

Proposed county LGBTQ+ library label sparks concerns

Sticker will go to commissioner vote, will indicate violence, sexual descriptions, underage drinking

Abigail Hobbs & Avery Sloan
Elon News Network

Books containing violence, underage drinking and drugs or sexually explicit content at the Alamance County libraries will be labeled with a parental guidance suggested sticker, if the Alamance County Commissioners vote to approve the label. The Alamance County Library Committee voted at its Feb. 11 meeting to bring the issue to the commissioners.

The label brought controversy after the committee considered labeling LGBTQ+ content in books, according to the minutes from the Nov. 12 meeting. After the request for the sticker was brought up, over 50 community members came to hear about the proposed policy at the next meeting Jan. 31. Twenty people spoke during the public comments section of the meeting, with only two speaking in favor of the sticker, according to the meeting minutes.

The majority of disagreements with the label cited the harm of targeting specific themes as it marks them as “wrong.” The American Library Association recommends against labeling books with LGBTQ+ themes as it can draw negative attention.

While Alamance Pride president Ken Smith wasn’t at the meeting himself, the organization posted about the meeting on Facebook, encouraging members of the community to learn about it.

“The continued stigmatization of people

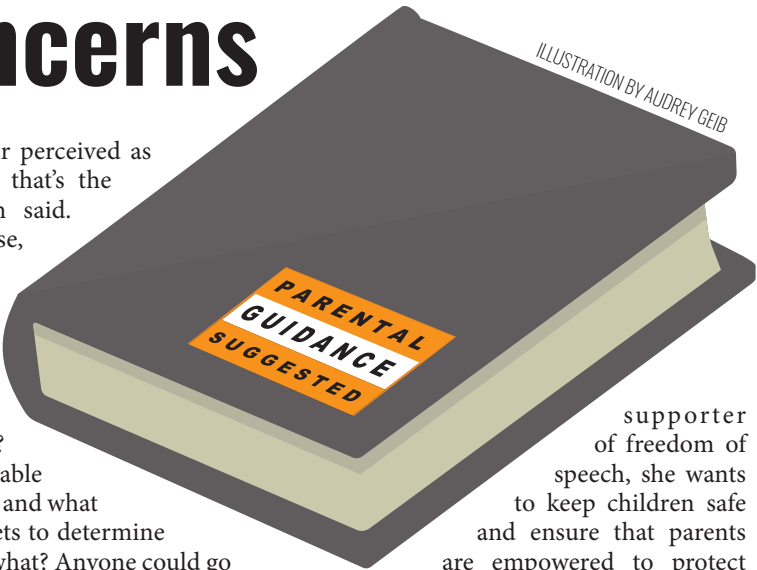
who are othered or perceived as others — I think that’s the real harm,” Smith said. “And of course, the proverbial slippery slope. Where do you stop, from a First Amendment perspective? What’s acceptable speech or language and what is and then who gets to determine who has access to what? Anyone could go into a library and that sort of situation and complain about virtually anything.”

Pamela Thompson, Alamance County commissioner and library committee liaison, said while she understands both sides of the issue, she would vote in support of the label. As a liaison from the county commissioners to the library committee, she is not a voting member but attends meetings.

She said this whole issue began after a mom brought her child to the library and the child found a book featuring a bunny rabbit that discussed “different lifestyles.” The rabbit was having “feelings that he didn’t understand,” Thompson said.

“When her kid started reading it, or she started reading it, light bulb went off and she said, ‘This is not what I want my child to be reading,’” Thompson said. “And that was fine. I think she made a complaint, and she has every right, but the next step is how you handle it.”

Thompson said this is a difficult issue that has been made worse with increased politicization. She said while she is a strong



supporter of freedom of speech, she wants to keep children safe and ensure that parents are empowered to protect their children.

“When you go in a place like a library or anywhere Barnes and Noble, anywhere, church, anywhere, if they don’t have your opinion, your feathers get ruffled and you just don’t like it, and you don’t have to believe something, but you cannot be judgmental and critical of everybody else,” Thompson said. “Last I checked God has not been on vacation and asked me to sub for him for two weeks. That is not my job.”

Smith said there really is no issue as the age groups these books are targeting should be accompanied by a parent.

“They use the typical moral panic of the children to justify these things to cover up their own fears and shame and guilt,” Smith said. “The reality of the situation is, I can’t think of one parent when you look at the age group that they’re really trying to address. I don’t know of one parent that wouldn’t be already accompanying their children to the library and knowing what they’re reading.”

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ABSS board member announces retirement, residents speak out for classified employee raises

Community members of local school system support pay increases for bus drivers, administrative positions

Avery Sloan
Elon News Network

Chuck Marsh, Alamance-Burlington School System board member, announced his resignation at the Feb. 24 Board of Education meeting in a letter read by Sandy Ellington-Graves, ABSS Board of Education board chair.

Marsh has previously had health issues, causing him to miss meetings, and he is planning to spend more of his focus on the four businesses he runs, he said in his resignation letter.

“As each of you know, I’ve had some health issues which have kept me from giving 100% and that’s not fair to the ABSS staff, my fellow board members and those who voted for it,” Marsh’s letter said. “I’ve come to realize that I am a better service to our community behind a radio microphone with that said, it’s with a heavy heart that I tender my resignation from the ABSS Board of Education.”

Marsh was elected in 2022, and the board will decide at the March 11 work



ERIN HRONCICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Chuck Marsh (right) takes the oath as he is officially inducted to the ABSS School Board of Education on Dec. 5, 2022.

session meeting how to fill his position, Ellington-Graves said.

2025-26 preliminary budget

The board of education will have a budget hearing March 24, but community members spoke out about the budget during the Feb. 24 meeting before the preliminary budget was discussed. With about 30 community members present and eight members making public comments — mainly regarding the preliminary budget — the Feb. 24 board meeting focused on possible budget changes to the 2025-26

academic year and calendar changes for future years.

While raises for certified staff members was a part of the county’s original proposal, classified staff members were not given raises. Employees who require a teaching license or certification are considered certified staff members, such as teachers and counselors and classified staff members do not, such as custodians, bus drivers and administrative assistants.

