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THE PENDULUM



A street view of the intersection between South Main Street and Elm Street in downtown Graham, where many community events and protests have been held in the past.

CARTER CRAIG | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

EVENTS COMMITTEE SUSPENSION BRINGS CONCERN OVER FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Graham City Council's vote raises questions of free speech, mayor's business interests

Ryan Kupperman | Enterprise Story Coordinator

GRAHAM CITY COUNCIL'S DECISION to suspend city events, including protests and demonstrations, has community activists pleading to have their voices heard and prompted questions not only about First Amendment rights, but also the mayor's conflict of interest in protecting her own businesses.

In a special meeting on Feb. 23, Graham's City Council voted unanimously to suspend the city's Special Events Committee, which had been designated to issue

permits for "parades and street events," which include protests and demonstrations. The council said it would not approve or issue any event permits until its members can rewrite city ordinances to transfer event-approval authority from the events committee to the council.

For activists in Graham, the council's vote is problematic as the city is already ground zero for issues of racial injustice — from the 1870 lynching of Wyatt Outlaw, to the 1914 erection of a confederate monument and recently the October

2020 March to the Polls where law enforcement utilized pepper spray and arrested eight people — including two Elon University students.

Calling the meeting

Jamie Paulen — an attorney, civil practitioner and former magistrate — stood behind the council chambers podium on Feb. 23 as Police Chief Kristy Cole outlined to the council the Graham Police Department's involvement in the local event processes. When Cole finished speaking, she turned around

to exit the podium and saw Paulen.

"Chief Cole turned to me and said, basically, 'You're not allowed to speak,'" Paulen said.

As Paulen continued toward the podium to speak, Mayor Pro Tem Ricky Hall called a point of order — a question of whether procedure is being followed — and said that her speaking during the meeting was "out of line." But Paulen continued to speak in front of the council.

See **GRAHAM** | pg. 4

Academic council plans for final months of the semester

Governing body of faculty is working on a new equity course requirement, elections and reimagining committee work

Kyra O'Connor
Executive Director | @ko_reports

As students, faculty and staff head into the final months on campus for the 2021-22 academic school year, Elon University's academic council met to discuss a new course requirement for future students, elections for faculty councils and streamlining on-campus,

faculty committee work.

Chair of academic council Jason Husser, who has just a few weeks remaining in his term, said the academic council's work this year focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, how the university's shared governance model works for faculty and the current faculty evaluation system: Student Perceptions of Teaching.

"This is a year where we're doing some pausing and reflecting and thinking, 'Do our structures make sense for Elon as it is today?'" Husser said.

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KYRA O'CONNOR | DESIGNER



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Office of Student Conduct raises awareness for mediation service



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Elon student balances pro disc golf career

THE PENDULUM

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CORRECTIONS

In the last edition of The Pendulum, an article misidentified professor Susan Ladd as a politics editor. She was a politics reporter. Elon News Network regrets this error.

Town of Elon awaits construction dates for downtown plaza

Schematics have been drawn for months, with no solid construction plan

Erin Martin

Elon News Network | @erinmartin35

Since the announcement of the downtown Elon plaza was made in August 2021, there is still no set date for construction to begin. The plaza will add additional outdoor seating and create a location for community gatherings and events, according to town of Elon manager Rich Roedner.

Roedner said that before the town can begin construction, finances need to be finalized.

"We're hoping that we'll have sufficient funds to actually go out, get the construction designs done and then get it into the ground," Roedner said.

According to Roedner, the town will have a better idea of when construction will begin this summer, but thus far the estimated cost is about \$400,000. The project might require community fundraising to help offset costs, Roedner said.

The idea for the plaza came about when the COVID-19 pandemic began and the town closed off part of West College Avenue so



COURTESY OF TOWN OF ELON

Rendering of downtown Elon's future plaza. Construction plans will be announced once finances are finalized.

community members could have a spot to eat outside. Currently, the area has a few picnic tables and often a tent covering. It was then when the town realized the space was a great place to gather, according to Roedner.

"We see this as a long term gathering spot for the community, akin to what we've had with the tent," Roedner said.

For businesses in downtown Elon, the plaza has already been successful.

Owner of Pandora's Pies Kimberly Holt said she's looking forward to seeing how the community will use the space.

"I can't wait to see it all done ... with COVID and more people wanting to do stuff outside, it just gives people that opportunity," Holt said. "It'll be nice to be able to see the community and to be able to have a spot to sit and enjoy your local restaurant."

The town also plans to start designing a new

outdoor space along North Williamson Avenue in front of Oak House. This will convert parking spots in front of the businesses into a more permanent outdoor dining and lounging area.

"It's not going to be dedicated to any specific restaurant, but it'd be dedicated to the general public to come and sit," Roedner said. "It'll be that center of downtown that we're kind of missing right now."

Council works on equity course requirement

ACADEMICS | from cover

COVID-19 and faculty

Back in 2020, the academic council was involved in pandemic discussions with the university about reopening campus, from spacing of desks in classrooms to testing strategies.

Lifting the indoor mask mandate was announced days before the all-faculty meeting, a university-wide faculty meeting that happens four times throughout the year. Husser said the largest concern voiced during the meeting on March 4 was faculty asking why the mandate will be lifted March 14, as opposed to another day.

March 14 is during Elon University's spring break, which means students will return to campus and have the option to no longer wear masks in class.

"There were a couple of faculty that expressed concern, particularly about the timing," Husser said. "The primary thing raised ... was why this week rather than after spring break."

Jeff Stein, chair of the Healthy Elon Committee, told Elon News Network that the two week buffer was to give students, faculty and staff time to adjust.

"We intentionally waited and chose the 14th, even, so that we would have spring break for the case numbers to come down further before everyone was back on campus," Stein said. "All of those things are moving in the same forward direction. We have no interest in switching things up unnecessarily."

