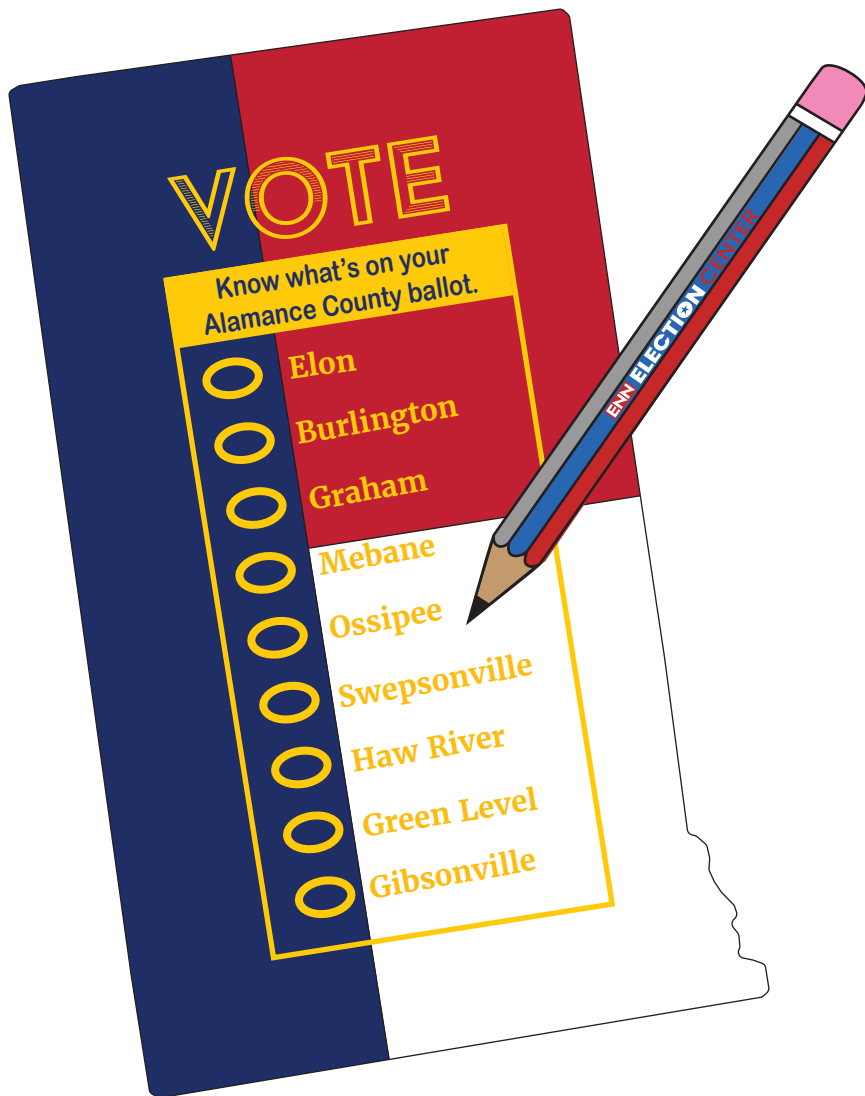




ALAMANCE COUNTY VOTER GUIDE 2025

Elon University, town of Elon invest in one another

University does not pay property taxes, finds other ways to support town

Nia Bedard
Elon News Network

Within the six square miles of the town of Elon, a little over one square mile is taken up by Elon University.

Despite the university taking up 19.3% of the land in the town, the university does not pay property taxes. This is because the university is a nonprofit, meaning that the university does not have to pay taxes on the land they use for educational purposes. The town of Elon currently has a property tax rate of 3.5%.

For the 2025-26 fiscal year budget, the town of Elon's second largest source of revenue was property taxes. The largest source of revenue was sales tax.

Town of Elon Mayor Emily Sharpe said the relationship between the town and university is in a good place at the moment.

"There is a lot of respect, I believe between town leadership and university leadership that maybe wasn't always there," Sharpe said.

While the university does not contribute to the town using property taxes, they contribute to other aspects of the town.

Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees Patrick Noltemeyer said one of the main items the university will contribute to is emergency services.

"We have committed to support emergency services within the town of Elon because we know that, as one of the largest users of those emergency services,"



ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

The Phoenix visits guests at a car meet to take photos during the Social District Block Party on Sept. 6, 2024, behind MaGerk's Pub and Grill.

Noltemeyer said. "We really have a responsibility to make sure they're at the highest level."

In the 2026 fiscal year budget, the university increased its contribution to the town of Elon Fire Department by 389% from \$86,598 to \$423,524 to help pay to replace a new ladder truck and adding two new firefighters to staff.

The university also will be contributing to a position in the downtown department, to the town of Elon Police Department and a subsidy to the town.

Twin Lakes, a retirement community and nonprofit in the town of Elon also increased its financial contribution to the fire department. Twin Lakes also does not pay property taxes on the land they own.

In addition to contributing to the fire department, Noltemeyer said that having over 6,000 students as well as faculty and staff on campus helps provide for the local economy.

"We're a big part of the local economy, with a number of students, faculty and staff that are here, driving dollars into the local economy, taking advantage of many local restaurants and shops in the town of Elon," Noltemeyer said.

Sharpe said while the relationship between town and university leaders is in a good place, she wishes students took more advantage of what the town offers while they are here.

"The businesses that exist here support the students either from that entertainment and dining standpoint, or to jobs as well," Sharpe said. "I would hope that Elon students' first experiences being an adult are here and that they can learn and grow from that experience here in the town."

The town of Elon has started new events like the Block Party, created the social district and built the plaza in downtown.

Even though Sharpe said the relationship between the town and university is in a good place, there are some things that she wishes were better.

"A lot of times we don't know about growth plans or strategic planning until it's released to the public," Sharpe said. "Let's say that they're gonna grow their student body by 2,000 in the next 10 years. Someone who should know that, we're a key stakeholder

and we would have to think about how we're gonna handle 2,000 additional people in town in the next 10 years."

Sharpe said she would like to see the town have a seat at the table — especially as the town grows its own residential properties.

“

THERE'S A DIFFERENT VIBE WHEN THE STUDENTS ARE HERE AND AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE ARE A COLLEGE TOWN.

EMILY SHARPE
TOWN OF ELON MAYOR

The town of Elon will be increasing its residential property with around 1,000 new housing units over the next 10 years with the developments of PARC Northwest, PARC East and PARC Village.

As the town prepares to grow over the next 10 years, Sharpe said students and full-time residents should take advantage of their time in Elon.

"There's a different vibe when the students are here and at the end of the day, we are a college town," Sharpe said. "If someone who lives here isn't leaning into the fact that it's a college town, then I would encourage them to do so because you can enjoy it so much more when you take advantage of what living in a college town can be like."



Global building named for 1st international graduate

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Alums participate in oral history project

PAGE 9 LIFESTYLE



Student athlete transitions from lacrosse to football

PAGE 12 SPORTS

THE PENDULUM

A PUBLICATION OF
ELON NEWS
NETWORK

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

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EDITORIAL POLICY:

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

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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

Contact
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to report a correction or a concern.