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Elon Poll finds continued division across party lines

Republicans, Democrats are still split on issues of immigration, tariffs, new administration

Avery Sloan
Elon News Network

New Elon Poll shows partisan division on public opinion regarding immigration enforcement and consequences of tariffs. The survey was conducted Feb. 6 to 11 and the dataset included 1,000 adults 18 and older.

The poll found 53% of Americans surveyed support mass deportations of people who immigrated to the country illegally. Republicans support mass deportations at 89% and older Americans support at 60%. The poll found 57% of Democrats and 42% of Black Americans were the groups with the highest rate of opposition.

Respondents were also split on approving or disapproving the job President Donald Trump is doing, with 45% approving and 41% disapproving. However, when split up by party, 88% of Republicans said they approved of his job and 75% of Democrats said they disapproved.

Jason Husser, director of Elon Poll, said this partisan divide is not new and has been a pattern since about 2004.

“What we’re seeing now is that being ramped up even further, where almost nothing Trump does is overall bad among his base, and almost nothing he does is right among those who are opposed to him,” Husser said. “That is a trend that is, I think, the biggest pattern to pay attention to in the last 20 years of American history.”

The poll also found that even when respondents had a low attitude toward something in general, their opinions change once it becomes an issue that directly affects them.

“What we found is even among people who support mass deportations, when we ask them, ‘Do you know someone personally who’s worried about being deported?’ What we’re finding is the majority of people who said yes, they do know someone, don’t want to see that person deported,” Husser said. “It’s much like the phenomenon which person really dislikes Congress as a whole, but they might like their local member of Congress.”

Survey respondents were also split on their opinions of the consequences of tariffs on the price of goods and impacts on businesses. While 45% of respondents said they feel tariffs will increase the price of goods significantly — or over 10% — 36% said they felt it would increase the price between 5 and 10% — yet Husser said there are still partisan differences on tariffs.

“In the net overall, we’re seeing attitudes towards tariffs break down what one might imagine along partisan lines, Democrats tend to find almost all things about tariffs bad,” Husser said. “Republicans are acknowledging that, yes, there will be some inflationary effects of tariffs, but they’re seeing it owes a whole is something that’s largely a good thing rather than a bad thing.”

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SGA changes student organization funding model

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County organization holds vigil for historic lynching

PAGE 6 NEWS



Former softball player returns as a coach

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THE PENDULUM

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CHEAT SHEET

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

Economics professor details how tariffs raise the price of foreign goods

Professor explains how tariffs will raise consumer prices, products such as cars, computers

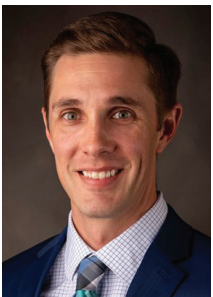
Trista Panagakos

Elon News Network

Throughout his 2024 presidential campaign to take back the White House, President Donald Trump outlined how tariffs would be used in his economic goals as well as his political ones. While on the campaign trail, Trump promised to put 60% tariffs on goods being imported from China, and 10% tariffs on goods from all other foreign countries.

Since taking office Jan. 20, Trump has imposed a 25% tariff on Mexico and Canada for what he says is their failure in maintaining their borders. He also imposed a 10% tariff on goods imported from China. On Feb. 3, Trump and the leaders of Mexico and Canada

reached an agreement to pause tariffs for 30 days.



Brandon Sheridan

Elon professor Brandon Sheridan has provided an insight on how tariffs affect consumers and the price of their goods, how tariffs have been used in the past and how retaliatory tariffs may affect consumers. According to Sheridan, consumers, not foreign countries, pay for the expenses tariffs put on their goods.

The length of this interview has been shortened for space.

What are tariffs and why should consumers care about them?

A tariff is really just a tax on goods coming in across the border from other countries. The impact to consumers is the same as any other tax, it raises the prices of the goods that they buy.

How do tariffs affect prices for businesses who import goods and consumers who buy those goods?

In the same way, anybody that uses an imported product is going to face and going to feel the effect of the higher price. So lots of businesses, for example, might use steel as an input to their production process. Let's say, if you're manufacturing cars, they're going to have to pay more for that steel. They're going to have to charge more for that car to consumers to cover the cost of the steel. It's going to raise the price for everybody all the way down the line.

How have tariffs been used in the past by the U.S. government?

Back before the United States had a developed income tax system, tariff revenues were used to fund a lot of the government. Once we shifted to income tax, and now we have sales taxes in the states, a lot of state operations are run from those, and so we don't really use it as something to generate revenue anymore. More in the past, they've been used more like a political football, so a point of negotiation. Some of that is valid, some of that is, national security concerns.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

A mechanic jumps onto the hood of a Jeep to get a closer look at the engine Jan. 9 at Thomas Tire and Automotive.

So for example, if semiconductor chips are vital to a lot of the products that we use, if you use a car, computer, etc., a phone, and so if the supply of those semiconductor chips was suddenly interrupted, that would be very problematic for the U.S. economy to run. So you may have a national interest in ensuring that you can have domestic production of that. And so you might want to heavily subsidize domestic production. And you might also want to put really high tariffs to discourage people from buying it from other countries. That would be sort of another explanation for how it's been used in the past.

How is Trump using tariffs now that are different from previous administrations?

President Trump has been using tariffs, I would say, unwisely. And I think he's been using them haphazardly, it's odd how he's using them, if I could say that, because you're using them on countries that we already have tariff agreements. We have free trade agreements with lots of countries, including Canada, Mexico, and so he's using, in some cases, the sort of the premise of national security to just put tariffs on everything. So he's using it as a negotiating tool on all sorts of things. And that is not really something that past administrations have wanted to do. For example, if you wanted to talk about border crossings and things like that, you have diplomats that could discuss specifics of those. But for everything that he wants to get done, he seems to be using tariffs as well: If you don't do this, then we're going to put tariffs on you. And that is not something that past U.S. administrations have done, or even administrations from other advanced countries have done.