Committee on committees

Husser said one of the biggest items on his mind is making the most of on-campus faculty committees. Elon faculty have over 15 committees they can be a part of on-campus, from the Academic

Standing Committee and Admissions Committee to the Graduate Council and Library Committee.

"All these collectively take a lot of time, and we want to make sure that we're making use of our time in such a way that is most helpful for students and students' success and the mission of the university," Husser said. "I'm hoping that we as a faculty will have a discussion of how can we optimize the amount of time we spend on committees, and trying to make them work better for both faculty and students."

To account for and address faculty

drastically change them right away. Major changes that are across the board can often be insensitive and end up causing unintended consequences," Husser said. "This is a long continual process. It's going to require incremental updates and improvements over time. That's been something I've cared a lot about personally this year."

Equity course requirement

The academic council is also focusing on adding an equity course for all students. The course, similar to an Experiential Learning Requirement, would be a designation rather than a specific class dedicated to equity in the United States.

The course right now is in the curricular stage, meaning it is still being workshopped by the committee and is not yet a course. The requirement would not be for current students, but incoming students in the future.

"One comparison is every student takes advanced studies classes, so it's not a single class, but everybody's got to take a couple classes in this category," Husser said. "Right now the curricular committees are focused on how should we go about doing one of these classes, where it works for all the departments on campus and works for people and students in various majors."

Switching chairs

Husser will serve in his role as chair of the academic council for just a few more weeks before Chair-elect and Chair of the Department of Accounting Danny Lanier Jr. will step into the role of chair in May. Academic council elects on a three-year cycle, with different positions elected each year. In total, 19 members serve on the council in addition to the chair of the university curriculum committee, the president of Elon University and the provost of Elon University.

“

I'M HOPING THAT WE AS A FACULTY WILL HAVE A DISCUSSION OF HOW CAN WE OPTIMIZE THE AMOUNT OF TIME WE SPEND ON COMMITTEES, AND TRYING TO MAKE THEM WORK BETTER FOR BOTH FACULTY AND STUDENTS.

JASON HUSSER

CHAIR OF ACADEMIC COUNCIL

members serving on numerous committees, Husser said it is important for academic council to prioritize committees systematically.

"I don't think anybody really wants to



Elon junior Eileena Boyce is lifted by fellow dancers during a rehearsal of “Sea Glass & Starfish,” choreographed by dance professor Renay Aumiller. It was the first performance in this year’s Spring Dance Concert, which ran March 4 to 6 in McCrory Theater.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR



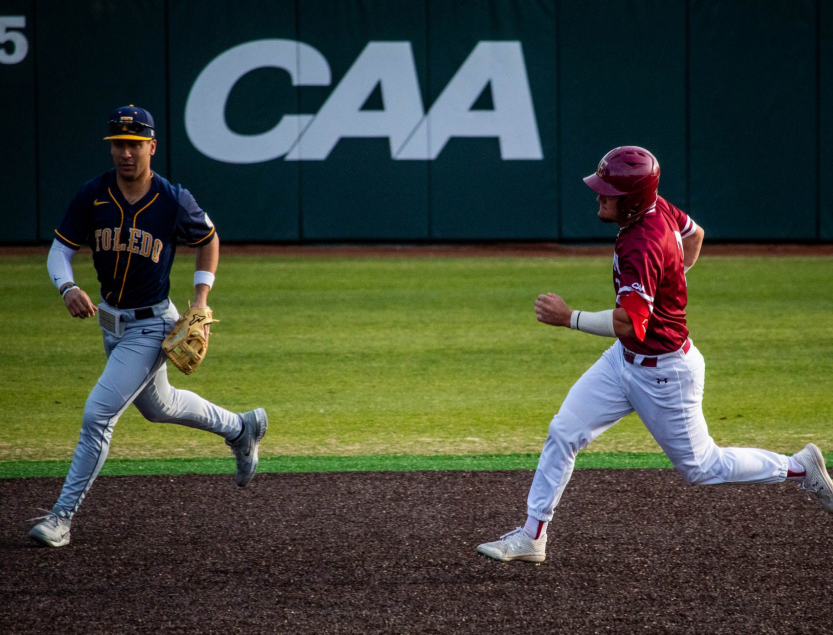
Senior forward Chuck Hannah goes for the layup against the University of North Carolina Wilmington Seahawks during their game at the Entertainment & Sports Arena in Washington, D.C. for the men’s basketball CAA tournament. The Phoenix lost to the Seahawks 75-58. Hannah scored nine points and made five rebounds to end his Elon Basketball career.

CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Elon junior Kerri Coffman studies at Medallion Plaza. Elon students are preparing for midterms this week, before heading into Spring Break.

ABBY REED | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Graduate student infielder Samuel Fontino (2) runs to home base during the baseball game against the University of Toledo March 4. Elon lost 13-6. The Phoenix won the next two games against Toledo on March 5 and 6.

JOSEPH NAVIN | PHOTO EDITOR

GRAHAM EVEN UNTIL ORDINAN

GRAHAM | from cover

GEORGE FLOYD AND GRAHAM COURTHOUSE

George Floyd was murdered in May of 2020 as everyone watched former officer Derek Chauvin kneel on Floyd's neck for roughly nine minutes as he gasped for air. This sparked national protests against police brutality and racial injustice, including in Graham. On Oct. 31, 2020, protesters gathered in downtown Graham to advocate for the removal of the confederate statue located just in front of the Alamance County Courthouse. Demonstrators were pepper sprayed by police and eight people were arrested — including two Elon University students.

“The conversation that I’m hearing today is really disturbing to me,” Paulen said in the meeting. “What you’re talking about is basically prior restraint on speech, and my concern is that you as council members are much more concerned about the business people in this city ... instead of the people who come here to express themselves.”

Although Paulen was nervous to insist on speaking, she said she did it because she believed it was the right thing to do.