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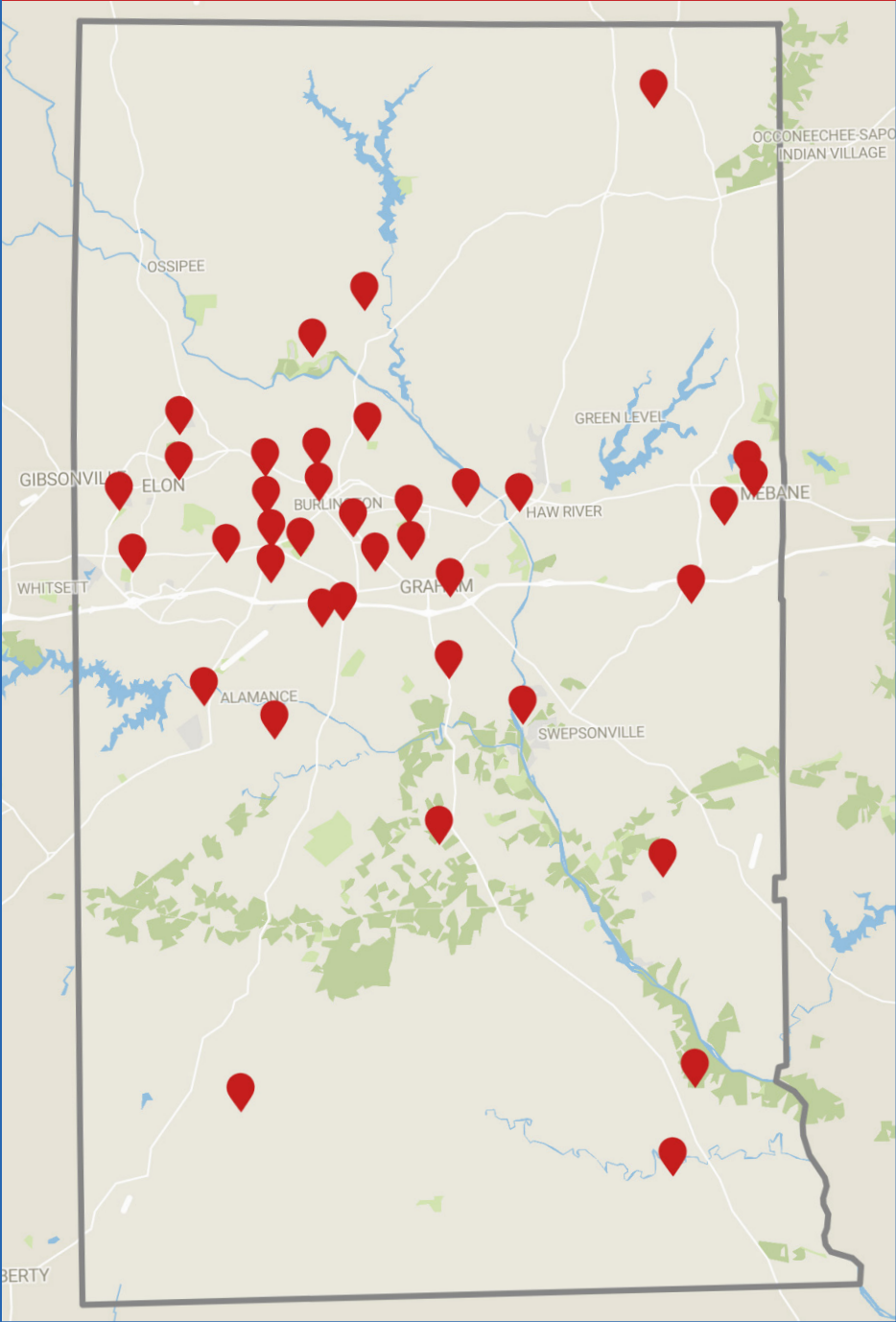
publishes daily



CORRECTIONS

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

VOTING LOCATIONS



IMPORTANT
DATES

OCT. 16

In-person early voting period begins at the Alameda County Board of Elections Office.

OCT. 21

Absentee ballot request deadline at 5 p.m.

NOV. 1

In person early voting ends at 3 p.m.

NOV. 4

Election day.
Polls are open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Absentee ballot deadline.

For more information or to check voter registration visit the Alameda County Board of Elections.



[Elections.AlamedaCountyNC.Gov](https://elections.alamedacountync.gov)

VOTING LOCATION BY PRECINCT

Patterson

Mt. Zion Baptist Church

Coble

Alameda Civitan Clubhouse

Central Boone

Trinity Worship Center

Boone 5

Elon Elementary School

North Boone

First Baptist Church of Elon

North Boone 2

Twin Lakes Center – Gathering Room

South Boone E

Marvin B. Smith Elementary School

West Boone

Beth Schmidt Park Community Center

South Boone M

St. Mark's Community Church

Morton

St. Luke's Community Church

Faucette

Lakeview Community Church

Graham 3

R. Homer Andrews Elementary School

Graham 4

Fellowship Baptist Church

North Graham

Graham Recreation Center

South Graham

Bethany Presbyterian Church

East Graham

Graham Civic Center

West Graham

Harvey Newlin Elementary School

Albright

Mt. Hermon Community Center

North Newlin

Eli Whitney Recreation Center

South Newlin

Chatham Friends Meeting Church

North Thompson

Swepsonville Fire Station 1

South Thompson

Salem Community Church

North Melville

E.M. Yoder Elementary School

South Melville

Mebane Arts & Community Center

Melville 3

Hawfields Middle School

Melville 4

Old Mebane Recreation Center

Pleasant Grove

Pleasant Grove Elementary School

North Burlington

Mayco Bigelow Center

South Burlington

New Birth Baptist Church

East Burlington

Fairchild Community Center

West Burlington

First Presbyterian Church

Burlington 4

Hillcrest Elementary School

Burlington 5

Grove Park Baptist Church

Burlington 6

Turrentine Middle School

Burlington 7

Elmira Community Center

Burlington 8

Kernodle Senior Center

Burlington 9

Baptist Temple

Burlington 10

St. Paul's Community Church

Haw River

Haw River Civic Center

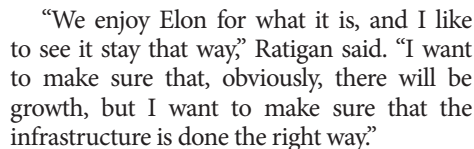
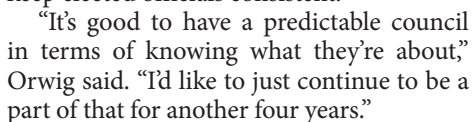
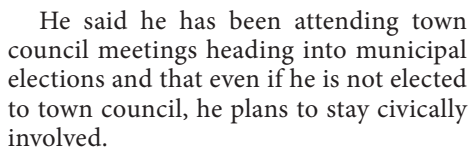
Emily Sharpe



“There’s no grocery store here, there’s no pharmacy,” Sharpe said. “I think that any opportunity that we can to enhance the offerings within our six square miles is not

“Every Friday night, when you come to downtown Elon on Fridays, it is just filled with families supporting our local businesses, enjoying the Plaza, which was created since COVID and it’s just a way to bring people together,” Sharpe said. “There’s Twin Lakes and their community, there’s the university and their community, then there’s communities within the full-time residential communities. When I think about it, I’ve been talking lately and thinking a lot about this. We are one, we are one Elon.”