How might uncertainty around American tariffs cause problems within the global business world?

We're already starting to see some of that. I know there's a couple different measures of economic policy uncertainty, both within the U.S. and globally, and those are reaching some of their highest levels ever in the past several weeks. So one of the worst things that a business can have is uncertainty, because it delays plans. And when you delay plans,

you may hire fewer people, or even fire some people. You delay expansion plans, you might miss opportunities that you otherwise would have had. So the Trump administration in 2018 also had some tariff trade wars and some estimates are that the uncertainty alone may have cost the U.S. something like 1% of GDP. Today in a \$30 trillion economy, that's like \$300 billion just because we're tossing around this political football. From an economics standpoint, it's not a very wise thing to do, but that's sort of the path they've taken. It substantially raises uncertainty and causes a lot of anxiety for businesses.

What are retaliatory tariffs? What would the effect of retaliatory tariffs be on American consumers?

Retaliatory tariffs are when the U.S. places a tariff on, say, Canada. Canada gets mad, they place a tariff on some U.S. product. And so the idea is that you go sort of back and forth and put tariffs on things that you think strategically might apply political pressure. So some foreign countries were saying they were going to specifically look to apply tariffs on important products from states that leaned Republican because they thought they could pressure the President a little bit more. For example, you might put high tariffs on bourbon from Kentucky, or on corn from Iowa, or something like that. That's been the tactic in the past. And so what that does is it hurts our producers, because it's harder for them to compete, because they have to compete with maybe lower priced producers abroad. But it also could permanently shift, if the uncertainty becomes the norm, then people that previously were buying, let's say, soybeans from the U.S. decide what the U.S. is not worth dealing with. There's so much uncertainty and chaos, we're just going to go with a different supplier altogether. We're not even going to entertain going back to American farmers. Something that you thought may have taken, like, a few months, to hammer out whatever political issue you have, and then you take the tariffs off, the other countries at this point have moved on, and so now they're not even going to entertain it, even if there aren't tariffs on it. So you could permanently damage these businesses. It's not necessarily just a temporary thing.

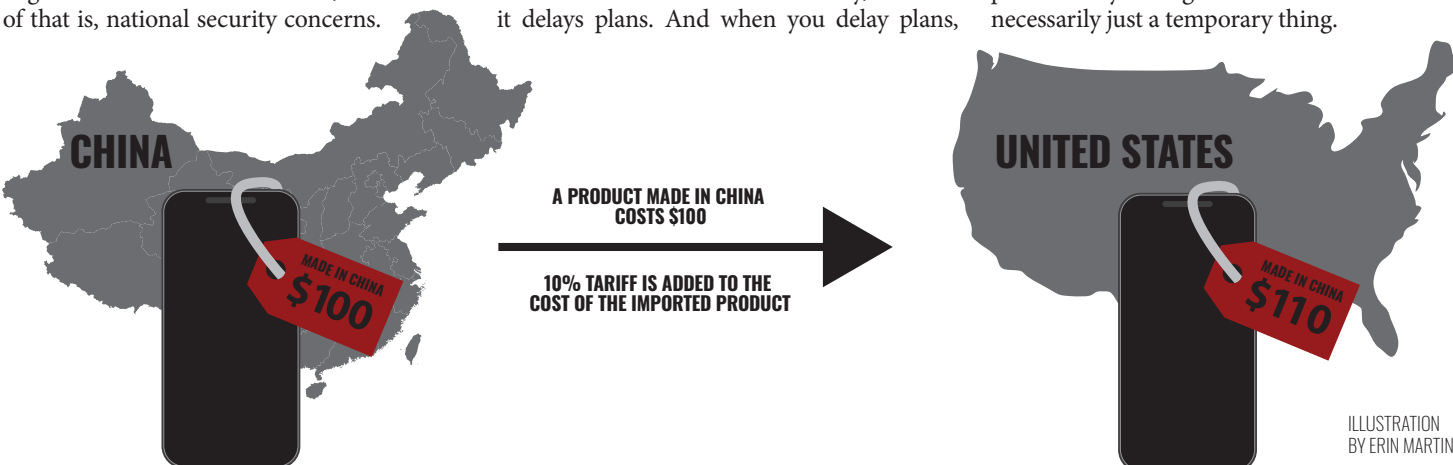


ILLUSTRATION
BY ERIN MARTIN

CORRECTIONS

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



Elon visitor Bree Wilson wipes away snow on a table Feb. 19 at Medallion Plaza. Elon University closed after noon Feb. 19 due to the winter weather.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR



Professor of music and festival director Alex Heitlinger conducts the Elon Jazz Ensemble to perform four songs Feb. 22 in McCrary Theatre. The university hosted the 2025 Elon Jazz Festival from Feb. 20 to 22, featuring visiting high school and middle school bands.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR



Graduate student Matthew Van Komen makes a slam dunk into the net, helping his team win its game against Towson on Feb. 20 in Schar Center. Elon won against Towson 69-63. Check out elonnewsnetwork.com for CAA coverage starting March 8.

LILLY MOLINA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



A family walks their dog as snowfall picks up Feb. 19 next to Lake Mary Nell.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Democrats, Republicans differ on tariffs

POLL | from cover

The Elon Poll found 50% of respondents felt there would be a negative impact on small businesses from higher tariffs, 19% said there would be a positive impact, 18% were unsure and 12% said there would be little or no impact. But, respondents were more split in terms of impacts of tariffs on jobs and manufacturing within the country. The poll found 50% of respondents said it was likely or very likely that production of goods in the U.S. will grow and be less reliant on foreign imports, and 34% said that was unlikely or very unlikely. Forty-four percent said there will likely or very likely be more job opportunities in the U.S. and 38% that is very unlikely or unlikely. More people also would prefer to round up or down to a higher value coin and stop production of pennies. The one cent coin costs over three cents to make and only 32% of respondents said they find pennies useful, compared to the 51% who would prefer to round and the 17% who were unsure. Husser said recently several politicians have talked about getting rid of the penny for this reason. “The penny has been, in some ways, this sort of touch point about government efficiency versus government providing services for all Americans for a long time now,” Husser said.