“I’ve represented somebody who was arrested and charged just for speaking at a public meeting,” Paulen said. “Knowing that the chief of police was standing there and the chief of police was the person who told me I wasn’t supposed to speak. ... It was frightening. But there’s no one else who’s going to speak up.”

Paulen owns the law firm Paulen Solidarity Law and actively represents protesters and demonstrators within Alamance County. Having practiced law for nearly 20 years, Paulen said her attention turned to Alamance following the murder of **George Floyd**. According to Paulen, her focus is prior restraint and how it limits people’s First Amendment constitutional rights.

Avery Harvey, a Graham resident, activist, community organizer and local business owner, said he feels like the local government is not looking out for the people’s best interests with this change.

“Quite frankly, we’re just trying to grasp the whole point,” Harvey said. “It seems like they’re just taking all our rights away.”

Ordinances and clarification

According to Graham’s Code of Ordinances, the legislation that granted the events committee authority within the event-approval process states that the city manager is responsible for establishing a special events committee, composed of city staff, to determine whether or not proposed parades and street events meet the standards and regulations the city has mandated for events.

City regulations require such **permits** for a wide array of circumstances, including demonstrations that consist of more than 10 people downtown, protests that might require road closures and events that request police presence. Graham’s ordinances also state that public assembly and protesting in the city cannot be prohibited or discriminated against based on political, social or religious grounds, or based upon the content of the views expressed.

A post to the city of Graham’s Instagram page following the Feb.

23 meeting stated that there was “some misunderstanding” over the event committee’s role in the permit approval process “related to demonstrations and protests.”

The post said that under the existing ordinance, permit approval for protests and demonstrations are granted or denied by the chief of police, and that the events committee never had a role in the approval process for demonstrations or protests under the ordinance — but rather parades, street fairs and festivals.

However, Cole spoke at the meeting as a member of the events committee and made no distinctions between events like festivals and parades and events like protests and demonstrations.

To end the post, the city specified that the council is drafting an ordinance amendment that would authorize the city council to grant final approval, rather than the events committee, to minimize traffic and business impact during special events.

Financial interest

The financial impact of protests, however, is noteworthy to Paulen considering the mayor’s personal investment in downtown businesses.

Graham Mayor Jennifer Talley, according to data obtained by the North Carolina Secretary of State, is listed as a registered agent, company official and manager for seven businesses — all located in downtown Graham near where Main Street and Elm Street intersect. Main and Elm streets were the specific streets mentioned during the special meeting Feb. 23 as the two most popular roads where events are hosted in Graham.

“To me, I really don’t want to be affecting people’s businesses and having businesses to close because they can’t have access to parking in front of their building or access to their area because someone’s decided to do a street festival in front of their property,” Talley said during the meeting.

Talley did not respond to Elon News Network’s multiple requests for comment on this article.

Talley, along with her husband William Gordon Talley, is listed as a manager under company officials for Colonial Hardware Company, Graham Cinema, Graham Soda Shop and Grill, I-40 Drive-In, Court Square Development Group, Home Court Advantage, and The Majestic on Main.

“When you start closing down North Main Street or South Main Street, you really start affecting people’s livelihoods,” Talley said during the meeting. “To me, it seems a little unfair to those businesses not to be able to come and speak to the governing body.”

Graham’s ordinances state

that no member of a board or commission may “discuss, advocate or vote on any matter in which he or she has a separate, private or monetary interest, either direct or indirect.”

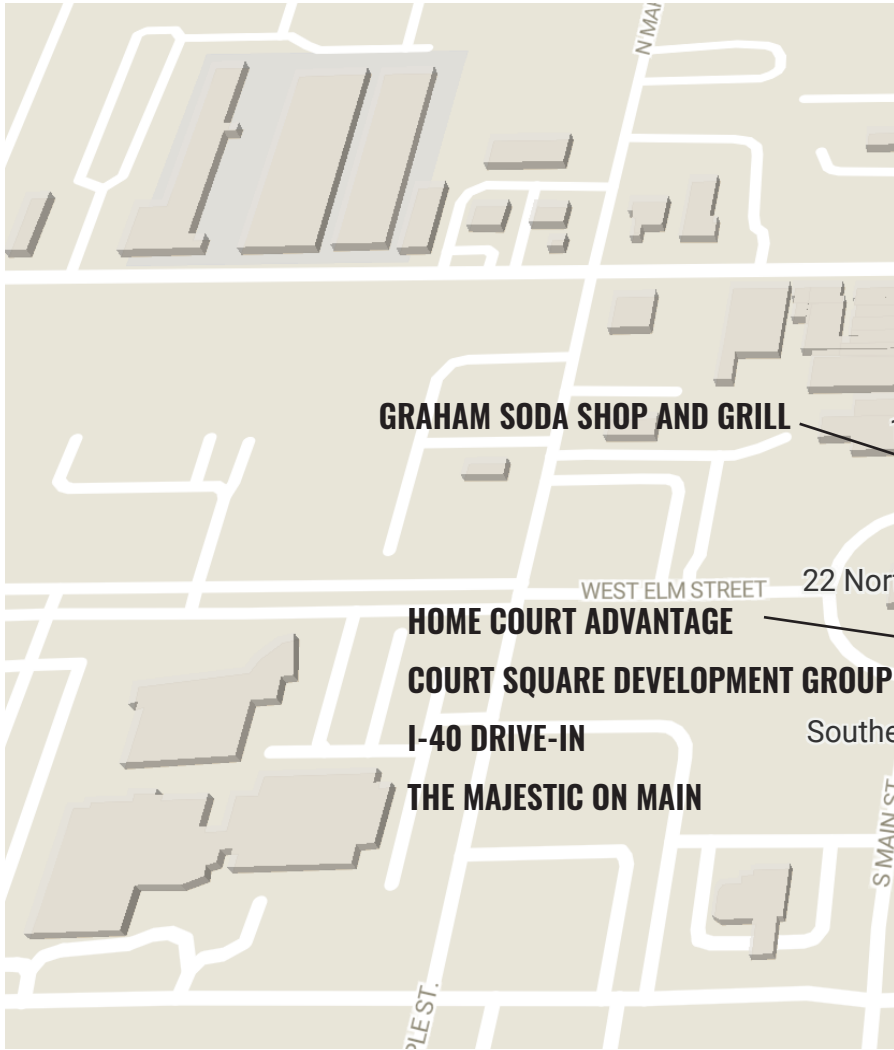
As specified in the ordinance, “any member who violates this provision may be subject to removal from the board or commission.”

Paulen said she thinks it is a “clear conflict of interest” for Talley as mayor of Graham to discuss and advocate for businesses in the meeting, while also having multiple business interests in the area of downtown Graham most

because they’re shutting down these special events, you’re losing money. ... What are people supposed to do, other than take their events somewhere else?”

Kristofer Loy, community organizer and resident of Graham for 23 years, attended the meeting on Feb. 23 and said he believes that the council’s decision to suspend the events committee only benefits Talley.

“It essentially centralizes power in the hands of Jennifer Talley,” Loy said. “The actions she’s taken to then postpone any further events just sort of contextualizes how she wants to have executive control



Locations that are labeled in downtown Graham are where Mayor Jennifer Talley has business interest. T

affected by events.

Community organizer and Graham resident Faith Cook said she also considers Talley’s behavior a “huge conflict of interest,” especially since Talley is a part of the council that is working on rewriting the ordinance to directly seize authority over the events committee.

Cook also said she thinks events draw more people and attention to local businesses, and she doesn’t understand Talley’s concern over events taking business away from downtown Graham.

“You’re worried about the traffic that these places aren’t getting when there’s an event that requires the streets to shut down, but that’s not something that happens,” Cook said. “That not only can bring money into Graham, but

over this process, and I see that as going to be very damaging, long term, to activists in Alamance.”

As Talley said during the meeting, Hall called the special meeting to have the council address how the current ordinances and event process affects businesses in terms of street closure for events.

Council member Bobby Chin commented during the meeting that the grounds for the event committee’s suspension stemmed from the fact that the committee was not composed of elected officials. Chin said during the meeting that he believed the committee then could not accurately represent the public.

Council members Hall, Chin, Joey Parsons and Bonnie Whitaker did not respond to Elon News Network’s request for an interview.

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“
AVERY HARVEY
GRAHAM RESIDENT

PERMIT NOT REQUIRED

A protest permit is not required for events that occur within the city’s permit-free or spontaneous gathering zone — created by the city — , as well as for events involving less than 10 people occurring within the fire limits of downtown Graham. This is specified in Article II, Division 1, Sec. 6-31 — , for events involving less than 30 people outside the fire limits and for events organized and conducted in response to breaking news within the past 36 hours.

EVENTS SUSPENDED ORDINANCES REWRITTEN

When reached over email, chair of the events committee Mary Faucette declined a request for an interview by Elon News Network.

According to a text message Hall sent to Parsons on Sunday, Feb. 20 — obtained through a public records request — Hall was also concerned about Faucette and the events committee bypassing the will of the council.

“Joey, I’m sorry for the short notice on the meeting, but we are trying to stop or head off Mary from approving a bunch of roads closings, in the downtown district with out Councils approval,” Hall wrote. “The only way to do this

of the Alamance News, stand up and advocate for businesses as a member of the public.

After hearing Talley solely focus on the perspective of businesses and the effect that street closures might have on them, Paulen said she is worried that the council could dismiss or deny speech that they do not agree with by taking over the event-approval process.

“The approval process is going to depend on the nature of the event and what the speech is,” Paulen said. “My concern is that because of the politics of the people who are in charge in Graham, that’s what’s going to be used as a

downtown Graham’ — that would be more of a classic content-based distinction,” Armijo said.

By “classic **content-based distinction**,” Armijo said the First Amendment is most concerned with the kind of censorship that specifically prohibits certain content or speech. Although he said he doubts the council will clearly state that specific speech is not allowed, Armijo said the effect of the committee’s suspension on local activists — not being able to demonstrate — is essentially the same effect as if the council engaged in content-based restraint.

According to Armijo, as long as the city remains fair in not permitting all events, there is less of a case for violation of the First Amendment.

“That’s not a classic content-based ban of speech, but it’s still problematic,” Armijo said.

At the meeting, Paulen said she felt as if she was the only one who could speak to the impact on activists that the council’s decision could have on freedom of speech.

“What you’re doing when you’re requiring people and groups to get permits before events, you are engaging in prior restraints on their speech,” Paulen said.

Community addresses change

Paulen said she recognizes Graham’s history with police brutality and discriminatory behaviors, and emphasizes the importance of giving a voice to those who are oppressed or targeted.

“I try cases where my clients are Black, and have to walk past that Confederate monument to get to their court dates,” Paulen said. “There are just people who don’t understand what that message is to Black folks when they see a Confederate soldier guarding the courthouse.”

Despite being wary of Talley and the council assuming more control of the event-approval process, Loy said he was more concerned about the police representation on the events committee. According to Faucette, the Graham Police Department, Fire Department, Recreation and Parks Department and Public Works Department all have representatives that make up the events committee. Therefore, he said he hopes some good will come out of the council’s vote.

Loy, who was present at multiple demonstrations where he witnessed hostility between the Graham Police Department and activists, said he thinks taking some event authority away from the police might serve to allow activists more freedom in demonstrating.

However, Cook and Harvey said they still think that the events committee is the best way to handle the event-approval process.

Although both organizers said they have had their fair share of negative experiences with the police, at least the former process incorporated the Graham police as a part of the conversation — allowing Cook, Harvey and others like them to converse and compromise with local law enforcement.