Steve Exum



Candidate profiles in this edition are by Nia Bedard, Miles Hayford, Charlotte Pfabe, Evan Cooper, Kate Gray, Lilly Molina, Trista Panagakos and Nolan Williams.

A sample ballot from the Alamance County board of elections for the upcoming town of Elon elections.

BURLINGTON

CITY COUNCIL

Ian Baltutis



Ian Baltutis '08 is running for the open Burlington City Council seat. Baltutis was elected as the mayor of Burlington in 2015 and served in that position until 2021. Afterwards, Baltutis went back to school and earned his master's degree in City & Regional Planning and Public Administration.

Baltutis also has a foot in the Burlington community, having helped establish the Burlington Beer Works and he owns Persnickety Books, a local bookstore.

"I've had my hands in a lot of development that's going on, really from that community standpoint of, 'what does the community need? What kind of activities, businesses operations would really bring the community together and help create good, positive engagement and development,'" Baltutis said.

Baltutis said campaign is defined by transparency, making Burlington more affordable and good government.

Donna Vanhook



Donna Vanhook, an Alamance Soil and Water Conservation district supervisor, is running for Burlington City Council. She is a retired law enforcement officer who was instrumental in the effort to get the Tarheel Army Missile Plant — a vacant plant site in Burlington that has contaminated the local area — cleaned up.

Helping revitalize East Burlington is a key piece of Vanhook's platform. She wants to create more nutrient-dense food options for East Burlington residents, make housing more affordable and create a pharmacy since the only one available is in Walmart. She said improving the quality of life and focusing on community development is crucial. She also wants to focus on youth development.

"I want to work on youth empowerment, and I think that we can do some great things through the city that will uplift and also address gun violence here in the city," Vanhook said.

Harold Owen



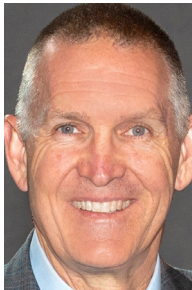
Incumbent Harold Owen is running for another bid as a city council member after being first elected to the position in 2017. He has extensive experience in Burlington, having served as the city manager for 13 years and the director of Burlington Recreation and Parks for 14 years.

Owen said he is focused on the growth of the Burlington community, which has grown to about 60,000 people now, and wants to maintain the consistency he has had over the past eight years on the council. He said he wants to continue to implement certain capital projects he has been a part of as a member of the council like a new recreation center.

He also wants to focus on policies regarding zoning and development. He said increasing the tax base is crucial to maintain public services in Burlington such as their water and sewer system.

"We certainly can increase the tax base which is needed everywhere to provide the services that people wish to have at the level we're providing them now," Owen said.

Jeffery Smythe



Jeffery Smythe, the former chief of police in Burlington, is running for Burlington City Council. Before moving to North Carolina, Smythe spent 27 years working for Arizona law enforcement.

After eight years as the police chief in Burlington, Smythe is now the director of criminal justice standards for the state of North Carolina. Smythe said he doesn't have direct experience with politics but his role as a police chief makes him suitable for the position.

"I don't have any experience being an elected official, but I've got a ton of experience," Smythe said. "Having been a police chief twice in two different states, the expectation or obligation is that you attend every council meeting. You attend every council study session, you follow the financial dealings and policy making decisions of said councils."

He said he is focused on being responsible with budgets as Burlington grows.

MAYOR Beth Kennett



Beth Kennett is running for mayor of Burlington. Kennett previously ran for mayor two years ago and has not held a seat on city council before.

Kennett said her previous run for mayor allowed her to realize that she

needs to capitalize on every opportunity to be in the community.

"I am constantly trying to figure out, 'Where is the best place for me to be, where is the place that I need to listen the most? Where do I need to be?'" Kennett said. "And that's not

always an easy answer to that question."

Currently, she works as a church consultant and is the director of the Center for Congregational Health. If elected mayor, Kennett said she would not initially step back from her position as director since the mayoral role is not a full time job, but if it became difficult to manage the two positions Kennett said she would step back from her role as director.

Kennett said her experience as a consultant will help her navigate differences, having conversations and planning for the future. Kennett said she feels the current city council has focused on addressing current issues in Burlington, rather than preparing for the future.

"It's always hard to think beyond what

has to be done immediately, especially when you need to tear up all the roads and repair the sewage system," Kennett said. "So all you can think about is the present, and that's what we're seeing in Burlington right now — not a failure of the system but a need to repair, an emergent need to repair where there is a way to plan for that."

Kennett is campaigning on three main platforms: community safety, economic opportunity and investment and hosting community engagement sessions.

Part of her plan for community safety is to bring different groups together to have conversations about community safety. Kennett said she believes that if there is a stronger sense of community between the citizens of Burlington, there will be a greater

impact on community safety.

"How many people live in a neighborhood now and don't know the people who live next door to them" Kennett said. "That is so common, so frequent and and I think if I know my neighbor, it's going to be less likely for me to call the police on my neighbor. So even that kind of thing begins to build a sense of community that impacts community safety."

Ronnie Wall is also running for Burlington Mayor. Walls did not respond to multiple requests for an interview.

MEBANE CITY COUNCIL

Jonathan White



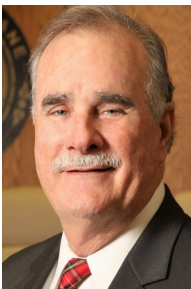
Incumbent Jonathan White is running for reelection to Mebane City Council. He has served on the council since 2021. White works full-time in the semiconductor industry, focusing on making artificial intelligence chips. He is the director of Research and Development at Synopsys Corp, having worked there since 2004. Previous civic activity includes serving as chairman of NC State EDE Strategic Advisory Board and serving as board member and treasurer of Bradford Academy of Mebane.

In an email statement sent to Elon News Network, White said that he is committed to his service on the council, and that he loves helping Mebane residents through his role. He said he uses his position to keep Mebane residents informed, sending monthly emails detailing major decisions made at council meetings.

"An informed Mebane is a strong Mebane," White wrote.

He said he has carefully evaluated all rezoning and land use issues, weighing pros and cons to make decisions for Mebane.

Tim Bradley



Incumbent Tim Bradley is running for reelection to Mebane City Council. He has served on the council since 1993. Bradley has served as a Mebane Volunteer Firefighter since 1974. He has previously served as assistant state fire marshal and as the executive director of the NC State Firefighters Association. Bradley received the Long Leaf Pine Award in 2012, the highest recognition of state service granted by the North Carolina Office of the Governor.

While serving on Mebane City Council, Bradley has supported Mebane parks. He led the drive to preserve Cates Farm Park, a 54-acre property with two miles of hiking trails and an all wood playground. In an email statement sent to Elon News Network, Bradley said he supports a strong and historic downtown as Mebane's core, supporting infrastructure and growth in the downtown area. Bradley said he listens to citizen comments before making a decision, believing that all citizens should have an equal voice.

Montreena Hadley



Incumbent Montreena Hadley is running for reelection to Mebane City Council. She has served on the council since 2021. Hadley has served as a director and officer for the City of Mebane Planning Department for 19 years. Hadley has served on the NC Chapter of the American Planning Association and the NC Retired Governmental Employees' Association. Hadley received the Joe Biden Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award in 2024.