The next Elon Poll, which is planned to come out in the next couple of weeks, is a statewide poll focused on the new general assembly elected in November and the relationship between a new governor and a general assembly that no longer has a Republican supermajority. Later on in the semester there will be another nationwide poll on a topic that hasn’t been determined yet and there’ll be a poll in the summer focused on college sports.

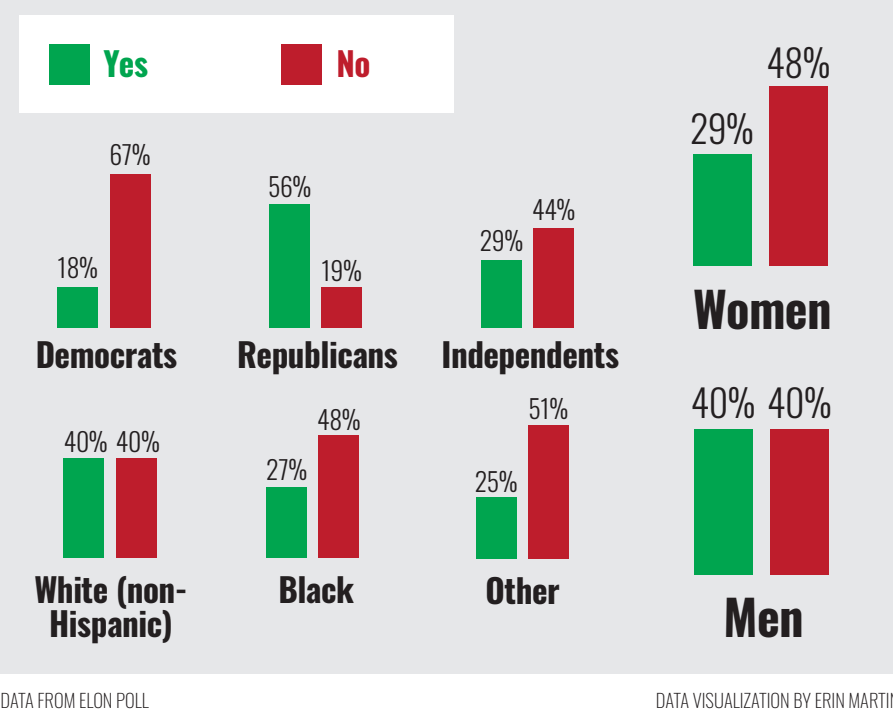


THE PENNY HAS BEEN, IN SOME WAYS, THIS SORT OF TOUCH POINT ABOUT GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY VERSUS GOVERNMENT PROVIDING SERVICES FOR ALL AMERICANS FOR A LONG TIME NOW.

JASON HUSSER
DIRECTOR OF ELON POLL

Do you support mass deportations of people who came to the U.S. illegally?

Data is based on an Elon University Poll of 1,101 U.S. adults aged 18 and older, conducted by web-based survey Feb. 6-11, 2025. The poll has a margin of error +/- 3.51%.



Alamance–Burlington School System Board of Education discuss preliminary budget, changes to future academic calendar

ABSS | from cover

Having a lack of bus drivers has led to students who are picked up on the second or third bus load showing up 20 or 30 minutes late to school, Medora Burke-Scoll, Eastern Alamance High School biology teacher, said during the public comment section of the meeting. “They’re missing content every single day,” Burke-Scoll said. “Because, in a state tested class with a giant set of standards, there’s not a moment where I’m not utilizing the class period that I have available to me.” There are 50 classified job openings across the county, Burke-Scoll said, which she feels is due to a lack of competitive pay. The base salary for bus drivers in North Carolina is \$17.56 an hour, 19% below the national average, according to Indeed. The current proposed preliminary budget is more than \$20 million more than the current budget, with employee benefits, supplement increases, operating expenses and certified staff additions making up large portions of the new budget. The employee benefit cost increases account for a 3 to 4% salary increase, a 2% increase in retirement benefits and about \$300 per employee increases in medical expenses. These increases are intended to account for what the county anticipates the state will mandate in salaries for next year, Tony Messer, ABSS

chief financial officer, said during the meeting. Messer said this works as an unfunded mandate, as some employees are funded by the state, but others are funded locally and therefore the county would not choose to give certain employees a raise over others because of where the funding is coming from.



OF COURSE, THERE’S ALWAYS MORE TO DO JUST NOT PAY, BUT I FEEL LIKE PAY IS ALSO A PART OF SHOWING THEM THEIR IMPORTANCE TOO.

SENECA ROGERS
ABSS SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

The supplement increases are increases for staff members that have consistently happened year to year — but were unable to be funded last year due to other budget priorities. Last year the main immediate expense was to remedy a mold infestation after mold was found in 32 of the 36 ABSS schools in August 2023 — prompting an expensive clean-up and delaying the school year two weeks.

Messer also outlined a preliminary plan for possible raises for classified employees, due to increased public support on the issue. The raises would total \$1.3 million to implement and would go from 1% to 10% based on years of experience per employee, Messer said. The board does have the ability to look at different funding models for classified employees, and Messer said this is just one way to create raises. “When you do a percentage based supplement for any employee, anytime that their pay is raised, this is also going to raise, so it’s always going to be a perpetual funding piece of anything we ask for from year to year,” Messer said. Board member Seneca Rogers said he agreed with what Burke-Scoll and other speakers said during the public comment section. “There’s something that needs to be done with our classified employees, because they’re an absolute necessity in our schools, and they need to know that they’re cared for, they’re looked at, they’re recognized,” Rogers said. “Of course, there’s always more to do just not pay, but I feel like pay is also a part of showing them their importance too.”

