes into the idea of service learning with week-long trips

Samantha Sussman
Lifestyle Editor | @Samanthasussma

As students begin to plan for Spring Break, there is another option they can take into consideration: The Kernodle Center for Civic Life’s Alternative Break programs.

They will be returning to communities outside of North Carolina and creating partnerships to cause a lasting impact with their service, no matter how small the task, according to senior Zoë Rein.

The Alternative Break program provides students with the opportunity to serve in communities outside of Elon over short-term breaks. Applications are open now on Phoenix Connect.

Rein spent a week last year on an Alternative Break serving the Greensboro community.

“It was amazing getting to work with a lot of the people just in the community who we’ve never even heard of but then just brought together all this amazing work,” Rein said.

Students who participate in Alternative Breaks work with a community partner to see how they can best serve the community. Last year, students were placed in the Greensboro area because of the COVID-19 pandemic. But this year, students will again have the opportunity to serve outside of North Carolina. This year’s Spring Break trips go to Nashville, Washington D.C. and Asheville. Rein will serve as the student director of Alternative Breaks programming this year.

“IT WAS AMAZING GETTING TO WORK WITH A LOT OF THE PEOPLE JUST IN THE COMMUNITY WHO WE’VE NEVER EVEN HEARD OF BUT THEN JUST BROUGHT TOGETHER ALL THIS AMAZING WORK”
ZOË REIN
SENIOR

“Our program, it was a lot more education-based instead of service-based last year just because of the opportunities that were presenting themselves in the timeframe,” Rein said.

Assistant director of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life Autumn Cox said the programs focus on one problem in a community in order to receive a more immersive experience. This year’s focuses are on homelessness, food security and educational disparities.

“Since you get to really dig into one subject in one location over the course of an entire week, you can really get a lot of deep education but also some experiential education,” Cox said.

Cox said the students who attend these trips get the chance to reflect on what they have done in their week of service to better understand the world around them.

Sophomore and student co-leader of the Washington D.C. trip Rachel Curtis said she and her fellow student leaders take a half semester class to prepare for the Alternative Break trips. In the class, they learn about leadership, reflection and sustainable service.

Curtis said sustainable service is important to her and the Kernodle Center because they want service habits to continue after the trip.

“We can change the way that we view service and so it can, I guess change the way that we help people in the future,” Curtis said. “And it’s also important to work with other organizations that meet people’s needs instead of in the way that they actually are instead of just what they think they are.”

Though the pandemic has altered trips slightly, the biggest changes programs have seen reflect the number of participants.

“It’s been like, just smaller participant crowds and trying to make sure that we’re just able to put on as best of the program as we can,” Rein said.

Rein said implementing the sustainable service element can create a difference in communities like Elon in the future, not just where the students travel.

“We like to think that the service doesn’t just stop with Alternative Breaks, but it’s just like a short-term way to get people involved,” Rein said. “A lot of that education and training also carries forward, so if they become really interested and passionate about the issue, then they can bring all of that information to further service and especially back to Elon’s community itself.”

THE SOCIAL SIDE EFFECTS: SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CLASSROOM

Professors struggle to navigate the drawbacks of social media and demonstrate proper use

Hope Valenti
Elon News Network

Every morning, professor of communication design Ahmed Abdullah Al Fadaam wakes up and says a prayer. On Tuesday, Feb. 2, he prayed for the end of social media.

“I said, ‘Please make someone shut down the internet,’” Fadaam said. “That’s killing us, basically. When it all started, we were all excited because it was a good source for information. Now, it’s becoming a good source for distraction. And God knows where this is going.”

Fadaam attributes the bias presented on social media as a contributing factor to the increased divide in the world. He said that students often come across and buy into information that contradicts what is discussed in class, threatening their knowledge.

“This is helping build convictions that are sometimes related to misinformation,” Fadaam said. “People will start to believe that it’s the truth simply because so many posts are repeating it. Compared to something you’re projecting said once in class, how can this be true?”