Hadley has 30 years of local government experience. In an email statement sent to Elon News Network, Hadley said she will continue her work on ensuring positive growth while meeting resident needs. Hadley said she will work to listen to the citizens of Mebane and ensure their voices are heard. With her local government experience, she said she understands the importance of planning for and maintaining infrastructure, and will use her position to advocate for and support city infrastructure.

Blair Helms is also running for Mebane City Council. Helms did not respond to multiple requests for an interview.

Richard Thomas may be on the ballot for Mebane City Council but told Elon News Network that he is withdrawing from the race.

GRAHAM CITY COUNCIL

Jim Young



Jim Young is running for Graham City Council because he enjoys serving the community and wants to keep large housing developments out of the city.

“I want to promote entrepreneurs, local entrepreneurs to open up businesses, not franchises coming in,” Young said. “And whatever money a franchise makes goes right out. It doesn’t stay in the

community.”

Young is a member of Graham’s Historic Resources Commission and the city’s Planning Board. He said through these groups, he has been able to voice his concerns about building high-density developments, such as apartment complexes, in the area.

Young said adding more apartment complexes to the area puts a strain on police and fire departments.

Young is the owner and founder of Salvation Coffee Company in Burlington, which opened in 2018. He said he has been a small business owner for 42 years.

According to Young, if elected, he will look for grants and other incentive programs to support entrepreneurs.

“You can keep it small and still have big town amenities,” Young said.

Young was born in Alamance County but grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee. After serving in the U.S. Army, he returned to North Carolina and has lived in Graham with his wife for 29 years.

Young said he understands that Graham needs to grow, but he would rather promote home ownership over the construction of apartment complexes if elected to Graham City Council.

“There’s something special about being a homeowner. Especially when you’re young and you’re able to buy your first home. It’s really great,” Young said.

Young said he previously ran for Graham mayor in 2017 on a whim because the then mayor, Jerry Peterman, was running unopposed and Young said the only requirement to run was a \$10 fee. However, he said he is now running for Graham City Council because he wants to serve his community.

“I’ll put the people first and I’ll make sure to listen to them,” Young said.

Bobby Chin



Originally from Mississippi, Chin moved to Graham in 2019 and was elected in 2021. He said preserving Graham’s small town atmosphere is one of his main focuses because

he supports keeping small businesses in the area instead of bringing in larger chain businesses.

“Distribution centers are fine when

the economy is growing,” Chin said. “But if the economy should take a downturn, those big distribution centers, if they went away, if they had to shut down, it has an impact versus if you’ve got a lot of small to medium sized businesses, you know, the impact is less.”

Chin said he is most proud of the council’s ability to secure an updated waste and water treatment plant contract. He said the previous city council did not agree on a contract and eventually the federal government told the City of Graham it would be fined if it didn’t start replacing infrastructure, which Chin said is almost

100 years old in some areas. The contract cost Graham between \$82 and \$84 million, Chin said.

If reelected, Chin said he is looking forward to the possible construction of a new fire station in the city. There is one fire station in the city of Graham, located at 201 S. Main Street. He said Graham purchased around three acres of land near Graham Regional Park to build a fire station and the new location would be a good opportunity to partner with the community, including a fire training center with Alamance Community College.

Chin served in the Army for 30 years

and described himself as a Christian and conservative. He said he wants people to know that while he understands that taxes serve a purpose, he doesn’t want community members to pay more than they should.

“I recognize taxes serve a purpose to provide for the health and well-being of our community. You know, in regards to infrastructure, police department for safety, fire department, things like that,” Chin said. “But I don’t think the taxpayers should be looked upon as the bank of any and all ventures that some of them undertake.”

Randy Phillips



Randy Phillips has lived in Graham for 57 years and is running for Graham City Council because he said decisions made by the current city council have not

been made in the city’s best interest.

Phillips pointed to the city council’s push to move Sesquicentennial Park which has been closed since September 2024.

“There are people who are just totally

upset about the dismantling of it and moving the Sesquicentennial Park,” Phillips said. “The current city council is just trying their best, in my opinion, to do just that, and don’t really take into account the issues of the citizens of Graham about that.”

Phillips is the General Manager of Sutton’s At The Wrike. Before his current job, he was a paramedic, retiring 10 years ago, and was a volunteer firefighter with the City of Graham Fire Department for 15 years.

He said Graham needs more fire stations because citizens need to be closer to emergency services and it would lower insurance ratings. If elected, he said he

would advocate for new fire department substations.

According to Phillips, he is also focused on lowering Graham tax rates. He said the city needs to grow its presence of large businesses and small industries. He said that since most people in Graham work outside of the city, businesses that can employ more than 100 people would help keep people in the area for work.

He said he has a good understanding of what the city council is allowed to do, but wants to dive deeper into how the council operates.

Phillips also said if elected, he would retire from Sutton’s in order to have more

time to dedicate to the city council.

“I get devoted and I put my mind to it and I dedicate myself to that,” Phillips said. “And that’s why if I do get on the city council, that’s why I’m going to retire, so I can devote myself to the city council and the things that the city needs.”

Phillips said he is supported in his candidacy by his wife of 39 years, Denise Phillips, and their two children.

Daniel Alvis is also running for Graham City Council. Alvis did not respond to multiple requests for an interview.

MAYOR

Chelsea Dickey



Though Chelsea Dickey recently moved back to Graham, she is not new to the area. The Alamance County native, worked on revitalizing downtown Graham eight years ago and now wants to do more

than that as mayor.

“In having a kid, I feel like having this new being that you’re raising, and I want him to be proud of where we’re raising him, and I want him to be proud of who we are as people,” Dickey said.

Running on a campaign of accountability and transparency, Dickey has plans to continue making Graham a welcoming place, focusing on the small business economy and downtown revitalization.

“I want to be known as a neighbor, representing neighbors,” Dickey said. “I want to be very approachable, and I will be approachable, and I want to listen and prioritize community voice.”

Last election cycle, the current mayor, Jennifer Talley, ran unopposed, and Dickey said she knew if this happened again she would put her name in. She entered herself into the race a day before the deadline. Since then she has been canvassing neighborhoods since August, and has over 200 signs anchored into people’s lawns and two billboards with her name on them.

“That’s a first for me,” Dickey said. “Never been on a billboard before.”

Dickey grew up coming to Graham, especially with her grandfather owning a business downtown. She has spent over ten years as a downtown coordinator and economic developer.

“I’m bringing the expertise to be able to listen to people and craft what we need to do in Graham,” Dickey said.

For Dickey, she says Talley holding the mayor seat is a conflict of interest. Talley and her husband Chuck own E.P Gates Construction & Reality which owns portions of downtown Graham, including landmarks like the Graham Cinema.

“I want to be part of making the world a better place, but she’s always been a conflict of interest for this town, and I needed to give the people an option,” said Dickey.

Jennifer Talley



Jennifer Talley, Alamance County native and Elon alumna, is gearing up for a second term as Graham mayor.

“I’m very protective of our community,” Talley said.

Her and her husband own and run downtown realty business E.P. Gates Construction & Reality and with this came a passion for preserving the historic downtown. They own buildings such as the Graham Soda Shop and the Graham Cinema, but Talley said she doesn’t see this as a conflict of interest.

“If my goal was to make money or my goal was financial wealth, I’ve really done a terrible job,” Talley said. “Really our passion is preserving old historic buildings.”