Future calendar options

On the homepage of ABSS’s website, there is a survey for proposed calendar options for the 2026-27 school year. The board plans to create the 2026-27 school year calendar further in advance to allow families, summer camp

programs and staff members to plan ahead accordingly, and to set a precedent to create two year calendars in the future, Rogers said. One of the calendar options allows for an earlier start date but is not compliant with state law, the other option has a later start date, as the county has done this year and historically, and is compliant with state law. An earlier start date allows the fall semester to end in December, with final exams before winter break, allowing for mid-year graduates to finish before the next calendar year, and in alignment with Alamance Community College’s academic calendar. Board member Dan Ingle said he is in favor of this change because students taking exams earlier could improve test scores, and many counties across the state are also in support of this change. He said there are currently bills in the state legislature in different counties that are also looking to start earlier. Community members present applauded after Ingle’s comment on the calendar and were vocally in support of his opinions while he was speaking. Board member Tameka Harvey said she felt it was important that community members vocalized their own opinions regarding the calendar. “We really need community members, teachers, parents, guardians, to go in there and look at it,” Harvey said. “Look at that calendar, see if it’s feasible, see if it’s something that’s going to work for you and your family, and do the survey.”

Activists urge action, political participation on library committee

STICKER | from cover

Thompson agreed that parents should be accompanying their children to the library but is worried children could still find ways to get books without their parents knowing if they are placed in children’s sections throughout the library. “I’m going to support children, and these stickers are a way to alert you that it may be too violent or too sexually inappropriate, whatever that looks like for a certain age,” Thompson said. “I’m going to support that because that is common sense, and parents need to be more involved with their children reading.” The prospect of labeling LGBTQ+ themes comes after the Alamance County Board of Commissioners unanimously voted Cheryl Sandford to join the library committee in 2023 rather than an incumbent. Sandford criticized an LGBTQ+-themed book display at the May

Memorial Library in 2022. Chair of the committee Jessica Simmons was an advocate of labeling LGBTQ+ content with a rainbow sticker to raise awareness of books content as a whole, according to the meeting minutes. Sandford, committee member Bonnie Whitaker and the Alamance Libraries Administrative Office did not respond to Elon News Network’s multiple requests for an interview. Thompson, who spoke on Whitaker’s leadership, said she is a important voice to have in this conversation, as Whitaker said at the Jan. 31 meeting she was in favor of the stickers to allow parent’s more discretion — yet Thompson said Whitaker is also very open about her own identity and is married to a woman. Smith said the alarm about these themes in books comes from fear. “The real truth is this is just another moral panic on behalf of a few who are living in

some kind of fear themselves about things that maybe they can’t understand and maybe even living with the some self imposed guilt,” Smith said. “I think it says more about the people who are advocating for labeling or trying to find information from people than anything else.” People can fill out the parental discretion advised request form, where once the submission is received, the request is received by the library management team and racial equity team, according to the meeting minutes. Once the decision is made to add a sticker, the decision can not be appealed. The form has three categories for reasons it should be labeled — “violence toward self or others,” “explicit description” and “underage drinking or drugs.” The form also asks for the page number of the content, as well as what the intended age and audience is. In 2022, the Alamance-Burlington School System banned “Gender-Queer: A Memoir” By Maia Kobabe due to sexually explicit material.

The graphic novel is about exploring gender identity, and it is one of the most banned books in the U.S., according to the American Library Association. Smith said people can take action by supporting organizations like Alamance Pride and Transcend Alamance or contacting local and state government officials. “In times like this, be willing to speak out. Be willing to show up and advocate and support,” Smith said. “When people have an opportunity to use their privilege to advocate for others, they should do it.” Thompson also wants community members to go to meetings — not to antagonize others, but to express their opinions. She feels on a local level is where people can make a real difference, not on a federal one. “It’s right in your backyard,” Thompson said. “That’s who you pay your taxes, and that’s who takes your trash, and so that’s who really affects you the most. And get involved.”

SGA elections bring executive changes, boost interest



Elon's Student Government Association candidates and officers gather Feb. 24 in a Moseley Center meeting room to discuss the campaigning and voting process.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

SGA elections feature executive position changes, increased student engagement

Liya Rike
Elon News Network

This year's Student Government Association elections bring changes to the process, including the addition of an executive vice president role, which expands the executive positions to five. Forty total candidates are running — an increase from recent years.

The positions of vice president of finance and vice president of communications are no longer decided by the student body but instead are appointed through an interview process and confirmed by a senate vote. These roles require specific skills, making the selection process more rigorous according to senior class president and chair of elections Alexander Siler.

Historically, voter turnout has been low — 20.4% for the 2024-25 year and 29.9% for 2023-24. To address this issue, the SGA has increased outreach efforts, using social media campaigns, campus-wide events and measures such as the Phoenix Five Weekly email to raise awareness.

Vice president of communications Ella Kucera said student awareness of elections varies, with some students informed and

others unaware. She suggested that overall engagement depends on factors such as class year and students' connection to their peers.

"I think either students are aware of it, or they're not, or maybe it slips their minds," Kucera said. "I feel like in the fall, there was a pretty decent amount of voter turnout for the freshman elections. So I think it just kind of depends on the classes' connection to their peers."



I WOULD LOVE TO GIVE BACK TO THE SCHOOL THAT HAS MADE A WAY FOR ME ON THIS CAMPUS.

SAVANNAH HAMEED
SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS SENATOR CANDIDATE

The class of 2028 saw 24 freshman running for eight positions.

This year has seen a rise in candidate participation, with 40 students running for various positions including two people running for executive president, juniors Anya Bratic and Nic Fillippa. Last year, no

one initially ran for executive president, leading to SGA extending the application. However, some positions still remain without candidates and Siler believes it's a matter of awareness.

"It's good to see a high turnout. In the past, we haven't always had many contested positions," Siler said. "Sometimes it's just a matter of people aren't necessarily aware that they're open positions. So it's more an issue of finding people who want to run for them."

Kucera said students often seek class senator positions and are appointed to other roles if those are filled.

"It also comes from a lot of people wanting a class senator position, and then if that gets filled, they don't get voted on to that, they'll just be appointed to something else later," Kucera said. "We saw that a lot in the fall elections with the freshmen."

Freshmen Kemari Logan and Savannah Hameed, who are running for School of Communications senators, said they are highly motivated to run in this election.

"I'm a communications fellow, and I would love to give back to the school that has made a way for me on this campus," Hameed said.