Looking ahead

Thinking ahead, Cook said she is concerned that when midterm elections occur this fall, any demonstration that activists might want to do in the spring or summer could be silenced. Especially if the council decides to stretch out the amount of time it takes to fix the ordinances, Cook said they could effectively postpone any permit issuing or approving.

“If we decide to do something that does require a permit, and we can’t get it ... now we’re forced at looking at, ‘Oh, you’re going to be arrested as soon as you hit the street because you don’t have a permit,’” Cook said.

Cook and Harvey both said they want to demonstrate again in the future — specifically to portray their discontent with the actions and decisions of Talley and the council.

“We will be out there again. We will be out there,” Harvey said. “Permit, no permit — special events committee or no special events committee. ... It’s not right.”

Paulen said she is grateful for the passion presented by other local activists, and hopes more people will begin to care about how the city of Graham chooses to utilize its laws.

“It’s not sensible, the way that they’re using the law in that city — basically to criminalize speech so that Jennifer Talley’s businesses are not harmed. That’s a problem for me,” Paulen said. “I swore an oath to the Constitution when I took my job as a magistrate. I’m an officer of the court and I care about to the extent that we have any constitutional rights in this country.”

CONTENT-BASED DISTINCTIONS

Content-based restrictions limit speech based on its subject matter and viewpoint-based restrictions limit speech based on ideology and perspective. Content-based laws are presumed to be unconstitutional. If the law “draws distinctions based on the message a speaker conveys,” it is to be treated as content-based and subjected to the highest level of scrutiny by judicial review.

Sable Communications of California v. Federal Communications Commission (1989), Simon and Schuster v. Members of the New York State Crime Victims Board (1991) and Boos v. Barry (1988) are all examples of the Court ruling against content-based laws. The Court also ruled that certain, narrow categories of expression — such as obscenity, child pornography, true threats and incitement to imminent lawless action — can be prohibited precisely because of their harmful content as in Burson v. Freeman (1992).

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KRISTOFER LOY
GRAHAM RESIDENT



These businesses are all located around Main and Elm Street where many events have occurred.

was to call a special to change the ordinates that created the special events committee and it’s Authority. We were hoping to do this at the March meeting, but, things have gotten out of hand and could not wait.”

Prior restraint and freedom of speech

According to Paulen, she was advised prior to the meeting, as well as during the meeting by Cole and the council, that only city staff members could speak before the council during the meeting.

Though Paulen attended the meeting just to hear what the council had to say and did not originally plan to speak, she said she felt inclined to provide her input after listening to Tom Boney, president and publisher

criteria to decide which events are approved and which are not.”

According to Elon Law professor Enrique Armijo, who specializes in teaching freedom of speech, freedom of expression and constitutional law, content-based restraint is generally not permitted under the First Amendment — except in the narrowest cases such as those of national security.

When it comes to event-approval processes, Armijo said they have been deemed OK by the Supreme Court as long as the board, committee or council with event approval authority is not denying events on the grounds of the content being shared.

“If the city council had said, ‘No ... Black Lives Matter protests in downtown Graham, or no Confederate monument protests in

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Upcoming tuition increase pushes local students to look at commuting

Local, lower-income students feel pressured to commute in order to save money

Naomi Washington
Elon News Network | @NWashingtonNews

Every morning, freshmen Morgan and Madison Williams make their way to Elon University. The twin sisters arrive to campus together, accompanied by one other person — their mother, who drops them off.

Both Morgan and Madison are daily commuters to Elon. Though they initially decided to commute to save money, when the sisters found out that tuition is set to increase by 9% next academic year, their wishes of eventually living on campus diminished.

“It’s honestly kind of hard for me to afford being here,” Morgan said. “I do try and keep my grades up so I can get scholarships and things like that, but it just makes me worry about what that will look like for me next year because I don’t have any extra money.”

Beginning in the 2022-23 academic school year, Elon University will raise its tuition and fees, leaving some low-income students to live off-campus and commute to Elon every day. The total price, including room and board, to attend Elon next fall will be \$56,127.

Students who commute next year will save \$13,886 by not paying room and board costs.

“I don’t live on campus, and I don’t have a meal plan. I don’t have any commuter plans. And I just commute back and forth,” Morgan said. “For getting food, I have to either get cash from my mom from time to time, or I have to pack lunch. And if I’m not able to pack lunch, or if I didn’t bring anything with me that day, I have to wait until I get home. But I’m usually on campus all day, every day.”

The Williams sisters live with their family at their home in Burlington. As commuters, they said it’s harder to find close-knit relationships with other members of the Elon community. Due to the tuition increase, Morgan said looking for friendships will continue to be a challenge for them since they will commute again next year.

“I’m not as close with certain people, because mostly everyone has the connection of living on campus,” Morgan said.



Madison (left) and Morgan (right) Williams get out of their car after their mom drops them off on campus on March 8. The Williams sisters live with their family in Burlington and are daily commuters to Elon University. The twins planned to live on campus next year, but after seeing that tuition will increase, they will continue to live at home.

The sisters are curious to see how the university will offer them support because both of them already have student loans.

“I want to graduate from Elon,” Morgan said. “I don’t want to have to potentially switch to any other school because I can’t afford tuition. I love it here.”

The Williams aren’t the only students commuting. According to Vice President for Enrollment Greg Zaiser, there are about 10 commuters per graduation class. Students who commute must be living with a family member.

Freshman Leslie Aviles Mendoza lived at home in Burlington with her family last semester while balancing a part-time job to save money, and she said traveling back and forth each day caused her to experience burnout.

“I’ve gotten very depressed because of it,”

Aviles Mendoza said. “It’s like thinking about working a lot of days over the summer and not having a social life per se.”