Besides keeping Graham’s small town

southern charm, Talley’s other policies she said she hopes to continue implementing is support for veterans, law enforcement and overall making sure Graham continues to be a safe community.

Since Talley took office, she has also successfully garnered funding for the city.

“We ended up getting a total over overall over the last four years, over \$19 million, when you consider our budget is \$23 million, that’s very successful,” Talley said.

Recently, Talley secured \$600,000 of state funding for crosswalks. On Nov. 4 when locals go to vote, Talley said she hopes they remember how much she loves Graham. She’s raised her two kids here and hopes that they one day do the same with their future children.

“The reason why so many people have come to us to ask us to buy property in the past has been because they trust us,” Talley said.

Talley said she works every single day, including weekends, to make Graham better.

VILLAGE OF ALAMANCE
ALDERMAN

Philip Cheap



Philip Cheap is running for reelection on the Village of Alamance board of Aldermen. If reelected, Cheap vows to continue prioritizing transparency and using the town's budget ethically. According

to Cheap, the board operates on a budget of roughly \$1 million per year.

"It's hard to have a last name like Cheap and not be fiscally responsible," he said. "That's probably my biggest emphasis, is making sure that we are very solvent right now, and I want to remain that way."

Some of his biggest triumphs in his first term on the board have been keeping property taxes low and ensuring that they will remain as low as possible for at least the next 10 years. In 2023, Alamance County reevaluated properties and greatly increased their values. Typically, increases in property values are associated with increases in property taxes. But Cheap voted to make the property tax in the Town of Alamance 14.5 cents per \$100, slightly above revenue neutral.

Cheap noted that there are sometimes disagreements on the board about tax rates or how money should be spent, but they always thoroughly discuss every issue and respect the majority opinion.

Cheap is also a member of the Village of Alamance Public Recreation Committee.

Dale Hunt



Dale Hunt is finishing his first term on the board of Aldermen. He initially ran because he felt that municipal governments could have a direct impact on community members

that the state and federal government cannot.

"I've always looked at government as a pyramid," Hunt said. "Ideally, the top of your pyramid is the smallest part — which is the federal government — and then it broadens as you go down to the state, and then the local level's at the biggest level, because I think that's where people get more bang for their buck on their tax dollars. They've got direct input on what money gets spent where."

Hunt has management and leadership experience from working in the pharmaceutical industry in proposal writing and development. He has maintained discipline and organizational skills in retirement and uses them to guide his work on the board.

According to Hunt, he spent much of his first term learning about common issues presented to the board and maintaining faith in contractors to explain and remedy problems he does not understand.

Hunt also shared he has an endorsement from the Village of Alamance mayor, Donald Tichy.

Shawn Francis



Candidate Shawn Francis has experience in the corporate and business sectors, mostly in cybersecurity and information system development. He said his experiences with business workflow and management would help him as a board member.

Like other candidates, he wants to ensure taxes remain as low as possible and money is handled fairly by the administration.

This is his first time running for the Board of Aldermen, and he said it was a beginner-friendly way to get involved in local politics as it is nonpartisan.

"The mayor is doing an excellent job, and I'd like to just be there to support him in any way I can and keep things running smoothly," Francis said. "It's a good position to not have to be like a big political activist — you don't have to go in there and fight for world peace or abortion rights — it's just, I go in there and take care of the daily work of actually governing responsibly."

If elected, Francis aims to keep operations in the Village of Alamance peaceful and free of unnecessary controversy. Francis also said he firmly supports the mayor and wants to support him and his current policies on the board.

MAYOR
Don Tichy



Incumbent Don Tichy is seeking reelection as Village of Alamance Mayor. Tichy is running unopposed, and has been mayor for the last 10 years. He is originally from Long Island, New York, and moved to Alamance around 20 years ago. Before

serving as mayor, Tichy served on the Village of Alamance Council for six years.

Tichy manages Tichy Train Group in

Alamance.

While serving as Mayor, Tichy said he has kept the tax rate flat. He said the Village of Alamance only went up 2.5% on water rates this year. Tichy said he has worked to get the Village of Alamance technologically up to date.

"We can now do text communication with almost all our residents. We have, I think, 95% of them on the system," Tichy said.

In his next term, Tichy said he is looking to continue upgrading the Village of Alamance's water and sewer infrastructure, along with other general improvements in maintenance and operations.

SWEPSONVILLE
Henry Carrouth



Henry Carrouth, who has been the Swepsonville mayor since 2019, is running for another term on the town council. Carrouth said he is focused on making sure the "small-town living" quality of life is

kept for residents amid the rapid growth of the town. Carrouth said that during his time as the mayor, the council passed a unified development ordinance to help make sure the growth of town is orderly. The ordinance lays out land use regulations to help guide the development of the town. He said there are a couple of projects that he started to implement during his time as mayor and hopes to see come to fruition in another term.

Two key projects that Carrouth is committed to are the construction of the first ever park in Swepsonville and the development of a downtown area in a 22-acre plot of land near the Haw River that has been bought by the town.

"We don't really have a downtown area in Swepsonville. We see this as an opportunity to create a town center, and also possibly be able to entice some retail and commercial development to come, as well as possibly some residential," Carrouth said.

He said improving the livability of the community and increasing opportunities for commercial and retail development is crucial. Carrouth brought up the fact that N.C. Highway 54 between Graham and Chapel Hill goes into Swepsonville, so it is important to have stores and restaurants available to people.

"I think this will really enhance the livability of our community, and I'd just like to have an opportunity to serve four more years to make sure that those projects get completed," Carrouth said.

Incumbent John Andrews, incumbent Wilbur Suggs and Lee Walls are also running for Swepsonville town council. These candidates did not respond to multiple requests for an interview.

GREEN LEVEL
Patricia Jones



Incumbent Patricia Jones is running for reelection for her seat on the Green Level town council. Jones has served on the council for the past four years and has worked in childcare for more than 30 years. She currently owns two daycares.

She was also on the executive board for the Alamance Partnership for Children.

Jones said a big issue for her is creating more growth in Green Level, particularly in restaurants. According to Jones, Green Level has a new training center for EMS workers and firefighters, and she said that there needs to be places for them to eat.

"They're going to need somewhere to eat to go and dine. I just feel like restaurants would be an asset to Green Level because it would also bring in revenue," Jones said. "It will bring jobs to our town."

Jones also emphasized that she wants to prioritize safety in Green Level. A shooting in Green Level on Sept. 20 left five people injured

and resulted in two arrests. Jones said there have been multiple gun-related incidents recently and wants to ensure citizens' safety.

"I just believe in keeping our people safe and getting the guns out of Green Level," Jones said. "We want to help make people aware that it's not Green Level, it's people bringing the guns in and the violence in."

Jones said her platform is based around people and caring for people. She said she wants voters to know that she cares about their well-being.

"I just want to be there for the people, be a support system for our people, the town of Green Level, so that they'll know that they actually have someone that they can go to that actually cares about Green Level," Jones said.

Incumbent Jose McBroom, Lesley Sanders-Carter and Theodore Howard are also running for Green Level town council. McBroom and Sanders-Carter did not respond to multiple requests for an interview. Theodore Howard declined requests for an interview.