Logan expressed his goal of being a voice for the School of Communications and how his background motivates him to run for a position.

"I went to a mostly Black high school, so coming to Elon and then seeing most of

IF YOU VOTE

Voting is open on PhoenixConnect from 8 a.m. March 10 to 5 p.m. March 11.

To learn more about candidates, watch their speeches on the Elon SGA YouTube channel.

the clubs being full of not as much diversity inspires me to try to be active," Logan said.

Lizeth Torres-Tomas, a candidate for the class of 2027 senator, said she decided to run after talking to other members of SGA.

"I was urged by other candidates in SGA who believed I was a good fit," Torres-Tomas said. "I wanted to become more involved in the Elon community and listen to students' voices."

Candidates must meet specific requirements before running for positions, including GPA thresholds and, for certain seats, affiliation with specific academic schools. Campaigning will follow strict guidelines: candidates can distribute flyers, post on social media and spread the word through GroupMe chats or personal conversations. However, mass emails and messages via Moodle or class-wide communication platforms are not allowed.

Candidates are also limited to spending a maximum of \$50 on their campaigns, and endorsements from SGA members or the use of SGA logos are not allowed. Campaign violations can be reported directly to the Elections Committee, which will handle complaints seriously according to Siler.

SGA changes bylaws, cuts down travel funding for student organizations

SGA's new funding model will follow a quarterly request routine, cuts within travel funding

Fiona McAllister
Elon News Network

In the previous Student Government Association financial bylaws, travel for conferences and other off-campus events covered the cost of hotels, meals and mileage for personal vehicles. Now, these expenses are no longer covered by SGA's budget — which comes from student activity fees.

Senior Taylor Cote, SGA Executive President, said as Elon students pay \$146 in student activity fees per semester, SGA felt it was unnecessary for this money to

cover the expense of other students to travel — which was one of the expenses organizations requested coverage for the most.

"We just feel like it's not like an equitable way to use student activity fees," Cote said.

SGA will still cover the cost of registration fees, flights and mileage for university vehicles. As for covering those non-included fees, such as hotels, Cote said SGA is looking to help organizations raise their own funding.

"We've been talking about doing fundraising workshops," Cote said.

Each year SGA receives an \$800,000 budget. If not all this money is used, it gets reallocated back into Vice President of Student Life Jon Dooley's budget.

Elon's Student Government Association reviews and updates its bylaws annually, but this year, significant changes are expected

in its finance bylaws. In addition to SGA no longer covering certain travel expenses it is moving away from funding requests on a rolling basis. Starting June 1, SGA will be implementing a new funding model which will follow a quarterly request routine.

Cote said this new quarterly schedule is a huge transition for organizations requesting funding. She said this change will help those in SGA going through budget requests — in order to eliminate extra work and stress for SGA members who regularly go through financial requests.

"It just makes it more streamlined," Cote said. "It makes it less of a full time job for these students who are juggling all the other things that they need to do."

As for organizations that have last minute requests, Cote said there is an emergency fund that can be used loosely.

Before the fruition of fundraising workshops, SGA will be hosting information sessions for organizations interested in learning more about the updated financial bylaws. Students can also schedule a one-on-one consultation with Vice President of Finance Clare Rudolph.

"We're here to help students," Cote said. "We're here to fund student activities."

Previously, SGA's funding bylaws stated that performance group funding was up to the discretion of the finance board. This was due to performance groups charging attendees for tickets. In its new bylaws, it makes no mention of funding regarding performance groups separately and now SGA funds performance groups as it would any other event.

"Our student activity fees are going to something that a lot of people are able to experience," Cote said.

Honoring the past, shaping the future: Alamance County vigil remembers Wyatt Outlaw, calls for change



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Attorney and Alamance County Remembrance Coalition member, Wade Harrison, talks to attendees about the backstory of Wyatt Outlaw on Feb. 23 behind the Alamance County Courthouse.

Community members gather with candle lights to the 6th annual ceremony

Lilly Molina
Elon News Network

“Black’ History is American history.”

A sign with those words is raised up to the sky by a community member during the vigil for Wyatt Outlaw. Ernest Lewis Jr., musician and Elon law alum, looks up and reads the sign out loud. A small crowd of community members turn back and erupt in applause.

Feb. 26 marks the 155th anniversary of Wyatt Outlaw’s murder where he was lynched right on the corner of Elm Street in Graham. On Feb. 23, the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition hosted its 6th annual vigil in honor of Outlaw and the victims of two other lynchings that took place within the county, William Puryear and John Jeffress. At these events, attendees have the opportunity to place the soil where each lynching took place into a jar. The coalition then keeps it in the African-American Cultural Art and History Center in remembrance of these tragedies.

The Rev. Walter Allison stood firm in front of the steps of the Graham courthouse and began reciting Martin Luther King Jr.

“We are many different people,” Allison said. “We come from many different places. Have many different cultures, open our hearts so that we may be bold in finding the riches of inclusion and the treasures of diversity among us, we pray in faith.”

And everybody in the crowd said, “Amen.”

Lewis then sang “This Little Light of Mine” and the crowd joined him in harmony.

Loy Campbell unfolded a stapled packet of papers with shaking hands. She approached the center of the crescent moon shaped crowd. She’s a member of the coalition, and every year a member reads aloud about Outlaw’s life and then his murder.

Outlaw was born a free man in April of 1816 to a white and wealthy father, Chelsey Faucette and to a Black mother, Jemima Phillips. However, Outlaw was raised by Faucette’s neighbors George and Nancy Outlaw on a tobacco farm. After serving in the Civil War with the Union 2D Colored Cavalry, he returned to Alamance County and became an active member within the community. He helped mentor recently freed slaves and

advocated for Black voting rights.

In 1868, Outlaw was elected into Graham’s town council and was named a constable with Henry Holt. However, during this time, white supremacist groups such as the White Brotherhood formed. According to Campbell, these organizations were responsible for assaulting and whipping 52 people in Alamance County. They were also responsible for the murder of two people: Wyatt Outlaw and William Puryear, a witness to Outlaw’s lynching.

The White Brotherhood stormed to Graham “as a show of the brotherhood’s disdain both for the Black law enforcement officers and the rule of law in the town,” Campbell said. Outlaw and Holt shot at the brotherhood as they rode around the courthouse. On Feb. 26, 1870, 70 men dressed in robes and out for blood pushed Outlaw’s mother to the floor, stomped on her face and dragged Outlaw out of his home in the middle of the night. They hitched him up on an elm tree on the southwest side of the courthouse square and hung him after slashing his face and mouth. Around his neck rested a sign saying, “Beware ye traitors both black and white.”

“It becomes a ritual of remembrance for us, and the story hasn’t changed,” Campbell said. “Unfortunately, we still need to keep speaking up and learning more, educating people in the community about what has happened.”

On the other side of the courthouse stands a confederate statue that the North Carolina Court of Appeals ruled in March 2024 cannot be removed by Alamance County despite numerous protests and controversies. The lawsuit was filed by the Alamance County NAACP branch in March 2021 against five members of the Alamance County Board of community, stating that the statue’s protection is unconstitutional. Elon University President Connie Book spoke out for the removal of the statue in 2020.

Despite this, every year community members gather to light candles to remember Outlaw.

“We do these things because we as a community should acknowledge the blood that was spilled,” Lewis said.

Lewis learned about Outlaw when he was in Elon’s law school program. But Samuel Merritt, Outlaw’s great-great-grandson, said he didn’t know much about his own family’s history until the vigils started. Growing up, his family didn’t have many conversations about Outlaw’s lynching.

“I’m learning a lot, although I am a descendant of his, but it’s ingratiating, it’s emotionally uplifting, and it’s encouraging that this is going on,” Merritt said.

For Merritt, he felt uplifted attending the vigil.



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LOY CAMPBELL
MEMBER OF COALITION

A common theme throughout the night was the political administration and Lewis said the government is trying to “turn back the pages of history.” On Jan. 20, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to end government funded programs relating to diversity, equity and inclusion that has become

a constant legal fight since. For example, on Feb. 5 the University of North Carolina system suspended all diversity, equity and inclusion related course requirements.

“We need to start strong, but stay small,” Lewis said, who advocated for local change within Graham during the vigil.

Wade Harrison, a lawyer and coalition member, also spoke out about how it’s time for the community to make a difference.

“Out of all the kids that Chelsey Faucette had there, ain’t but one of them that we are standing here honoring tonight and that’s the one that made the most difference,” Harrison said.

He said the coalition’s objective with the help of the Equal Justice Initiative is to install three permanent monuments dedicated to Wyatt Outlaw, William Puryear and John Jeffress.

“We know the truth,” Harrison said. “We keep coming back year after year, and the story never changes, but we have to learn it anew. We have to remember it anew.”

Outlaw’s body was cut down from the Elm tree by William Albright and taken into the courthouse. The coroner examined his battered flesh and buried him in a coffin paid for by the town of Graham. To this day, the location of his grave remains a mystery, and not even his family knows where he rests.

Anjolina Fantaroni contributed to the reporting of this story.



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Alamance County Remembrance Coalition has collected containers of dirt from the lynching sit of Wyatt Outlaw, and other victims of racial violence. Community members were able to fill the jar with the dirt to remember Outlaw at the vigil.

Truitt Center hosts Ripple Conference, fosters interfaith connection



Ripple Conference panelists Roman Williams, Josue Vega and Hannah Podhorzer '19 discuss art and interfaith Feb. 22 in LaRose Commons.

RUBY BURCKLE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The annual conference brought together over 10 universities to discuss art, spirituality

Ruby Burkle
Elon News Network

With an estimated 150 attendees hailing from over 10 universities, the Ripple Conference, held from Feb. 21 to 23, showcased the importance of interfaith dialogue on college campuses.

The Ripple Conference is the largest student-led interfaith conference in the Southeast. This year, the conference's theme was "The Art of Interfaith" and explored how art can bridge the gap between people of different faiths.

On Feb. 21, the first day of the conference, participants gathered in the Richard McBride Gathering Space to hear from keynote speaker Rodger Kamenetz, a poet and author.

During his keynote address, Kamenetz highlighted the importance of interfaith dialogue and how art can help foster those conversations.

"If we want to do serious dialogue it's better not to start with a difference, it's better to start with something in common," Kamenetz said, setting the tone for the rest of the conference.

On Feb. 22, participants attended several breakout sessions, a group art project and a panel.

The breakout sessions highlighted different art forms, including music, poetry and calligraphy. The sessions were led by student leaders, professors from Elon and other universities, and spiritual leaders.

Student leaders also organized a group art project, where attendees painted rocks that would later be traded with other participants at the conference. Here, participants were encouraged to sit and chat with people they didn't know, and some shared why interfaith is so important on college campuses.

Sam Davis '14 worked at the Truitt Center during his time at Elon and attended the conference with Emory and Henry University where he works as director of new student advising.

Davis said interfaith was only just beginning when he interned at the Truitt Center and is happy to see how much it has grown.

"I feel like I'm seeing the waves of the ripples that I saw when I was here, which is kind of cool," Davis said.

Jonah Morgan, a junior at Texas Christian University, said having multifaith spaces is especially important on campuses that are religiously affiliated, as not every student practices that specific religion.

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RODGER KAMENETZ
POET AND AUTHOR

"If we didn't have those spaces, especially at a Christian university, they wouldn't feel comfortable to be here, they wouldn't come to our campus, and then I feel like campus would be a sadder place if everyone was just the same denomination," Morgan said.

One of the final events of the night was the Plenary Panel, which featured Roman Williams, founder of Interfaith Photovoice, an organization that aims to bring people together to photograph and reflect on faith-related topics in day-to-day life. The panel also included Josue Vega, student at the Art Institute of Philadelphia and Arabic calligrapher as well as Hannah Podhorzer '19, graphic designer.

The panelists spoke on their personal experiences with art and how it impacts their faith, and the ways they believe art can bring people together.