This semester, Aviles Mendoza lives on campus and works at Longhorn Steakhouse in Burlington to help with financial issues. However, she said it’s possible she’ll have to go back to commuting next semester.

In a previous interview with Elon News Network, Director of Financial Aid Patrick Murphy said that next year’s amount of financial aid available will be affected by the increase in tuition, and any additional funding will support part of the projected change in cost for students who receive need-based aid.

Aviles Mendoza is among the 15% of freshmen students with Elon University’s merit-based presidential scholarship of \$7,500 each academic year. She is also a communications fellow and receives an

additional \$5,500 scholarship each academic year.

Even with this financial aid, she said she still has to worry about covering more than half of the costs. Aviles Mendoza said she tries to relieve any money issues from her mom.

“I come from a single-parent household and I don’t like bothering her with the cost,” Aviles Mendoza said. “That’s why I’m trying to work more days a week to be able to afford it.”

Aviles Mendoza said it’s likely that she will have to return to commuting next semester when tuition officially increases.

“Elon advertises a lot about how they care for low-income students, but with the tuition increase, it kind of shows that they don’t,” Aviles Mendoza said. “I think it’s like a slap in the face to low-income people.”

A SHIFT IN SOFTWARE

Student emails will change to Outlook from Gmail over Spring Break

Mason Willett
Elon News Network | @MasonWillett20

While students are away on Spring Break, their email platforms will change from Google Workspace to Office 365. According to an email sent by Elon Information Technology, the shift will happen on March 14.

The change only affects sophomores, juniors, graduate and law students. Undergraduate seniors aren’t changing their platforms. The freshman class and other first-year students have only had access to Outlook for email, so the switch will not impact them.

Assistant Director of Campus Technology Pat Donohue said the switch will have no impact

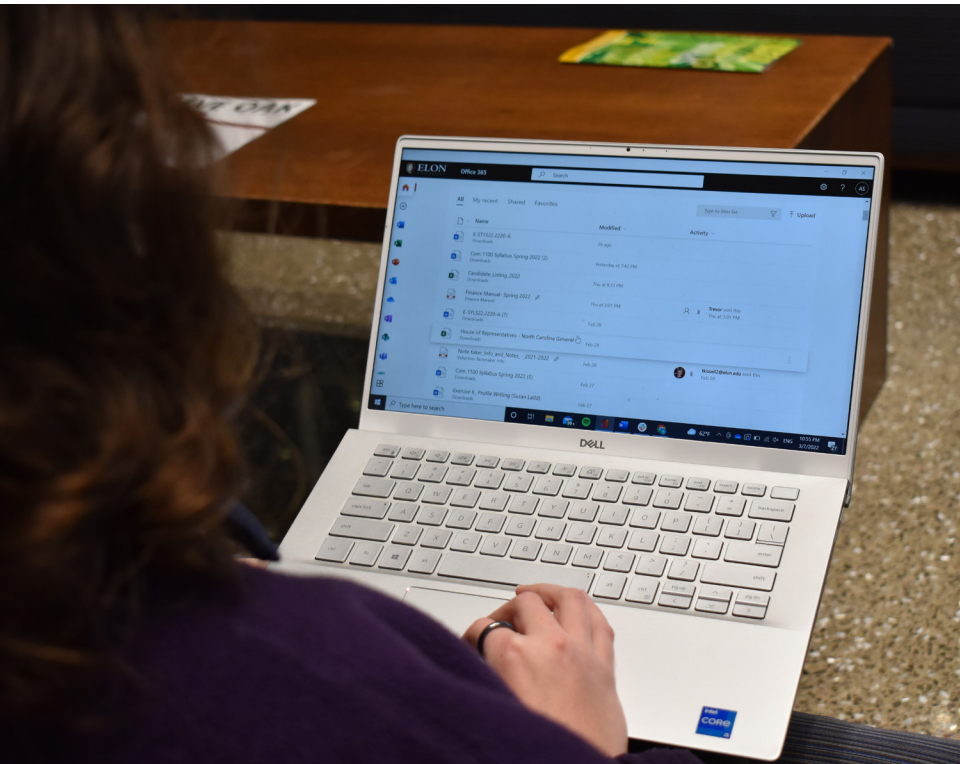
on past documents or emails. Students will still have access to the rest of the Google Workspace — such as Google Drive — just not Gmail.

“We see this as you get the best of both worlds,” Donohue said. “We’re not taking away anything, we’re simply defaulting the email to one place.”

The update comes after a two-year delay — IT decided to hold off on the switch when the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020.

But not everyone sees it as a good change. Sophomore Quin Student said he’s upset that the shift will happen halfway through the spring semester.

“I don’t understand why they would do it in the middle of the school year, or middle of the semester for that matter,” Student said. “That’s probably something they should have wheeled out during the summer, especially if they had a better plan.”



A freshman uses Office 365 as she does her homework. Undergraduate students under senior standing will see their emails change from Google’s Gmail to Microsoft Office 365’s Outlook.

Mediation service looks to raise conflict resolution awareness

The Office of Student Conduct houses services that aid in resolving student conflict, including mediation

Betsy Schlehuber
Elon News Network | @betsyschlehuber

Getting into a fight with a friend or roommate can result in sweaty hands, a racing heart and debilitating anxiety. This can sometimes lead to hesitation to reach out for help.

Professor Linda Dunn, who has mediated thousands of misdemeanor cases around Alamance County since 1988, hopes to minimize these feelings and that hesitation by implementing the mediation process is on campus.

“Mediators don’t give advice, they don’t take sides, and they don’t judge you. By being a neutral, confidential place to talk things out, people usually reach an agreement,” Dunn said. “It just gives them safety and gets them over the embarrassment and the uncomfortable part about approaching another person about conflict.”

Under the Office of Student Conduct at Elon, there is conflict coaching, facilitated dialogue, mediation, and restorative circle or conversation. The mediation service inside the Office of Student Conduct resolves conflicts between students confidentially and without punishment.

But since its founding, the mediation service has only had one case, which was back in October 2021. Dunn said they want to receive more cases, but she feels that there is not enough promotion



CAROLINE MITCHELL | DESIGN CHIEF

toward students regarding this service.

“We did a presentation for all the RA’s on campus. We did a demonstration of a mediation and told them how to refer,” Dunn said. “They seemed really interested in it, but we just never got any cases from Residence Life, and that was where we thought we would get all our cases.”

According to Dunn, the only place where the mediation service is posted is on the Student Conduct website, which is not visited often

by students. But Dunn said her and her mediators will continue promoting around campus and even plan to set up an informational desk so that students can drop by and learn more about the service.

The mediation service consists of eight student workers who have to go through training before becoming a mediator. As for students who want to go through mediation, sessions will be scheduled for a time that is convenient for everyone and will occur under the supervision of

two mediators and is completely confidential.

During mediation, students in conflict share their sides of the story. The mediators will listen and lead the students through the conversation until they are ready to brainstorm an agreement.

A student mediator, sophomore Taylor Classen said learning conflict resolution in college will not only benefit him and his fellow students now, but also in the future.

“Being a college student and having to think about the workplace

in the future I really think that positive conflict resolution ... will improve my four years at Elon,” Classen said. “But also when I go into the workforce, knowing conflict resolution skills can really help me be a better worker in the workforce and make the workforce also a better place because I don’t bring conflict into it.”

As students navigate college, Dunn said she believes that conflict resolution is crucial to learn about and experience during their years at Elon.

“Because of the polarity in our country right now, it’s really important for us to listen to one another and to be able to talk through conflicts rather than cut people off, or avoid them, or harm the other person,” Dunn said. “It’s really important that we show that we care about each other.”

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ELON LISTENS ELON LISTENS IS A COLUMN THAT REVIEWS DIFFERENT TYPES OF MUSIC THROUGH STORYTELLING

Considering Pinegrove’s “11:11”



Grey Gaul
Freshman

Last weekend, I saw Pinegrove perform at the Orange Peel in Asheville, in promotion of their album “11:11,” which they released in January. They played a set of 22 songs, among them all 11 tracks from the album.

“These songs are for everyone,” said frontman Evan Stephens Hall during the show, “... but especially for those worried about our current climate crisis.”

Thematically, the record is a journey through the mind of Hall as he weathers daily life since the dawn of the pandemic. Environmental and societal concerns, perhaps more noticeable as life returns to “normal,” mark the forefront of the album’s lyrical

focus.

Sonically, Pinegrove’s “rocking and rolling” tendencies are more present than they’ve been since “Cardinal” in 2016. The guitars are crunchier and more distorted, but not reluctant to give way to moments of acoustic-laden tenderness and contemplation which the band explored on “Skylight” and “Marigold.”

Coming off of 2021’s “Amperland, NY,” a grand collection of rerecordings and reinterpretations which arguably stands as Pinegrove’s most impressive piece of work, the band haven’t fallen short with “11:11.”

Engineer and multi-instrumentalist Sam Skinner and mixer Chris Walla have crafted something which taps into the feel of their early/mid 2010s sound, yet is more expansive and intricate. A song like “Cyclone” harkens back to this feeling. Banjo picking over top a steady 4/4 beat, as Hall sings with a heavy melancholy and a little bit of hope. Other things about a classic Pinegrove song remain similar as well, including a consistent rhythm guitar strum and a second verse grounded by

the beat of tom drums.

Noticeable changes include that of more texturally sophisticated lead guitar tones. Experimentation with distortion is met with a similar regard toward effects like tremolo and vibrato. Additionally, the bass feels more present in the mix than ever before on a Pinegrove album. Megan Benavente provides counter-melodies and an integral groove to songs like “Iodine.”

This sound enters new territory which I’m hesitant to label anthemic, yet in a way feels totally appropriate. Musically and lyrically, everything comes together in “Respirate” as a triumphant organ and plodding beat of a ride cymbal meet the words “We’re having a hard time now, finding a good way out.” This is the kind of song one can only write and sing in earnest after years of refining their craft and I think it’s a good summation of the place that Hall’s songwriting has reached with “11:11.” Playing on the strengths of the band’s past and taking advantage of new resources, all the while considering what’s important to him.



The album cover for Pinegrove’s “11:11.”

ROUGH TRADE

SPORTS

THE ELON COMMUNITY IMPACTS PRO DISC GOLF SCENE

Elon students past and present walk the line between professional and amateur play

Ian Taylor
Elon News Network

When wrist injuries and the pandemic robbed her of an outlet for her competitive spirit, Sarah Austin rediscovered disc golf. Austin, an Elon senior, now frequents local courses and tournaments as a proud professional disc golfer.

Disc golf, much like golf, is played on a course of nine to 18 holes. Each hole has a set par, or number of disc throws that is expected to get the disc in the basket. The object of the game is to complete the course in as few throws as possible for a higher ranking.

Though she was introduced to the sport as a child, playing once or twice a year with her family, Austin said she did not begin to take it seriously until early 2020.

Austin began hitting the course at least once a week, but when the pandemic arrived, it only pushed her play more.

“I played almost every single day,” Austin said. “Then by August of 2020, I decided I wanted to join the PDGA, which is the Professional Disc Golf Association, and I started playing competitively, and I’ve been playing competitively since then.”

The PDGA hosts and sponsors disc golf tournaments around the globe, including several within a short drive from Elon. Disc golf tournaments are similar to golf tournaments. They typically last two to four days, during which players compete in one round per day of 18 holes each.

Professionals and amateurs often play in the same tournaments at the local level, but pros pay a higher entry fee. The highest reward an amateur can hope for is store credit to the disc golf club or a local sports equipment store. As a pro, the reward for winning a tournament is cash.

Daniel Bascuñan-Wiley ’21,

an amateur disc golfer, said there’s not much difference between professional and amateur tournaments, other than the value of the prize.

“You can still get a payout, but normally that in like a voucher for merch or swag or discs or whatever so I feel like the stakes might be a little bit lower,” Bascuñan-Wiley said. “It is not as serious as if you were playing pro, where you put a lot of money in and you have a lot at stake so you have to be really zoned in every time.”

For Austin, the high stakes sounded exciting, so after she had won her fair share of disc golf merchandise, she began looking for something more rewarding.

“After playing for a year and a half, I accumulated probably more than 150 discs,” Austin said. “I thought, ‘I’m done with being an amateur, I think I’m ready to go pro.’”

Austin submitted an application to the PDGA in November 2021 and paid the \$75 annual membership fee, and she became a professional disc golfer.

“I’ve made about \$600 in the past two months, and that’s just from playing in local tournaments in North Carolina,” Austin said. “That \$600 came from four different tournaments, I believe, and I won all of them. I’m on a bit of a winning streak right now.”

Austin’s winning streak has taken her across the Southeast. Her latest tournament, the Alamance County Pro-Am, was hosted at Cedarock Park — only a 20-minute drive from Elon’s campus — but she has traveled as far as Florida for tournaments.

“I played in the amateur world championships last August, so I went and played in Orlando,” Austin said. “But I’d say typically I travel between 30 minutes and two hours for a normal weekend.”

Bascuñan-Wiley also competed at the Alamance County Pro-Am, playing in and winning the second amateur division. The Alamance County Pro-Am, like most disc golf tournaments, is divided into different divisions ranging from



COURTESY OF SARAH AUSTIN

Senior Sarah Austin plays disc golf at a course in Cary. The senior plays the sport professionally in tournaments across the Southeast.

novice to professional, based on experience and PDGA membership.

Austin’s recent success has earned her a sponsorship deal with the Burlington franchise of Play It Again Sports.

“This is very exciting for me,” Austin said. “Play It Again Sports is a company I’ve been familiar with since I was young.”

The sponsorship, which began in January, had Austin promote Play It Again on her social media page and at tournaments, and the company gives her around \$100 a month to fund tournament and equipment fees.

Sponsorships also interest Bascuñan-Wiley, but not just for himself. Bascuñan-Wiley runs ROBOT Disc Golf, a disc golf organization that posts tips and gives an inside look at PDGA tournaments, with his friend Matthew Mitten ’21. For now, ROBOT is just a way for Bascuñan-

Wiley and Mitten to brand themselves on social media, but they have dreams of transforming it into a business, and offering sponsorship deals to professional disc golf players.

“We’re hoping to start sponsoring people,” Bascuñan-Wiley said. “Right now, we don’t know what that will look like. We’re thinking about doing social media content for people, sending out some merch, creating golf polos, and getting discs with our stamp on it.”

But Bascuñan-Wiley isn’t interested in becoming a professional himself quite yet.

“Maybe down the road. I think, for now, the skill set is not there. I think I’ve gotten a lot better, but not good enough to be winning cash,” Bascuñan-Wiley said.

For Austin, on the other hand, going pro and finding success did take effort, but she was able to manage the stress and pressure.

“Instead of saying, ‘Oh, it’s just for fun,’ now, it’s just for fun but there’s also \$200 on the line,” Austin said. “It adds a little more pressure, but I remind myself that I do this for my mental health and for fun as my priority, and secondary is the money.”

Disc golf is a primarily male-dominated sport, according to Austin, but she said demographics are changing, making her excited for the future. In 2020, the PDGA reported that its membership was 93% men in an annual demographic report.

“It’s grown the past couple years, but it’s very skewed,” Austin said. “So it’s nice that they’re holding divisions for women to play against other women.”

Austin is looking for further success on the course as the professional disc golf season gets into full swing in the spring and summer.

FORMER ELON FOOTBALL PLAYER TO PLAY PROFESSIONALLY IN SWEDEN

Tristen Cox, a former defensive lineman, is set to play overseas

Jack Spalding
Elon News Network

In just a few weeks, former Elon defensive lineman Tristen Cox ’21 will move over 4,000 miles away to play football in Sweden. Cox was signed by the Orebro Black Knights of the Swedish Superserien in February.

“I knew that my chances of playing in the NFL were slim to none, so when the opportunity came to go play and spread the game of football overseas, I couldn’t pass it up,” Cox said.

For the past four years, Cox was a staple on Elon’s defensive line, winning the team’s MVP award for his performance in the spring 2021 season and served as the team captain for his last two seasons before graduating last fall. Cox is set to move to Sweden on March 13. The Swedish Superserien season will begin in April.

The decision to move and play in another country was partly because of another Elon alumnus Sam Eisenstadt ’19 — head coach of the Black Knights. Cox said he

knew Eisenstadt for a few years, which later developed into opportunities for him.

The Black Knights had a historic season last spring, finishing first in their division with a 2-0-1 record and winning their first Swedish Title, according to JC Abbott of American Football International. They are hoping to build on that title and produce another strong season.

Football is gaining popularity in Sweden. Superserien, the highest level of American football in Sweden, currently consists of four league teams — the Carlstad Crusaders, Stockholm Mean Machines, Uppsala 86ers and the Orebro Black Knights.

“I’m really excited to be able to get over there and play for the team, go to events to try and spread the game I’ve been playing for so long,” Cox said.

Cox said he is most excited to play football at the professional level, but he’s also looking forward to playing in a new country surrounded by new cultures.

“It’s going to be different,” Cox said. “I’m just mainly excited to go experience something that I never thought I’d get to experience, so I’m just really trying to take in everything that I can and make the most of it.”



COURTESY OF ELON ATHLETICS

After graduating in the fall, Tristen Cox ’21 will continue playing football — overseas.