GIBSONVILLE
Bryant Crisp



Bryant Crisp has served on the Gibsonville Board of Alderman for the past four years and is now running for Gibsonville mayor. Crisp is an Alamance County native, graduating from Cummings High

School.

Crisp said he wanted to run for mayor to help guide the initiatives he has been putting into place as an alderman.

Crisp is committed to implementing certain capital projects, such as the construction of a new library and police station. He also said he wanted to revitalize the town's playgrounds and improve walkability. He said improving the culture of the town is a big priority for him because the town is becoming more diverse.

"It's a changing demographic, it's becoming more diverse, and we want to welcome all the cultures to show and express themselves and feel like a part of this community, just like everyone else," Crisp said. "I want to be intentional about giving people that space."

Darian Smith



Darian Smith is running for Gibsonville mayor and has lived in Alamance County since a young age. He has been on the Child Fatality Council and the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council in Randolph County since 2020.

Smith is pursuing a master's degree in Financial Services from the University of North Carolina, Pembroke. Smith said Gibsonville's previous mayor's retirement inspired him to run. Smith said he understands politics and how to talk to people.

He said he prioritizes downtown Gibsonville and wants to give out grants to local businesses to help them grow their revenue.

He said that as Gibsonville attracts a younger demographic, he wants to provide opportunities for them.

"I don't want people driving all the way to Burlington or downtown Graham just to have fun or have a drink," Smith said. "There's definitely enough people coming in that I feel like downtown Gibsonville should be more thriving than it is."



Plain White T's members Tim Lopez, left, and Tom Higgenson play side-by-side Oct. 10 at Young Commons. The band was the headliner for Elon's homecoming concert "Rock The Block."

VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Freshman defender Magnus Jacobsen dribbles the ball Oct. 11 during a home game against the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. The Phoenix won 1-0.

ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Attendees watch Plain White T's perform Oct. 10 during "Rock The Block." East Haggard Avenue was closed for the concert.

JESUS ROMERO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



From left, senior Caden Minnich, sophomore Andrew Blum and another attendee reach for a cup simultaneously on Oct. 7 during Phoenix Feud — a homecoming-themed trivia and game night hosted by the Student Government Association in the McBride Gathering Space. Minnich was the first to grab the cup and won the short game.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR



Attendees cheer on Elon University's football team Oct. 11. The home game against Villanova had 7,126 attendees, according to the Elon Athletics website. The Phoenix lost 29-21.

ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon dedicates building to 1st international graduate

Global Commons is now known as Sato Commons

Nia Bedard
Elon News Network

Elon University's first international graduate, Toshio Sato, graduated from Elon in 1920. The university celebrated Sato's role on campus by naming Global Commons after her.

Sato came to Elon at age 16 in 1914. At the time, Elon College was just 25 years old, and World War I was underway.

Despite the global conflict, Sato traveled 6,813 miles from Utsunomiya, Japan, to Elon, North Carolina.

Kelly Policelli, coordinator of university archives and special collections, described Sato as highly involved during her time at Elon.

"There was an announcement the week that she got here about her arrival," Policelli said. "Then literally a week later, she is singing at a mission group event. So she was, from the very beginning, super involved. She seemed very happy to be here."

During her time at Elon, Sato was elected president of the Young Women's Christian Association, served as secretary of the senior class and graduated as class valedictorian.

Sato's descendants, including her grandson and great-grandchildren, visited Elon to attend the dedication of Sato Commons on Oct. 10.

Two of her great-granddaughters, Miyako Kitazawa and Aya Kimura, traveled from Japan and said they were grateful for the opportunity to visit the school their great-grandmother once attended.

"We are just amazed how beautiful this place is and how generous people are," Kimura said.

Kitazawa and Kimura said they also learned more about their great-grandmother during their visit to North Carolina.

"She had to go through a lot, but she



Toshio Sato's family listens to Elon University alum Chika Kusakawa '09 speak during the dedication of Sato Commons on Oct. 10. Sato graduated from Elon in 1920 and was Elon's first international graduate.

survived, and not just survived," Kimura said. "She made a lot of friends, and she had leadership on this campus. I'm proud of her, and I respect her as a woman."

Kari Taylor, deputy chief of staff for campus engagement, oversaw the planning for the dedication and said a great deal of effort went into the event.

"We spent the summer learning about the culture, trying to make sure we understood language, putting together some cultural awareness classes," Taylor said. "I wanted everyone who came in contact with the family to be prepared."

Taylor also said Sato embodied the qualities of a typical Elon student.

"If you were to meet Toshio today, you would be like, 'Oh, you must go to Elon,'" Taylor said. "We're living in the same type of spirit that she brought to campus. She was very well-rounded, very thoughtful, very creative. She was very into the arts, and so it's a great thing, I think, when you can match someone from 100 years ago and see the character traits of an Elon student — that's a bridge."

“

WE'RE LIVING IN THE SAME TYPE OF SPIRIT THAT SHE BROUGHT TO CAMPUS. SHE WAS VERY WELL-ROUNDED, VERY THOUGHTFUL, VERY CREATIVE.

KARI TAYLOR
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT



A photo of Toshio Sato from the 1920 Phi Psi Cli yearbook. Sato was Elon's first international graduate.



Yusuke Kato, grandson of Toshio Sato, speaks at the dedication of Sato Commons on Oct. 10. Kato and his family were invited to spend the week at Elon and attend the dedication event.



The Global Commons building opened its doors to the Elon University community in 2014. Now 11 years later, the building was dedicated to Toshio Sato on Oct. 10.

ETHAN WU | PHOTO EDITOR

Ms. Sandra greets students with strength after surviving breast cancer

McEwen cashier said yearly mammogram, faith keeps her hopeful

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

Sandra Greeson, known to students as Ms. Sandra, is a familiar face at McEwen Dining Hall, greeting students five days a week in the mornings and afternoons. Throughout the month of October, Greeson's smiles and waves are accompanied by breast cancer awareness pins and ribbons on her black Elon Dining shirt.

Greeson was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer four years ago and was the first person in her family to have it. Even through her diagnosis and chemotherapy in 2021, she still worked the McEwen cash register, which she said gave her a drive.

"I didn't want to sit home and just mope about myself having cancer," Greeson said. "I wanted to be strong and show others what it was like to be strong when you have cancer. It's not just something you set back. You can be strong and move on forward with it."

When she was first diagnosed, Greeson told the doctor that she wasn't worried.

"God's got this, and I'm strong and I'm not worried about it, and you're going to get it all," Greeson said she told the doctor.

Her cancer was stage 1 when doctors discovered it, but it had progressed to stage 2 before they surgically removed it. Greeson said one annual appointment saved her from losing her breasts during her diagnosis.

"Having my yearly mammogram, that's where it all started at," Greeson said. "I



Sandra Greeson works at the McEwen Dining Hall register Oct. 5.

ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

have a yearly mammogram, and that's when they found it. So it's important to have a mammogram."

A mammogram is a type of X-ray commonly used to screen for breast cancer. The Mayo Clinic recommends a yearly mammogram starting at age 40.

In 2024, Greeson was surprised with balloons and gifts from her best friend, Jennifer Boggs, to celebrate three years cancer-free. Boggs, who also works in McEwen Dining Hall, said Greeson is somebody she looks up to.

"In the way that she approached having cancer, she never let it get her down, and she did not want anybody to feel sorry for her," Boggs said.