Vega touched on art's ability to cross boundaries and levels of understanding, and communicate that there is beauty in all things and faiths.

"When words fail you can connect through imagery," Vega said.

Williams said interfaith, much like art, has the ability to connect people from all different backgrounds.

"Interfaith also is an art in and of itself,"

Williams said.

Elon senior Sarah Cadol helped direct and plan the Plenary Panel, and wanted listeners to feel inspired by the panelists' words.

"I hope that a sense of inspiration ripples out for people to feel more comfortable discussing their faith background and to feel more comfortable having interfaith dialogue in general," Cadol said.

Co-directors of the Ripple Conference seniors Morgan Williams and Ryan Gibbons shared what they hope participants take away from the conference and all of its events.

"I want one of the 'ripples' of the Ripple Conference to be that more people have hope and belief in the fact that interfaith is something that can happen," Gibbons said.

Gibbons said he was proud to be involved in the conference and was happy to have

created a space for many people from different universities and faiths to come together.

"That's what interfaith is, it's bridging the gap over the spiritual boundary that we kind of force ourselves into," Gibbons said.

Williams said many participants told her that they didn't believe interfaith was possible on their campuses either because of the size of their university or that it hadn't yet been established.

"I hope people leave with hope. I hope they leave with a sense of new renowned purpose when it comes to building interfaith on their own campuses," Williams said.

On interfaith events such as the Ripple Conference, Williams said their importance couldn't be overstated.

"Interfaith allows us to see each other as human," Williams said.



Participants of the Ripple Conference left their painted rocks to dry Feb. 22 in LaRose Commons.

RUBY BURCKLE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Attendees of the Ripple Conference Jonah Morgan and Tanis Grenier paint rocks Feb. 22 in LaRose Commons.

RUBY BURCKLE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Former softball star returns to Elon in new role



JOJO LIEBREICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Assistant coach Carley Davis gives sophomore pitcher Anna Dew advice during a Feb. 18 game against North Carolina State University. Elon lost 4-0.

Carley Davis is back at Elon as an assistant coach after graduating last year, enhances pitchers' mental game

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

Carley Davis was getting ready for her final season of college softball last January, but bigger things were on her mind. She was thinking about life after Elon University. She was looking to become a graduate assistant coach and was exploring different opportunities at schools across North Carolina. She had been discussing her plans with Elon head coach Kathy Bocock throughout the entire process, and when the opportunity to stay at Elon after her final season presented itself, the choice was obvious.

Months later, current senior McKenna McCard received a message about a Zoom meeting to introduce the team's new assistant coach. Throughout Davis' process, McCard had talked to her and heard about some of the schools she was considering but Davis had kept a lot to herself. Still, before the Zoom, McCard wondered whether Davis would be the one to hop onto the Zoom because she hadn't heard anything about where Davis ended up. Soon after, Davis joined the Zoom and surprised the team.

Davis spent five years at Elon and finished as the program's all-time Division I leader in runners caught stealing. She was a two-time All-CAA Second Team selection and hit a career-best .312 and 24 RBIs in her final season in 2024.

"Coming back to get my first coaching experience under the head coach who provided a foundation for me as a player and as a person, it was an easy decision to say yes for that," Davis said. "Also coaching 19 of my former teammates, I thought would be a cool experience and a fun experience, but also a challenging one."

As an assistant coach, Davis is primarily working with the pitching staff, assisting with pitch calling and analyzing hitters. As a former catcher, she had already developed strong working relationships with many of the team's

pitchers. Watching their growth over four years has been rewarding for her, both as a player and now as a coach. She said Davis, who got her undergraduate degree in psychology, has been applying her studies in her coaching role. She said she aims to instill a strong mental presence in all of the players, and believes that her connection to the team strengthens her effectiveness.

"Being so young and coming straight from being a player, I feel as if I'm relatable with the players and know what they're going through and what they're thinking at times," Davis said.

The transition into coaching wasn't as difficult as Davis expected. Having been a team captain, she had already built strong communication with both the coaching staff and players. Bocock said the transition was seamless.



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CARLEY DAVIS
ELON SOFTBALL ASSISTANT COACH

"She knows how things run around here, like laundry, how we do our building. So sometimes I get ready to say something, and she'll say something, and I'm like, she already knew I was going to say it just because she's been playing for me for five years," Bocock said.

Setting up boundaries between Davis and her former teammates was the hardest part of the transition, though. Bocock said that was something that the two of them had talked about before finalizing the hire.

"Her biggest concern was the challenge of

the boundaries, and I said, 'Well, it could be that way anywhere you go because she's going to be that same age with other players and growing and just understanding,'" Bocock said. "I have so much trust for my team here and Carly and everybody, that was the least of my worries because I knew our team would give Carly that respect, because they played with her."

Bocock emphasized that the boundaries between a coach and a player are important, but it doesn't have to prevent relationships from continuing. It's still OK for the players to go to the movies or go out to eat with Davis because those relationships are important for the team, Bocock said. McCard said the transition felt natural because Davis had always been a guiding presence for the team. She said it hasn't felt all that different from what Davis did as a player.

"Carly has always been someone that has always been there for us to talk to, and she's always helped give the team direction," McCard said. "So seeing her change into this new coaching role is just a continuation of what she was for the team, but in a more official way"

McCard said it is helpful having someone on the coaching staff who understands the players so well. Davis agrees that her relationships with the players has only strengthened her ability to coach them effectively.

"As a player, you get to know your teammates on a personal level and know their families, or where they're from, or what they want to do with their lives, and knowing those background characteristics, it helps you understand who you're meeting with in that moment," Davis said. "Because they're in this moment because of all the things that have happened in their past, and they've grown into this person."

Davis is excited about her future with the program and is particularly eager to strengthen the mental approach of the pitchers.

"I want all of them to believe in themselves as a player and a person and to develop mental skills that will carry on throughout their next grad program, or if they go straight into their job that they believe in themselves and know what they're capable of and continue to grow throughout it," Davis said.



JOJO LIEBREICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Assistant coach Carley Davis (third from left) coaches from the dugout during a Feb. 18 game against North Carolina State.