Now a staple in today’s society, social media has grown from merely being a source of entertainment. With a presence in political and professional realms, it yields a great influence. As it expands into educational environments, social media presents drawbacks and benefits to be navigated by faculty and students alike.

For professor of religious studies Brian Pennington, the pressure is on faculty to instill a positive view of social media into the minds of students because it allows for rapid communication and access to ideas — a feature he believes supports collaboration and exposure.

“Students are able to engage with one another and scholars in ways that weren’t possible before,” Pennington said. “It helps students to see how topics that we’re dealing with in the classroom are current and relevant right now.”

Freshman business major Nathaniel Lerman said he does not use social media often, but when he does, he uses apps such as Snapchat and Instagram to connect with his peers. However, Lerman has observed other students engaging in social media usage during class, which disrupts his own learning.

“It’s definitely a distraction to see others on their phones during a lecture,” Lerman said.

Fadaam said that students’ misuse of the technology, such as texting and scrolling during a lecture, has created learning drawbacks. Although he realizes many students today use technology to take notes and connect, Fadaam said there are others who take advantage of this privilege from online shopping to posting on social media during lectures.

Fadaam said the internet has made academic research considerably effortless, eliminating the need to scour through books at the library — a convenience that jeopardizes students’ work ethic. He said that productivity and integrity has diminished in recent years as students can easily find answers to assignments and exams online.

“They’re not putting enough effort into looking for information. It’s already there in front of them, ready to be used,” Fadaam said.

While the ability to have such a variety of information at one’s fingertips can be an advantage, it can also be dangerous. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have faced issues of containing false or biased news, spreading



CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGNER

prejudice and false intelligence. A 2016 study about fake news by the Pew Research Center found that 23% of Americans admit to spreading misinformation on social media — whether it’s intentional or not. The ability to filter and identify reliable sources can contribute to accumulation of knowledge.

“

IT CAN BE A DETRIMENT TO CRITICAL THINKING BECAUSE SOCIAL MEDIA DISCOURSE TENDS TO BE INSTANTLY POLARIZING. SOCIAL MEDIA DOES NOT OFTEN DO A GOOD JOB OF DEVELOPING COMPLEXITIES AROUND ISSUES.

BRIAN PENNINGTON
PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

“It can be a detriment to critical thinking because social media discourse tends to be instantly polarizing,” Pennington said. “Social media does not often do a good job of developing complexities around issues.”

The distracting tendencies of social media have led Pennington to reject incorporating it into his teaching style, but he does acknowledge that it is possible and important to address it. Journalism instructor Susan Ladd said she’s taken it upon herself to fulfill such an essential task.

“It’s something we need to take seriously and actually teach students how to use it correctly,” Ladd said.

Both Ladd and Fadaam said they have incorporated positive examples of social media use into lectures. The objective is to make clear how its capacity exceeds

entertainment. Social media presents students with a variety of opportunities to network with individuals on a global level. Fadaam believes it holds great potential for broadening the minds and capabilities of individuals, but it’s their responsibility to make positive use of the platform.

“It’s a double-edged sword,” Fadaam said. “You can use it for good, you can use it for bad. So we are trying hard as teachers to use this sword for good and bring to the attention of our students that this is what [they] should do.”

As the director of Elon’s center for the study of religion, culture and society, Pennington neglects social media use outside of a professional setting, but some educators have found themselves turning to social applications for more information. Fadaam said he frequents news accounts on TikTok and Ladd said she often uses Twitter and Facebook to access recent reports.

Despite its limitations, Ladd sees social media as a potential tool to advance one’s knowledge and career. Ladd, a former journalist, said social media is simply a part of life. Prior to retirement, she incorporated social media into her own career. As a professor today, she prepares her students through assigning tasks that parallel those she encountered, such as live tweeting events. She said multimedia coverage is expanding in professional prevalence.

“By the time I left the business, I had a Facebook page, a blog, a professional Twitter account — all of which were used for my job as a journalist,” Ladd said. “Monitoring social media is part of the job now.”

Ladd has noticed the emergence of social media in various occupations. She said the multiple platforms have proven advantageous, specifically in searching for jobs and internships as students are able to build upon their public portfolios.

“A lot of students are already becoming entrepreneurs on social media,” Ladd said. “That’s amazing. People who are actually doing creative work are using social media to be their own PR people and promote their product or whatever it is they’re doing.”

Lerman uses applications such as

BY THE NUMBERS

23%

of Americans admit to spreading misinformation on social media — whether it be intentional or not, according to a 2016 study by the Pew Research Center.

LinkedIn to showcase his abilities to potential employers. He said he believes the ability to connect professionally is important as students advance their careers.

“You can have essentially all of your business online for employers or other people to see and notice,” Lerman said. “If you stick out they’re able to connect with you.”

Ladd said social networks are the future of society, constantly evolving and growing in popularity. Educators are having to adapt to its presence in the classroom and inform students about its importance to their futures. There are both beneficial and destructive consequences of social media — and the power, she said, lies in the hands of the user.

“It can be a distraction, but it can also be a tool,” Ladd said. “A very powerful tool.”

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KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University women's lacrosse team practices one week before the spring opening match. The Phoenix will face off against the University of Virginia Cavaliers on Friday, Feb. 11 at Rudd Field.

WOMEN'S LACROSSE PREPARES FOR OPENING WEEKEND

The team will face off against the University of Virginia to kick off the 2022 season

Kyra O'Connor
Executive Director | @ko_reports

When Mikaela Buoscio decided to play lacrosse at the collegiate level, she was looking for a great coaching staff and team culture, and Elon University fit the bill.

"Sports is a huge part of my life and I wanted to continue that for four more years, if I had the chance," Buoscio said.

The sophomore midfielder is one of 32 players on the Elon University lacrosse team ready to kick off the spring season this Friday, as the team takes on the University of Virginia at Rudd Field.

Elon last played the Cavaliers in 2019, losing at home 11-4. Despite the history, head coach Josh Hexter said the team is practicing to play its best, not based on the opponent.

"Regardless of the opponent we play, we have to do what we do and do it really well," Hexter said. "We don't necessarily concern ourselves with the name on the chest of who we're playing. We concern ourselves with competing at the highest level possible that we can compete at."

Heading into the season, Elon is projected to finish fifth in the Colonial Athletic Association, as ranked by the conference's preseason poll. The poll was conducted by CAA women's lacrosse coaches and placed James Madison University as the pre-season favorite, followed by Drexel University, Towson University and Hofstra University. Elon sits ahead of University of Delaware and College of William & Mary in the poll.

Hexter said the team's overall goals are

to win both the national championship and the CAA championship, something Elon has never accomplished before. The team has not received a bid for the NCAA tournament since 2017.

“

THE GOAL EVERY DAY IS TO EMBRACE OUR COMPETITIVE DRIVES AND TRY TO GET BETTER EVERY DAY, TRY TO BE THE BEST VERSION OF YOURSELF EVERY DAY, AND TRY TO SATISFY THAT CURIOSITY THAT WE HAVE OUT IN THE FIELD, AND TO REALLY GIVE EACH OTHER OUR BEST.

JOSH HEXTER
HEAD COACH OF ELON WOMEN'S LACROSSE

"The goal every day is to embrace our competitive drives and try to get better every day, try to be the best version of yourself every day, and try to satisfy that curiosity that we have out in the field, and to really give each other our best," Hexter said.

Both Buoscio and senior midfielder Gillian Curran were selected as part of the preseason all CAA team, as well. Curran was a preseason all CAA honorable mention in



KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University women's lacrosse team runs a drill at a practice on Feb. 4.

2021 and ranked ninth in the conference. This year the senior was tabbed as an all-conference team member and Buoscio was named an honorable mention.

As a sophomore, Buoscio said her biggest challenge last year was the transition from high school athletics to the collegiate level. The midfielder played in 11 games last season, including starting in the opening round of the CAA championship.

"I haven't been on a team where people put in this much work," Buoscio said. "It makes it really easy to come before practice or stay half after ... It's just spending time with my teammates while also putting in the extra work."

Buoscio said as she prepares for the season, she is looking forward to participating in more out of state contests.

The Phoenix have six road games this season, including one at Virginia Tech — where new additions to the women's lacrosse coaching staff are from.

Announced in the fall, Amanda Mozier and Taylor Caskey joined Hexter for the spring season as assistant coaches. Both Mozier and Caskey previously worked at Virginia Tech, and Caskey played on the Hokies for four seasons, as well. The Phoenix will face off against the Hokies on the road in March.

Buoscio said as the team gears up for Friday, she hopes the student body will come out and support their fellow Phoenix at Rudd Field.

"The lacrosse team has been working really, really hard," Buoscio said. "We're gonna do something special this year."



A FIGHT FOR HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

Freshman utility player Allee Seering throws the ball during a practice on Jan. 27. Seering is one of seven freshmen on Elon University's roster this season.

LUCAS CASEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon's softball team begins its season with the potential of competing in the conference tournament at home

Jacob Kisamore
Sports Director | @jacobkisamore

When Elon University head softball coach Kathy Bocock told her players that the school had been selected to host the Colonial Athletic Association softball tournament, she was met with enthusiasm. However, she was quick to remind her team that just because the school will host, they're not guaranteed to qualify.

"I remember their faces when they found out and how excited they were," Bocock said. "I told them, 'Listen. We're hosting, but keep in mind only five teams make it. No pressure.'"

Last month, the conference announced the relocation of May's softball championship from James Madison University to Elon University after James Madison announced it would leave the CAA for the Sun Belt Conference beginning next season. This will be Elon's first time hosting the event.

Only the top five finishers in the CAA regular season standings will qualify for the tournament. Bocock said she knows making it into the tournament will not be easy, but that it will be rewarding to see the school host, regardless of if the Phoenix qualify.

"They're going to have to work really hard to make sure we're there," Bocock said. "I'm just so excited for our whole program, the alumni, the players now and the players to come in the future."

Junior and team co-captain Megan Grant said the potential of playing de facto home games in the conference tournament has inspired the team, and she believes the goal of qualifying for the championship will help them dig deeper than in previous years.

"It hits home for you," Grant said. "It does because you just have that power to push even further at times when it might not feel like you can."

Balancing youth and experience

The Phoenix welcomed seven freshmen to this year's roster, but there are many returning core players from last season.

Among the team's key returning position players are Grant, senior outfielder and co-captain Rebecca Murray, junior infielder and co-captain Carley Davis and sophomore

infielder Gabi Schaal.

While the Phoenix have much of its hitting production back, Grant said she believes the team's four freshmen hitters will make an immediate impact.

"I'm very excited about our freshmen," Grant said. "They are bringing a bunch of new tools and mindsets to the game and it's ... very great to see us all work together."

Despite losing Kenna Quinn, the team's top pitcher from last season, the Phoenix return a strong pitching staff. Graduate student Alexa Nemeth, redshirt senior McKenzie Weber, senior co-captain Katie Hoover and junior Kaitlin King are all back after seeing significant playing time in 2021.

“

IT HITS HOME FOR YOU. IT DOES BECAUSE YOU JUST HAVE THAT POWER TO PUSH EVEN FURTHER AT TIMES WHEN IT MIGHT NOT FEEL LIKE YOU CAN.

MEGAN GRANT
JUNIOR AND TEAM CO-CAPTAIN

Bocock said she also expects contributions this season from her three freshman pitchers — Isley Duggins, Taylor Cherry and McKenna McCard — and believes the balance and variety of pitch types possessed by this year's staff could be a strong point for the team.

"What's so neat about this group is if one throws a certain type of pitch, we've got another one that can come in and offset them," Bocock said. "If we have speed, we have somebody that can come in and throw off speed and that's kind of huge for softball."

Rejuvenated mentally and physically

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, it has been difficult for the team to stay in peak physical shape with protocols always changing the team's schedule, Bocock said.

"Trying to stay in shape and really get back to where we once were was a big drive



LUCAS CASEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University will host the 2022 CAA Softball Championship at Hunt Park in May for the first time.

for me," Bocock said. "I wanted to make sure that we did that."

After spending a few seasons working with Elon's men's and women's basketball teams, sports performance coach Cameron Ringstead is back working with the softball team on strength and conditioning. According to Bocock, the reunion is already paying dividends.

"This is the best I've seen my team in shape in quite a few years," Bocock said.

The team has also focused on becoming stronger mentally after a pair of challenging seasons heavily impacted by COVID-19. While the team's routine is not yet where it was pre-pandemic, as players and coaches must still abide by the University's indoor mask mandate, Grant said the team has a much healthier mindset compared to last season.

"This year, we've really come out attacking it compared to last year," Grant said. "Last year, there was just so much uncertainty and hesitation about ... what's going to happen with this game, what's gonna happen with this practice, if somebody gets COVID, and this year, it's kind of been a little freer in that way."

Elon opens its season on Friday, Feb. 11, with a game against the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis Jaguars. The team will play a strong non-conference schedule with games against Atlantic Coast Conference foes such as the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill on Feb. 16,

Duke University on Feb. 23 and North Carolina State University on Mar. 2, as well as three clashes against Michigan State University on March 4, 5 and 13 from the Big Ten Conference.

"We're going to have a very competitive out of conference to really prepare for our conference," Bocock said. "I like doing that because I'm not afraid to go up against anybody and our girls know when we take the field, it doesn't matter who we're playing, we believe that we can win."

Bocock said the CAA season will feel much more normal compared to last year, when the Phoenix did not play all of the teams in the league due to COVID-19. Grant, who has not experienced a full conference schedule since she arrived at Elon, said she's looking forward to the normal conference slate.

"I'm excited to play teams that I haven't played and compete with them," Grant said. "I'm just looking forward to going out there, and giving it all I have, and being on a true, real schedule now, and being able to compete the way we're supposed to."

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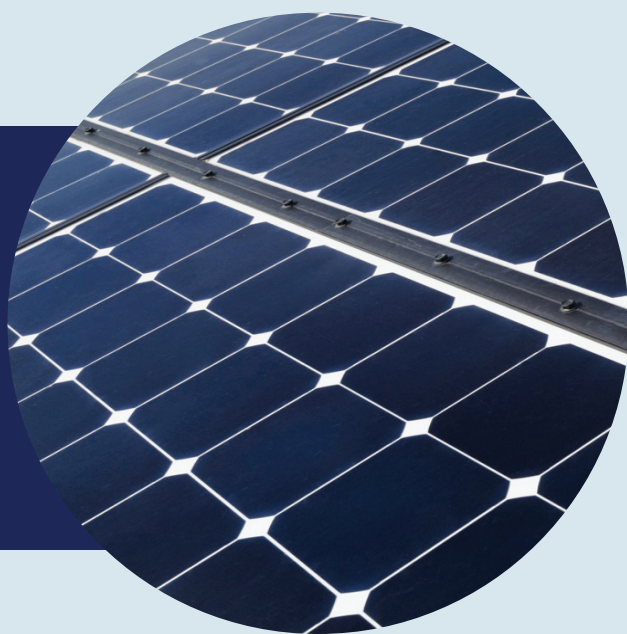
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