Boggs said she leaned on her faith in God and prayed often for Greeson while her friend battled with cancer.

"I prayed a lot for her and encouraged her," Boggs said. "But she's really very strong, and she never let it get her down. She's amazing."

Greeson and Boggs both wear breast cancer awareness pins, ribbons and

bracelets to their shifts to show their support for the cause.

Greeson said she knew that God had a plan and wanted her to speak to people who didn't know about breast cancer — which is exactly what she did. Dressed in a pink breast cancer survivor t-shirt, hot-pink pants and a pink feather boa wrapped around her neck, Greeson was asked to speak at Elon's Relay for Life 2025, and she is set to again in 2026.

"If I can save one person from breast cancer, it's worth it," Greeson said.

Alums share their Elon stories at the Voices of Elon Oral History Booths

Elon grads gave interviews about their experiences at Elon

Megan Walsh
Elon News Network

For the first time, Elon University alums had the chance to share a little bit of their experiences with the school at the Voices of Elon Oral History Booths.

The booths were hosted by the Committee on Elon History and Memory in collaboration with Belk Library and The Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education. The event operated as part of Homecoming Weekend programming Oct. 10., and featured two booths, one in Belk Library and one in the Black Community Room in Moseley Center.

Alums were given a chance to participate in filmed interviews, 10 to 15-minutes long, where they were asked two questions: "What made you choose Elon?" and "What do you hope students today, or 50 years from now, understand about your experience at Elon?"

Emma Powell, member of the Committee on Elon History and Memory and archivist, said the booths were designed to get small snapshots of a diverse range of alum experiences.

"It is really meant to meet alumni and get a brief overview of their story, especially because we don't have time to meet with every alumni that Elon has ever had," Powell said. "This event allows us to kind of get little bites of people's stories and get them a bit more representation in the archive."

Powell said that with the booths the archives can expand its history of campus

life to go to Elon in different time periods.

"We're still a relatively young archive, and we don't have everything," Powell said. "The archive only started in the early 2000s and so we have things from the '70s or the '80s, but we don't have as much as we would like, especially about student life. We really want those perspectives of what student life was like back in the day, and we really can't get that without the stories of people who actually lived those moments."

Co-chair of the committee Lynn Huber said the booths are meant to bring to light the stories that are not a part of the official Elon narrative.

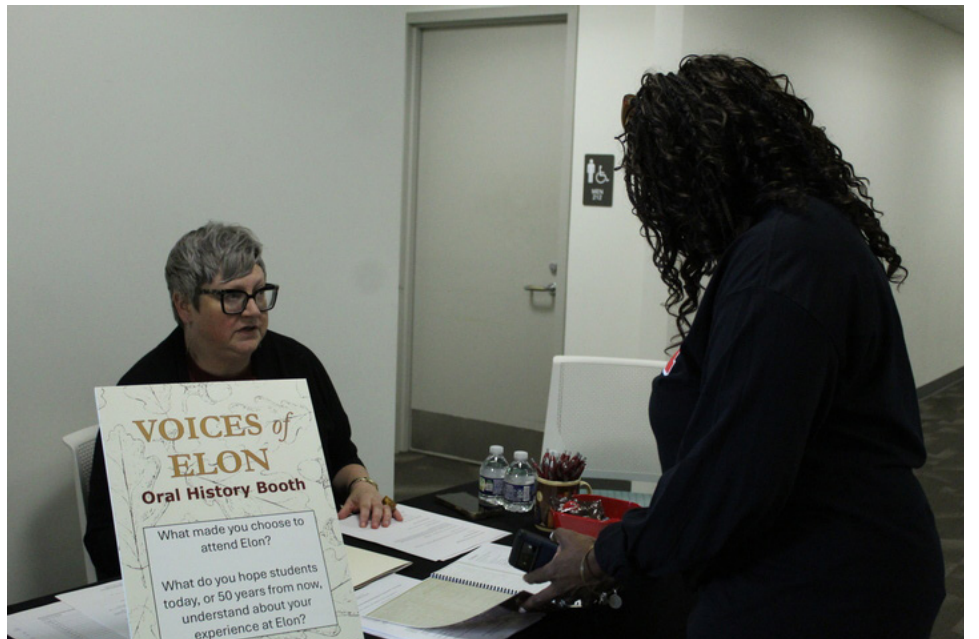
"There's not one history of Elon," Huber said. "There are many histories, and I think we're trying to open up some of those other histories and other experiences that people have at Elon that may not make it into the official record."

Library archivist Shaunta Alvarez helped conduct the interviews. She said many of the stories she heard from alums were very positive.

"I'm grateful that we actually get to do this with people that we maybe don't get to hear from on a regular basis. Like, these are people who came and they left," Alvarez said. "They created history here. They left legacies here."

Ruby Thornton Bracey '99 said she chose to participate in the booth for that exact reason, and that giving her interview felt therapeutic.

"I felt that my story needed to be told and needed to be heard," Thornton Bracey said. "There are other young ladies who may have experienced what I experienced while I was here, as well as other students or



MEGAN WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Co-chair of the Committee on Elon History and Memory Lynn Huber helps check an alum in to interview in the Voices of Oral History Booth on Oct.10 outside the Black Community Room.

young people who didn't take the traditional route to go to college."

Assistant Director of Black Student Success Initiatives for the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education Abdul-Malik Harrison '21 said he enjoyed his experience in the booth and that people don't always realize the history they are a part of.

"We fail to realize that every single day, every single minute, second, that we're making history, whether it feels like it or not," Harrison said. "So to be a part of something like that, it satisfied the history

nerd in me."

Huber said while the committee may not know exactly how the interviews will be used, they will become part of the archives and be shared publicly.

"We're hoping that they might be teaching resources," Huber said. "We hope that they might be resources for talking about the work that history and memory is doing, for talking about the work that the archive is doing. We hope that they might be useful resources for getting people interested to think about sharing their stories."

START



B_3 E_1 S_1 T_1

O_1 F_4

2025

Do you have a favorite dining hall? Do you have a favorite club at Elon? What's the best coffee shop at Elon?

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Staying paw-sitive

Emotional support animals help college students destress

Elon University enters its 13th year of permitting ESAs, allowing students to decompress with their pets

Mackenzie Cruz
Elon News Network

Abby Martin did not expect to bring Gracie, a 12-year-old British shorthair cat, to school with her for her sophomore year at Elon University. Martin’s mom flew five hours from Houston to meet her in North Carolina with Gracie under the seat in front of her.

Martin decided to register her family cat as an emotional support animal at Elon this year. She initially got a dog in 2020 to help with her anxiety, until she started college.

“When I started coming to school, I kind of started experiencing those issues again, and I really just thought it would be helpful to have an animal with me,” Martin said.

Martin said Gracie has been a huge help in dealing with stress and the workload of a college student.

“I feel like instinctually, whenever I’m stressed, I go down, pick up the cat, and just start petting her,” Martin said. “Just knowing there’s a presence there is just really reassuring.”

Gracie is not only sharing Martin’s space, but her roommate’s as well. But late night meows are not a deal-breaker according to Martin, who said Gracie is helpful for them both.



MACKENZIE CRUZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Gracie is sophomore Abby Martin’s 12-year-old British shorthair cat. She is Martin’s emotional support animal.

psychology professor Bilal Ghandour, an expert on anxiety disorders and self-harm behavior. He said the tactile feeling of interacting with cats provides a sense of calm and security.

“There’s some studies that have been done that the touching, specifically of cats, the fur of cats, reduces the level of stress in one’s body and cortisol levels because it just provides a calming impact on the entire nervous system,” Ghandour said.

In a study reported in the Journal of American College Health, a group of college students with ESAs were surveyed on the benefits and drawbacks of having their pet on campus. One participant said their physical PTSD symptoms were eased by the sound of their cat’s purring. Another said just their rats’ presence was helpful.

Ghandour said ESAs are beneficial to people who either struggle emotionally or in interactions with others because they will more or less always understand and comfort you without judgment. According to the Journal of American College Health,

pets provide a sense of unconditional support, whereas humans can harbor a stigma surrounding mental health.

“They just don’t want to struggle on their own,” Ghandour said. “So we [clinicians] often write letters justifying why it’s essential to have a pet to help them as it allows to cope.”

ESA registration at Elon is considered on a rolling basis, with multiple deadlines throughout the academic year. Elon University has allowed ESAs on campus since 2012, with every request from dogs and cats to bearded dragons and fancy rats.

According to the Office of Academic Accommodations and Accessibility, formerly known as Disability Resources, to qualify for ESA approval, the student must submit a request and documentation from a licensed mental health professional justifying the ESA.

In a statement to Elon News Network, Alex Crabtree, an accommodation specialist at Elon, wrote, “It must clearly explain the impact(s) a student experiences with regard to their mental/emotional/psychological health and how having an ESA mitigates the

impact(s) and barrier(s) they are experiencing.”

If approved by the ESA committee, the student needs to provide a photo of their animal, up-to-date vaccination records, completion of the ESA owner responsibility agreement and consent from roommates to share a living space.

“

JUST KNOWING THERE’S A PRESENCE THERE IS JUST REALLY REASSURING.

ABBY MARTIN
ELON SOPHOMORE

“I really think she’s become an ESA for the both of us,” Martin said. “Whenever she’s stressed, I’ll go, ‘Do you want to hug the cat?’ She’ll go, ‘Yeah, yeah I do.’”

Cats specifically are soothing for the human sense of touch, according to

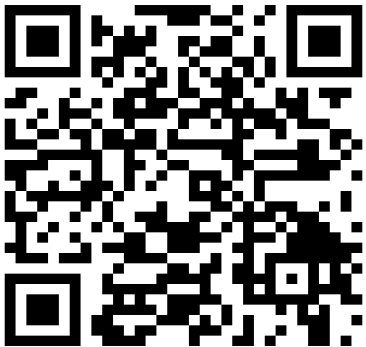
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Graduate linebacker returns to football after 4 seasons playing lacrosse

Player transitions from Cornell lacrosse to Elon football

Benjamin Berfield
Elon News Network

Before transferring to the Elon University football team, graduate linebacker Jayson Singer was on top of the men's college lacrosse world. In 2025, Singer played a major role in Cornell winning the NCAA men's lacrosse championship. He was selected as the 2025 Ivy League Defensive Player of the Year, and represented the conference's all-tournament team.

Now Singer has taken his talents to play linebacker at Elon as a graduate student. Although it's a big change to go from achieving the highest honor in one sport to playing an entirely different one, this was something Singer always hoped to pursue.

"Football is something I always wanted to do, especially at the Division I college level," Singer said.

Before playing lacrosse at Cornell, Singer had starred as both linebacker and running back at Syosset High School in Long Island, New York. He started all four years, earning Nassau County All-County honors.

Singer said he initially wanted to play both football and lacrosse when he committed to Cornell, but ultimately decided it wasn't the right decision at the time. However, he knew of a couple people who played lacrosse at one school before playing football at another college as a graduate student.

"A few people from my area that I looked up to helped me throughout this process of being able to play both sports at a high level," Singer said.

With the NCAA's rule allowing athletes to seek another sport as long as they're still academically eligible, Singer transferred to Elon University. He said it would be a great chance to finish collegiate athletics.

“

A FEW PEOPLE FROM MY AREA THAT I LOOKED UP TO HELPED ME THROUGHOUT THIS PROCESS OF BEING ABLE TO PLAY BOTH SPORTS AT A HIGH LEVEL.

JAYSON SINGER
GRADUATE STUDENT

"I thought it was an opportunity that I couldn't pass up, and it is a great way to cap off my college career playing a year of college football," Singer said.

As for why Singer chose Elon, he said the coaching staff gave him the chance to play football which he really appreciated.

"The big thing was just getting the opportunity to play football," Singer said. "I'm really grateful for the Elon coaches to play football one more year."

Defensive coordinator and linebackers coach Casey Vance said he was very impressed watching Singer's game film from high school. He credited

his athleticism, citing his toughness in multiple sports as something which caught the coaching staff's attention. Vance additionally wanted to see Singer's lacrosse highlights to see how well he'd transition from one sport to another.

"He was an athlete," Vance said. "He played both ways on offense and defense, and then we had him send his lacrosse highlights. And again, he played defense and was not scared of contact. Being an All-American and playing at that high level, he's gonna be able to probably pick things up pretty quick and compete and do well."

Lacrosse is often seen as a complementary sport to football for many reasons. Athletes are expected to play physical while showing agility,

speed and stamina every game. Vance said he believed Singer had the on-field resume to make the switch back to football.

So far, Singer has been an asset to the linebacking unit. Vance said Singer is always trying to get better each day.

"He helps us with depth on the field," Vance said. "He's smart, a good guy in the room and the guys like him."

Throughout the summer and first half of the season, Singer said that the biggest change is learning the playbook. He admitted it's a lot different than high school where players can go out and just make plays.

"High school football, you can go out, make plays, and just go with the flow," Singer said. "Here everyone has to do a job and it's imperative that everyone knows exactly what their job is at that moment."

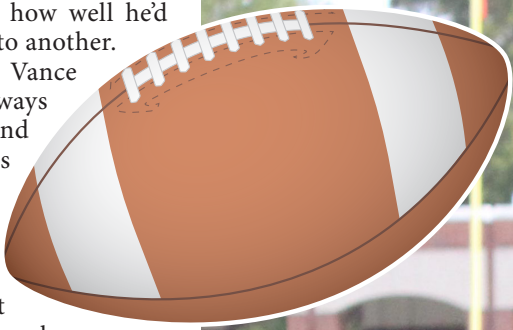
However, Singer has started to get a better hold of the expectations for his position over time. Vance said Singer is not shy to ask questions regarding certain assignments, and has done a great job getting acclimated to Elon's defensive schemes.

Although Singer is currently a backup at his position, Vance noted there's certainly a chance he will get starting reps at linebacker if he continues to progress.

"He hasn't even had a playbook to learn from his previous school," Vance said. "He's getting better at diagnosing and learning the playbook."

For the experience as a whole, Singer said it's a tremendous feeling to come back and play football. He said that football was the first sport he loved playing and hopes to finish on a good note.

"To finish off my college career playing football is something I wanted to do," Singer said. "My first love was football so finishing it off with a year of college football is definitely a great way to end it."



DESIGN BY SARAH T. MOORE

BENJAMIN BERFIELD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER