

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2018
ELON, NORTH CAROLINA

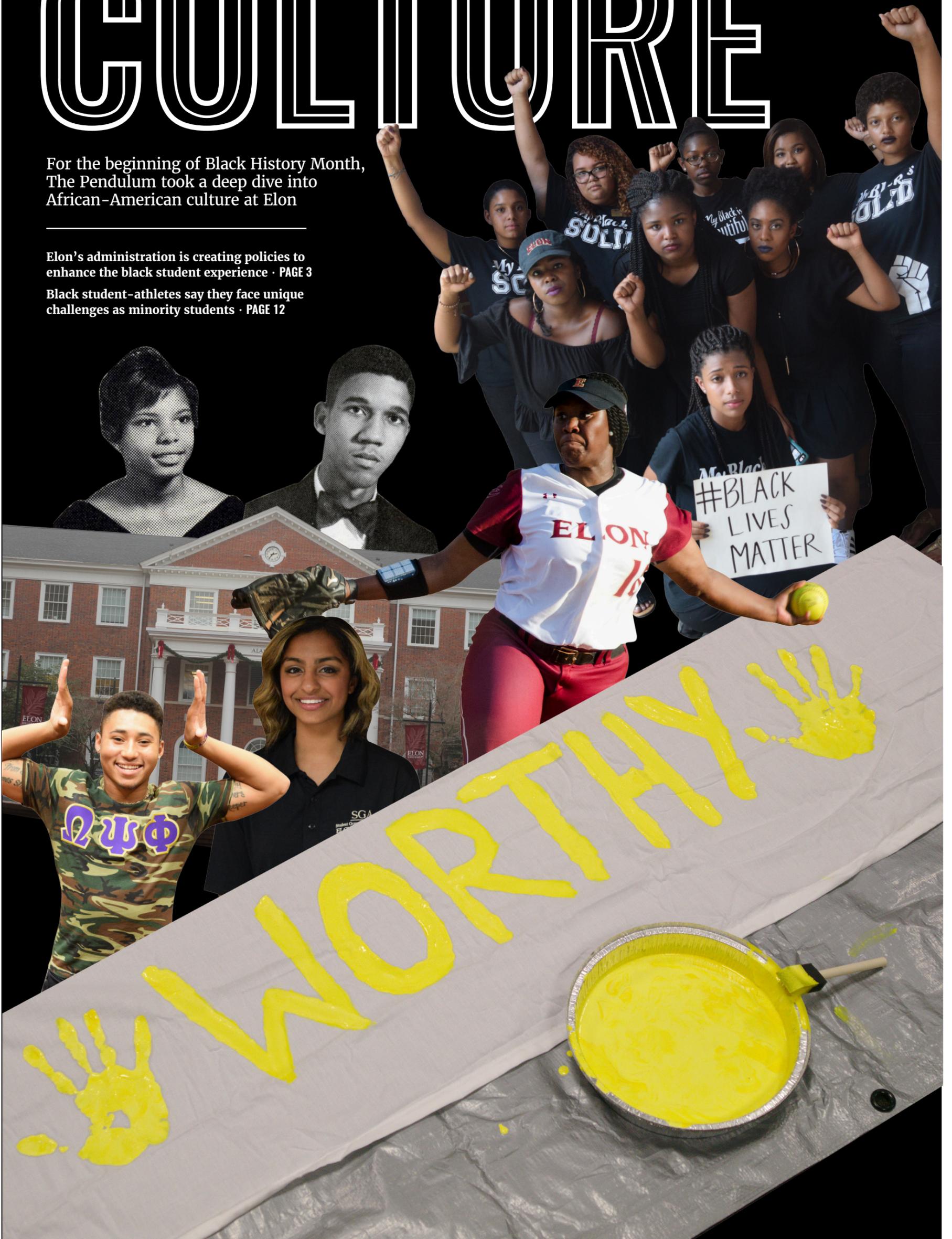
THE PENDULUM

FOR THE CULTURE

For the beginning of Black History Month, The Pendulum took a deep dive into African-American culture at Elon

Elon's administration is creating policies to enhance the black student experience · PAGE 3

Black student-athletes say they face unique challenges as minority students · PAGE 12



Addressing the state of the BLACK ELON STUDENT

Emmanuel Morgan

Managing Editor | @_EmmanuelMorgan

LAST DECEMBER, WHEN EUGENE Perry '69 drove through Elon University, he felt the scars of his past.

It doesn't matter how many years it's been or how much an Elon education has blessed him. Perry said coming here gave him mixed feelings.

He arrived that weekend to bury a transformational figure. James Earl Danieley, the seventh president of Elon who died Nov. 29, 2016, daringly admitted the first black student — Glenda Hightower — in 1963. Six years later, Perry became the first black graduate from then Elon College.

But though he's revered as a pioneer now, Perry said his white classmates viewed him as a nuisance.

"I was never made to feel a part of Elon," Perry said. "I was never made to feel a part of the student body — or that I mattered."

It's been nearly half a century since Perry attended Elon, but the struggles he experienced haven't left. They've simply morphed into new challenges for current black students. The statistics are clear: Elon's student body is now 80 percent white. Only 5.3 percent of students are black.

For every seven black students, there are 112 white students.

And since 2011, a series of events including micro-aggressions, students being called racial slurs and a host of forums addressing inclusivity show that while Elon has progressed significantly, there are still remnants of Perry's era plaguing a university desperately trying to erase it. But while it may seem the work is incomplete, those at the forefront say making Elon more inclusive is a methodical fight.

But everyone needs to do their part.

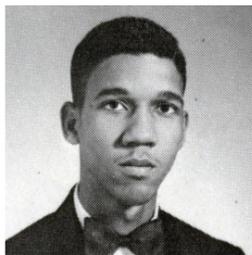
"I think it's important that your community reflect the world as best it can," said incoming President Connie Book. "Who sits next to me matters, so we need to make sure that we're doing a very good job to get Elon diverse so that people of all backgrounds can enter our education system and can contribute to it."

Identifying the Problems

Randy Williams, associate vice president for campus engagement, wasn't surprised with what he found.

But the findings still weren't ideal.

The Presidential Task Force on Black Student, Faculty and Staff Experiences, which the University started



Eugene Perry '69

BLACK STUDENT STATISTICS

5.3%

Elon's student body is 5.3 percent black and 80 percent white.

80%

The Presidential Task Force on Black Student, Faculty and Staff Experiences found in 2015 that almost 80 percent of black student respondents didn't feel physically safe on campus.



IF YOU KEEP DIVERSIFYING THE POPULATIONS WITHOUT US AS STUDENTS TRYING TO BE THE MOST INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY AS POSSIBLE, IT'S NOT GOING TO BE HELPFUL.

MORGAN BODENARAIN
SGA EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT



Students raise their fists during a silent Black Lives Matter march in September 2016.

in 2013, found in 2015 that almost 80 percent of black student respondents didn't feel physically safe on campus. Of the 151 black student respondents, there were 98 examples of racially disparaging comments.

The results spawned from a December 2014 survey that 749 students completed online. About 15 one-on-one interviews and focus groups with students and faculty also gathered data. Of the 63 black faculty and staff who participated, they said they heard 47 disparaging comments directed at them personally. Now, just more than three years later, Williams, who co-chaired the Task Force, said this still isn't shocking. It mirrors the current national climate.

"I think that Elon is not an island; we're not isolated from greater society," Williams said. "That finding was not surprising for me to see. People who are oppressed and all the reasons that come with it will filter into Elon, too. We are not insulated."

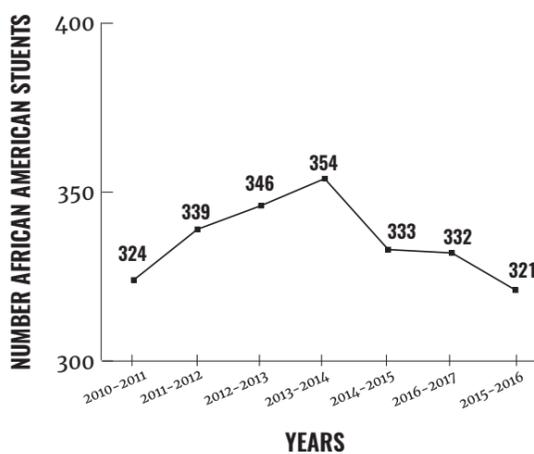
The headliner for the report, Williams said, was Elon's response. After collecting the data, Williams presented it to senior staff and to other offices. The Task Force also presented recommendations — almost six pages worth — to address these issues. Williams said it was "sobering" to hear these experiences from students and faculty. Everyone on the Task Force wanted to change this.

"Elon is a very planing institution," Williams said. "We identify problems. We identify a team to address the problem. And we come out with a strategy to implement it. This one is important because we're in essence trying to create a change in culture."

"It wasn't a report to sit on a shelf. It was a report to hold us accountable."

Creating institutional changes

ELON AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENT POPULATION



STATISTICS COURTESY OF THE ELON FACTBOOK
STEPHANIE HAYS | DESIGN CHIEF

tified people.

A progress report in November 2016 — the most extensive progress report available — outlined changes in five themes: Admissions and Recruitment, Welcoming and Success, Curriculum and Classes, Campus Climate and Communication and Messaging.

Elon restructured its admissions office by hiring Natalie Garza, associate director of admissions and director of diversity recruitment, after a nationwide search. Garza then hired Courtney Vaughan '15 as assistant director of diversity recruitment. Her specific focus is targeting African-American candidates.

The admissions office also put more emphasis on hosting Evening in Elon events in areas with high African-American populations such as Atlanta and Washington D.C.

Search committees for leadership positions at Elon — most notably the one that selected Book — include people of color. Williams and Jean Rattigan-Rohr, executive director of community partnerships, were promoted to serve on the president's senior staff. The 16-member team now has two black iden-

The report says each dean and department chair should develop strategies to advise students about classes promoting cultural competency. "The Black Man in America" course was developed to address systemic racism and counts as a requirement in the Core Curriculum.

A living and learning community on dismantling racism is also planned to start within the next two years. Williams said this is an ongoing process, but he is excited about how it's progressed.

"We're continuing to round out recommendations and strategies," Williams said. "I think it's definitely had a positive effect for sure."

Less talking, more doing

But all the work won't truly be complete unless students lead the charge. Senior Morgan Bodenarain, SGA executive president, said she isn't necessarily tired of talking about inclusivity — but she is tired of the majority of students not taking action.

For every member on senior staff, there are 390 students. While she said the administration has done well, it's up to the students to push the work forward.

"The administration can program and come up with as many things as they want, but if the students aren't responding to them, if the students aren't creating this environment, it will be problematic," Bodenarain said.

"We need the inclusive community so that diverse populations stay and keep coming," Bodenarain said. "That is what's going to make Elon flourish. If you keep diversifying the populations without us as students trying to be the most inclusive community as possible, it's not going to be helpful. Those students aren't going to want to be here, they're not going to want to stay and diverse populations aren't going to thrive here."

Bodenarain said she's used her platform for change, ranging from SGA legislation such as the Student Inclusive Campus Committee and hosting town halls with the Black Student Union. She said she is working for the "future me," saying that if she doesn't see tangible results before she graduates, she hopes to see them at Homecoming 10 years from now.

In the short term, as she prepares to leave office in March, her advice to the next president is to create a sense of action. Taking those conversations from SGA and having those ideas implemented in Fraternity and Sorority Life chapters, athletics and other club organizations is a start, she said.

"Conversation is great, but there needs to be a little more action," Bodenarain said. "It can be a little tiring to put in all of this work and feel like nothing is happening. But this is an ongoing process, and I don't think any SGA president will say they did enough on this issue. SGA presidents from now until forever will have to focus on this."

One of the recommendations in the Task Force was to have ongoing assessments every three to five years. In the fall, the 2018 Diverse Learning Environments Survey was released to students, which will be somewhat of a litmus test for the Task Force on inclusive issues other than just black students as well.

Book, who becomes president March 1, said inclusivity will be one of the key issues she'll address. And ultimately, the goal is to give current black students a better experience than the one Perry had.

"There is no finish line for that work, and as you make progress, you empower the university," Book said. "College campuses are complex places, and a lot of it has to do with emerging ideas that challenge precious beliefs."

"It often is these moments of interacting with each other where we learn how much work there is left to do," Book said. "And we need to prepare our community for that."



OLIVER FISCHER | ELON NEWS NETWORK

Brandon Bell, assistant director of the CREDE, talks to students during the CREDE's first Black History Month event on Feb. 2



OLIVER FISCHER | ELON NEWS NETWORK

Sophomore Derrick Luster, president of the Black Student Union responds to a question written on a poster in the CREDE on Feb. 2.



OLIVER FISCHER | ELON NEWS NETWORK

Freshman Mikayla Edwards paints her feelings toward black culture onto a blank canvas in the CREDE on Feb. 2.

THE BLACK STUDENT UNION: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

Three years later, the BSU continues to bring Elon's black community together

Anton L. Delgado
Enterprise Story Coordinator | @JADelgadoNews

Now in its third year at Elon University, the Black Student Union continues to fight and advocate for the rights and representation of all black students around campus.

Beginning BSU

BSU originally stemmed from the Black Cultural Society, established in 1974. In 2015, several students under the leadership of Alex Bohannon '17 decided the Elon black community needed more support than what BCS was providing.

"There was a huge need for change because BCS had become a fragment of what it had been in the past," Bohannon said. "Throughout all of BCS, there was a general apathy about reaching the organization's full potential."

Instead of trying to repair what Bohannon felt was a broken system, he decided a more drastic change was necessary.

"We decided to get rid of the rot, and to do that we needed to start from the beginning, a complete brand change," Bohannon said. "I wanted to create a structure that would support every black student, no matter what they were affiliated with on campus."

With that mindset, BSU was formed during fall 2015 with Bohannon as its founding president.

Three years later, despite graduating, Bohannon continues to advise the students of BSU. In spring 2017, Bohannon visited campus and spoke to the new executive board leading the organization.

"You can't come into this type

of work assuming that it doesn't mean anything. If the only reason you are here is for your ELR or your resume, then you got to go," Bohannon said. "This work matters. If you're here but don't really care about the black student experience on this campus, then you don't need to be here."

Who BSU is today

Sophomore Derrick Luster, current president of BSU, was present during Bohannon's remarks and shares a similar mindset about caring for the black student experience at Elon.

"All we want to do is provide a safe place for black students and a place of reference and refuge where they can go to feel comfortable expressing their identity," Luster said. "Doing that has always been a priority for the organization."

With the goal of maintaining a safe space for black students as the core of BSU, Luster has set other goals for the organization he hopes to reach during his term as president.

"I want to improve our group education. We need to help black people and other minorities explore their identity more," Luster said. "While it is important to learn about your identity, it is equally as important to learn about the identities of others so that we can stand in solidarity."

To lead this drive for more student learning, Luster knows he will need more than just hard work.

He needs more people.

"I want to see more people from the majority identities be more comfortable coming to BSU meetings and learning more about the issues that we go through as black people," Luster said. "I want to see people learning how to be more comfortable with people of color in their environments."

As president, Luster hopes more students will have the cour-

age to join BSU and help spread its reach across campus.

"The only thing that separates an ordinary person from a leader is the willingness to act and do something about the problems in our society," Luster said.

This drive to act is not the only aspect present within the BSU students.

"BSU is an action-oriented organization that values planning and context," said Brandon Bell, the advisor to BSU. "If you are coming to BSU, be prepared to commit to the cause, and be prepared to commit to the journey of self actualization along the way as we pursue that cause."

Where BSU is going

As the organization's advisor, Bell is looking forward to seeing what BSU will accomplish. But while action is important, both Bell and Luster want the organization to focus on facilitating the education of students. Luster said there are about 150 active BSU members.

"BSU is well on its way to helping students realize the interconnected nature of the world, the complex nature of themselves and their identities and how that connects them to each other," Bell said. "If you want to be a member of BSU and want to get your hands into something, you first need to be willing to get your mind wrapped around something."

Freshman Mikayla Edwards is one of the students ready to work.

After her first semester at Elon and with BSU, Edwards is already certain she wants to help lead the organization in the future so others can have the same experiences with the organization as she did.

"I joined BSU because I wanted to go somewhere where I felt comfortable," Edwards said. "When I first got here, I didn't see a lot of people that looked like me. It didn't

bother me, but I was like, 'Woah, where all my people at?'"

While she is comfortable with being a minority on Elon's campus, Edwards felt she had found her place at BSU.

"When I first arrived, I felt a little out of place, but coming to BSU and going to events and meetings has really helped me find my place here at Elon," Edwards said. "I want to help someone else who is coming here find their place."

Edwards is currently in the process of applying to be the BSU's Vice President of Special Events. She believes this position will allow her to both help others feel welcome and spread the word about BSU.

"BSU is going to expand, and we are going to connect with other organizations, and I know we are going to do a lot more positive things not only at Elon, but also in our community," Edwards said.

One of the most positive things the BSU wants to do is teach students to care more about others.

To sophomore Arianne Payne, vice president of BSU, fostering this care is one of the most important roles of the organization.

"In our community, you shouldn't just care about the people that look like you — you also have to care about people that don't look like you and people that come from different backgrounds than you," Payne said. "To anyone that is hesitant to do that, really think about how caring for your fellow community members can impact the community."

If enough people begin to care about all people, Payne hopes this will one day lead to an Elon that no longer needs organizations such as BSU to build support structures.

"I don't want there to be a BSU. There shouldn't need to be a group that advocates for the rights and representation of black students at Elon because I want that to just be the norm — that is our goal," Payne said. "One day, I want to stop building these support structures for black students because they have already been built. I want this institution to get to a place where all of its students feel accepted and included."

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I WANTED TO CREATE A STRUCTURE THAT WOULD SUPPORT EVERY BLACK STUDENT, NO MATTER WHAT THEY WERE AFFILIATED WITH ON CAMPUS.

ALEX BOHANNON
FOUNDING PRESIDENT OF THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

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THE ONLY THING THAT SEPARATES AN ORDINARY PERSON FROM A LEADER IS THE WILLINGNESS TO ACT.

DERRICK LUSTER
PRESIDENT OF THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

BRANDON BELL'S GOALS FOR THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

1. To continue to improve the campuses climate for diverse students, with black students in mind.
2. To continue to challenge administrations, policies and procedures that are not conducive of diversity, equity and inclusion along racial lines.
3. To think about the intersectionality of blackness and other major social identities.

Elon's black HISTORY

A timeline of black student accomplishments at Elon.

MARGARET MALONE | Elon News Network | @margaret_jeane

1960

1963 - FIRST BLACK FULLTIME STUDENT

Glenda Phillips became the first black student to attend Elon College full-time. According to an interview conducted by L'Tanya Richmond, author of "Elon's Black History: A Story to be Told," illness prevented Phillips from graduating as planned.



Glenda Phillips

1970

1970 - FIRST BLACK FEMALE GRADUATE

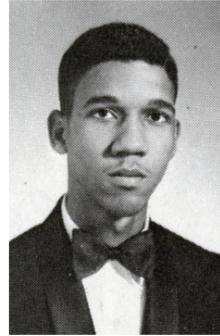
One year later, Gail Fonville became the first black female to graduate from the college.



Gail Fonville

1974 - BLACK CULTURAL SOCIETY CREATED

Under the co-chairmanship of Rodney Evans and Donald McLaughlin, the Black Cultural Society was created.



Eugene Perry

1969 - FIRST BLACK GRADUATE

Eugene Perry became the first black student to graduate from Elon. The Third Front of the Organization of Afro-American Unity of Elon College wrote an open letter to Durward Strokes, chairman of the department of social sciences. Their letter requested that a Black Studies course be created and taught by 1970. The organization also asked that at least one black professor with at least a Master's degree in Black History be hired by 1971. By this point, according to Richmond, more than a dozen black students were enrolled at Elon.

1980

1978 - FIRST BLACK EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Bryant Colson became the first black Editor-in-Chief of The Pendulum.

1979 - FIRST BLACK SGA PRESIDENT

Colson became the first black President of SGA and Mary Carroll became the first black student to be crowned Homecoming Queen.

1977 - GOSPEL CHOIR CREATED

A gospel choir was established to bring black students at Elon together. According to the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education (CREDE), the Elon University Gospel Choir is today the largest minority organization on campus.



Elon College 1978 Gospel Choir

1975 - FIRST BLACK TRUSTEE

John Rascoe became the first black member of the Elon Board of Trustees. He was elected the young alumni trustee after graduating cum laude the year prior.

1987 - FIRST BLACK ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

Donna Hill Oliver became the first black person to be recognized as Young Alumnus of the Year — the same year she was given the National Teacher of the Year award by Ronald Reagan.

1990

1981 - FIRST NPHC SORORITY

The Omicron Lota chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority became the first historically black Greek organization chartered on campus.

1984 - FIRST NPHC FRATERNITY

The Sigma Mu chapter of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity became the first historically black Greek fraternity chartered on campus. The same year, the Black Cultural Society hosted their first annual gospel festival.

1992 - RESOURCE ROOM

The African-American Resource Room, which would later become the CREDE, was created.

1991 - FIRST BLACK SUB PRESIDENT

William Walker became the first black president of the Student Union Board and the Sigma Delta chapter of the historically black fraternity Alpha Phi Alpha was chartered.

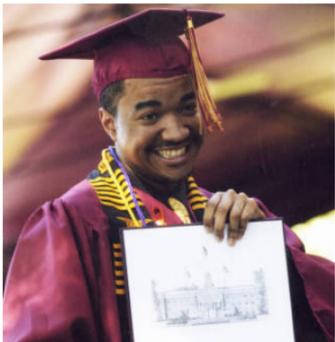


William Walker

2000

2005 - FIRST BLACK DRUM MAJOR

David Morrow became the first black Drum Major of the Fire of the Carolinas.



David Morrow

1998 - FIRST BLACK FEMALE SUB PRESIDENT, TRUSTEE

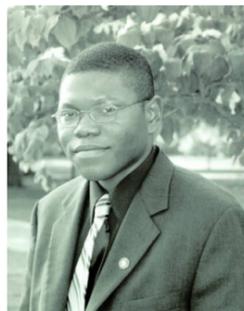
Sherrika Stanley became the first black female President of the Student Union Board and Kebbler McGhee became the first black female appointed to the Board of Trustees.



Kebbler McGhee (top) and Sherrika Stanley (bottom)

2003 - FIRST BLACK IFC PRESIDENT

Darris Means became the first black president of the Inter-Fraternity Council.



Darris Means

2000 - FIRST BLACK FEMALE SGA EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

Akila Weaver became the first black female elected Executive President of SGA.



Akila Weaver

2010

2016 - BLACK LIVES MATTER

Hundreds of students gathered to silently march through campus to support the Black Lives Matter movement.



DIEGO PINEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

2014 - MULTICULTURAL CENTER RENAMED

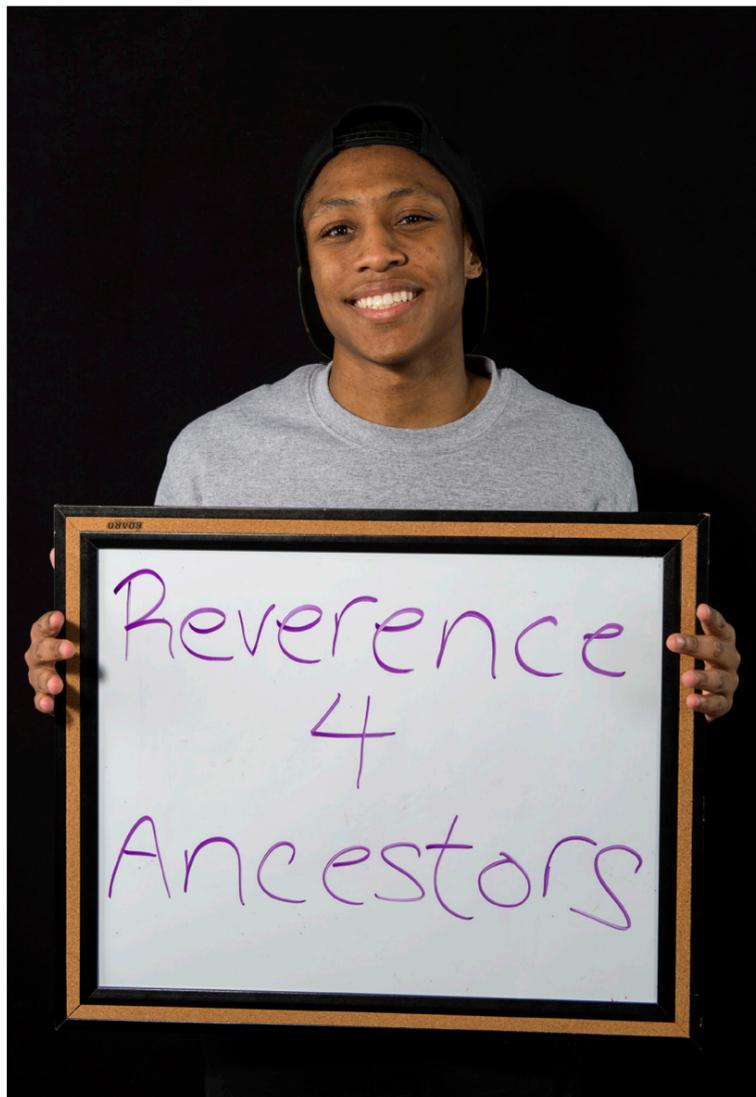
The Multicultural Center was renamed to the CREDE to "accurately reflect its role in the university system of diversity and inclusion efforts," according to the CREDE's website.

WHAT DOES BLACK HISTORY MONTH ? MEAN TO YOU

BLACK HISTORY MONTH ANNUALLY celebrates the achievements by African-Americans. It is also a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in United States history. According to history.com, the month grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African-Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history.

President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to “seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history.” Below, Elon University students wrote what Black History Month means to them:





AJ MANDELL AND CAROLINE BREHMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER AND PHOTO EDITOR
(From top right to bottom left) Senior Kellcee Batchelor, freshman Sidney Wilson, junior Halaj Mack, junior Kenneth Brown, junior Breia Kelley and junior Tres McMichael display what Black History Month means to them.

Randy Williams, a senior administrator, faced a winding path to arrive at Elon

Emmanuel Morgan
Managing Editor | @Emmanuel_Morgan

IF YOU SEE RANDY Williams, he'll probably be wearing a bowtie. Unless it's a special occasion, that piece of neckwear will always be on him.

But many people don't realize the struggle behind Williams having the opportunity to wear one everyday.

Some don't even know that the bowtie and his credentials may have played a factor in preventing a violent police encounter.

Not even a full year into his tenure at Elon University, Williams, then a presidential fellow and dean of multicultural affairs in 2014, was stopped by a police officer and questioned during a traffic stop after a robbery of a nearby bank at Elon. Confused and dazed, Williams did something he normally doesn't do.

Instead of using Randy, he gave the officer his full name.

"This was during a time where a number of reports of black men were actually being pulled over and killed by police officers," Williams said. "I just wanted to do everything possible to put this white police officer at ease to not see me as a threat. Normally, I am called Randy, but I introduced myself as 'Dr. Randolph Williams Jr.,' thinking the title of Doctor or the official name as 'Randolph' would put this officer at ease."

Elon's culture greatly differs the Virginia neighborhood where Williams was raised. Williams, now associate vice president for campus engagement, said the police encounter was a simple reminder that his ascension from broken family doesn't guarantee a pass from the negative perceptions which plagued African-Americans for centuries.

But that still doesn't deter him from trying to make a difference.

Now, as one of only two black members on Elon's senior staff, Williams said he strives to make Elon as inclusive as possible.

"The students I interact with now will one day be the leaders in our community that my daughters will look up to," Williams said. "I feel a responsibility and a desire to be a role model for black students, especially at a predominantly white institution. By being a black face and wearing a suit every day and for students to see that, I carry a sense of pride and obligation when I wake up for work."

The haves and the have nots

Before he earned his doctorate in higher education, Williams was simply an African-American boy primed for a life in the streets. At times, Williams voice cracked when he reminisced on his past.

Last year, Williams office in the Center for Race Ethnicity and Diversity Education (CREDE) was barren, with a naked bookshelf only housing a picture of his wife and children. Months before, books and decorations lined his space. After his promotion, Williams was given a new office across campus in Powell, the same building as the President's office, where he currently works.

But while growing up, Williams didn't have indoor plumbing.

"It blows my mind to think of where I come from," Williams said. "I never imagined this."



Randy Williams, vice president for campus engagement, is one of only two black senior staff members.

MALLORY SIEGENTHALER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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BY BEING A BLACK FACE AND WEARING A SUIT EVERY DAY AND FOR STUDENTS TO SEE THAT, I CARRY A SENSE OF PRIDE AND OBLIGATION WHEN I WAKE UP FOR WORK.

RANDY WILLIAMS
ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR CAMPUS
ENGAGEMENT

UNFOLDING THE MAN BEHIND THE BOWTIE

Williams' native ground of Lawrenceville, Virginia, has an average income just above \$28,750, according to federal data. Washington Park, the neighborhood he was raised in, was notorious for drug dealing and other criminal activity.

"Not only was I hearing [former First Lady] Nancy Reagan talk about the war on drugs, but I was seeing this stuff in the neighborhood," Williams said. "It was something that was seen on television that was right outside of my doorway as well."

They were broke, but Williams said he and his friends were broke together.

"We were dirt poor and we knew it, but we were still resilient," Williams said. "Being raised in that environment forced me to learn how to make the most of every situation."

Unstable family life accompanied Williams' struggles in his community. His father was a functioning alcoholic and eventually, his mother had enough. She divorced, causing Williams and his brother stayed with her.

"My mom was really getting out of a bad situation," Williams said. "You can't fault her for that. They had two young boys and were struggling financially. Add all of that stress in and that was a bad combination."

But while Williams said that his home life was hard, it motivated him to be different. Now, as the father of two girls, he said his past has motivated him to be the father he never had.

"It taught me how I wanted to be," Williams said. "Because of what he wasn't as a father, it made me want to be that much more for my kids and my wife."

Williams met his wife, Chiquita, in middle school and dated while at Brunswick High School. She was attracted to his "confidence and swag-

ger," she said. When they went to separate colleges, they were determined to make their relationship work.

"We just made our relationship a priority," she said.

Williams earned a scholarship at Hampden-Sydney College where he majored in physics and played football. As he did in high school, Williams immersed himself in numerous activities. He was a resident advisor, a tour guide and also pledged into a historically black fraternity — Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and he still proudly displays those Greek letters in his office. All of this was in an effort to make sure college did not go to waste for him.

Finding his career

Williams was one of 15 black students at Hampden-Sydney, which helped foster his love for diversity education. He advocated for a more diverse curriculum and more faculty of color. Three years after he graduated, the Board of Trustees created a diversity program and unanimously picked Williams to spearhead it. At first Williams said no, but the president hand selected him because he felt he was the right person for the job. Eventually, Williams changed his mind.

"I didn't have any experience in this realm," he said. "At this time, I was simply a high school physics teacher. But when the President called me, he said he needed me because of my passion. He said they would get me the proper training, but they couldn't teach passion and that's what I had."

Williams climbed the ranks from being a program director to Associate Dean of Students at Hampden-Sydney in 1998.

RANDY WILLIAMS: WHEN & WHERE

1998-2007: College Associate Dean of Students at Hampden-Sydney College

2007-2009: Assistant Dean of Students at the College of William and Mary

2009-2014: Vice President for Student Affairs at North Carolina Wesleyan College

2014-2016: Presidential Fellow, Special Assistant to the President and Dean of Multicultural Affairs at Elon University

2016-present: Associate Vice President for Campus Engagement at Elon University

In the next 16 years, accolades became commonplace.

He earned his master's degree at Longwood University, enrolled at The College William and Mary and worked in the dean of students' office while pursuing a higher education doctorate. He eventually became Vice President of Student Affairs at North Carolina Wesleyan College. But soon, he wanted more.

"I knew sooner or later that I would be leaving North Carolina Wesleyan for a bigger and different school, and Elon was on the list," Williams said.

Instantly fitting in

Once Williams arrived at Elon in 2014, he immediately found his groove. Chiquita said he's excelled at Elon because he's "had the ability to coach and be coached." Some of those mentors include Jon Dooley, vice president for student life and even President Leo Lambert. For Williams, it has been the best of both worlds.

"At N.C. Wesleyan, Randy was the person that everyone had to

look up to for advice," Chiquita said. "Now at Elon, he has had the chance to be a mentor as well as a mentee. It has been great for everyone."

Chiquita said that's typical for Williams, even in his homelife. Through the craziness of raising a family while working a demanding job, she said Williams always keeps a level head.

"He is always that calming voice in the room," she said. "He always knows what to do and how to go about it. When I'm frazzled, I always know I can lean on him"

Since his arrival, Elon has done just that — rely on Williams' guidance and expertise to move the institution forward. Elon uses him in any way it can.

That translates to important projects and committees.

To date, Williams has been a member of the following initiatives: co-chairing a Presidential Task force for Black Student, Staff and Faculty experiences, leading the First-Year advisory committee, advising Fraternity and Sorority Life, co-chairing the implementation of the Presidential Task Force for Social Climate and Out of Class Experiences and was on the search committee for the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students, among other things.

It's proven that people can be successful without such a hectic schedule as Williams. But he said this line of work is his calling.

"You can imagine how many meetings I go to," he said. "But this is what I love to do. For me, this is a what I've been conditioned to do."

Not leaving any time soon

Williams said the main reason why he loves his job is because of the students. Junior Kenneth Brown is one of the many students who have nurtured a mentoring relationship with Williams and said he is one of the reason why he feels comfortable at Elon.

"He is an example for me and every other black student on this campus about what it means to excel in life," Brown said. "Dr. Randy is a role model to me and I hope to be like the man he is when I graduate."

Williams said that he is looking forward to continuing to work at Elon and says that he doesn't plan to leave anytime soon. And with a new position and a new office — and the same bowties — he said he is excited for the time ahead.

"I believe in a higher power and God put me here at the right place at the right time," Williams said.



EMMA MCCABE | DESIGNER

STAFF EDITORIAL

Celebration of accomplishments must include reflection

HOW WE SEE IT

Black History Month is a powerful time to reflect on past accomplishments while still looking forward to growth

On the second floor of the Moseley Student Center in the African American Resource Room, Elon University students, faculty and staff members can find a wall of firsts. In framed photographs, one can find anyone from the first black student to attend Elon to the first black student to be inducted into Phi Beta Kappa.

In 1963, Glenda Phillips became the first black person to attend Elon. In the 55 years since then, there have been dozens more firsts and achievements for the black community. Elon's administration has made diversity and inclusion a priority for our campus, and with that has come an increase in

enrollment of black students and more positive experiences.

It is no question that our community has come a long way since Phillips attended Elon, but that does not mean the fight for equality, inclusivity and respect on campus is close to over.

Black History Month is a time to recognize and celebrate the growth and accomplishments of black people within our different communities. It is a time for reflection and celebration, but this cannot be without criticism and looking toward growth.

There is a great difference between achievements in diversity and achievements in inclusivity. While the black

community has grown considerably in size and prominence at Elon, racially insensitive incidents of the last several years — including students standing on an NPHC fraternity's plaque and students dressing in racially insensitive costumes to parties — have shown the ongoing need for in depth conversations on what it means to be an inclusive community. These events may be far different from what the first black students at Elon experienced, but we shouldn't settle for an experience that is better, but one that is the best.

Equality isn't just about the number of students of color on campus or the photographs of students achieving firsts — it's about the need for a quality of life at Elon that is consistent with the experiences of all students. Increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of our campus can help with inclusivity, but it is not the only way.

Throughout Black History Month, the Elon community should consider ways in which we can continue to move forward towards a more inclusive campus where everyone will feel like they truly belong.

This month, consider attending some events across campus for Black History Month, such as the Circle of Hope Dialogue Series, showing of the film "The Mountaintop" in Turner Theatre or the Black History Month Dance Concert. These events are excellent ways to celebrate while also considering need for change.

It's important to reflect and celebrate, but we cannot let ourselves settle in our success. Instead, we must constantly be looking forward to how we can still improve, while always considering the immeasurable value of the accomplishments of those before us.

CAMPUS VOICES

Find ways to celebrate this Black History Month



Brandon Bell
Assistant Director of
The Center for Race,
Ethnicity, and Diversity
Education

Each year, agencies and institutions across the United States take time to observe February as Black History Month — a month within the year to acknowledge the heritages, histories, contributions, legacies and lived experiences of black identified persons to the United States and greater global communities. A somewhat familiar observance and activity in the 21st century, it is imperative that communities take the time to revisit the historical relevance of black identified persons in America and their role in the modern day understanding of civil rights.

Black History Month began as Negro History Week as an initiative created by Carter

G. Woodson in February 1926. Believing that the black experience was too important to only be discussed by historians and other academics, Woodson understood black history and culture to be imperative tools for racial uplift and the advancement of civil rights. Negro History Week was designated during the second week of February in order to commemorate the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass and their roles in the abolishment of slavery in the mid to late 1800s.

Negro History Month was extended for a full month as a result of a proposal made by the Black United Students of Kent State University in

February 1969. In February of 1970, the inaugural celebration of Black History Month was held at Kent State University and other institutions began to follow suit. In 1976, the bicentennial of the United States, President Gerald R. Ford expanded African-American week into a full month.

Black History Month is an integral part of our nation's tradition in which we continue to promote positive examples of poignant historical events, exemplary leaders and steps towards societal change. This remembrance is not only deeply meaningful for the African-American community, but imperative for the greater understanding of national and

world history. As you think about the ways in which you will celebrate Black History, I offer a few suggestions.

First, celebrate with knowledge. In addition to Google, access the number of books, articles and multimedia that chronicles various dimensions of the black experience in Belk Library. The archives of Belk Library are a treasure trove of information about Elon University and hold many gems regarding the impact that black people have had at Elon University. You are encouraged to check that out.

Second, engage the community. February has become a time designated for reflection, open dialogue, interdisciplinary education and

shared advocacy initiatives. The Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education (CREDE) in partnership with many university offices and academic departments have created a robust array of programming to celebrate black history. Check E-Net and the CREDE website for a complete list of events.

Every race is connected to the rich history of this nation, and by celebrating Black History Month everyone can be included in a tradition of acknowledgment, inclusion and community engagement. If you have questions about Black History Month feel free to contact Brandon Bell at bbell5@elon.edu for more information.

EBAN connects alumni, mentors current students

Alumni in various fields support current Elon students

Oliver Fischer
Reporter | @ElonNewsNetwork

Building relationships with black alumni, networking and philanthropic purposes are the main aims of the Elon Black Alumni Network (EBAN) but that doesn't mean current students don't benefit from the network. "We are a support network system for current students. It's not just about being alumni," said Eden Brown, vice president of EBAN.

Since its inception in 1997, EBAN has evolved over the years, according to Aliana Harrison, associate director of Residence Life for residential education and community development.

"Key alumni wanted to make sure there were ways for black alumni to still be connected," she said.

Gatherings were initially informal, starting with meet-ups in a single room at Homecoming, but as the relationship with the alumni engagement office grew stronger, a rebranding occurred about 10 years ago, and the Elon Black Alumni Network in its current form was created.

"From there, the network became more structured," Har-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELON BLACK ALUMNI NETWORK

ison said.

Elon gave the network five years to raise \$50,000 to have the scholarship endowed. The alumni base reached the goal in three years. "We have been able, every year since then, to give money to a black student," Harrison said. "We will work with the university to identify a student who is high-achieving but may need additional financial support in order to maintain being a student here at Elon."

EBAN also acts as a sounding board and voice for current students. "We come to their events; we want them to know that we are here for them if they have concerns or have ideas or anything that would make the black student experience better," Brown said. "We often have brought those ideas and concerns to upper administration."

One of the struggles EBAN

faces is lacking levels of engagement. Brown said the situation has improved as the network became more organized over the years.

"We're looking at trying to get more engagement, and part of that was, when it wasn't as clear what is going on, it's easy to lose engagement," Brown said. "Now that we have a clear structure and we're being more open about communications, we're seeing that our numbers are going up for the whole alumni body."

Engagement is a challenge because of the small number of black alumni and their inconsistent experience at Elon that may affect their decision of investing their time into the school after graduation.

"There probably a little less than 2,000 black alumni in Elon's entire history," Harrison

said. "All of those alumni have had very different experiences. You are going to talk to some black alumni who loved their Elon experience. You will talk to other black alumni, and also depending on the generation when they were here, that had very bad experiences here."

"The systems at Elon were not supportive for black students during that time. Some will tell you stories of being the only one in their classroom, being the only one in their residence hall, being ignored by students, being ignored by faculty and staff."

"Then when it's time to think about coming back to Elon or giving back to Elon, some people have some pain about their Elon experience. EBAN is currently trying to reactivate some of these old alumni in addition to reaching out to current students."

EBAN celebrates annual awards during Homecoming Nov. 4, 2017.

Another component of EBAN is a mentorship program designed to match older students with alumni. "We knew there were a lot of support systems for first-year students, so we didn't want to compete with that," she said. "This mentorship program is ideally for juniors and seniors who can apply, and then they are matched with alumni."

The EBAN mentorship program is currently not connected to the SMART program, but Harrison said the network has contributed to events hosted by the Black Student Union in the past by sending alumni there. "We are beginning now to work with Brandon Bell, who is one of the assistant directors in the CREDE who works with the SMART program, and part of his role is also to work with the Black Student Union and other initiatives for black students' success."

Freshman Cameron Mullins said that connecting with the CREDE would be helpful for EBAN to reach more current students.

"While it is run predominantly by black students and black faculty members, it is a place where every student — no matter what their race is — can go," Mullins said. "If they really want to start getting in touch with black students, they need to go to the CREDE and get affiliated with them because the CREDE is where many black students on campus, including myself, know about what's going on in black life on campus."

"That's the best chance they have at really getting themselves known with the black community on campus," Mullins said.

Elon First Baptist Church celebrates diversity

Historically black church still uses traditional roots in worship

Lemma Iskenderian
Reporter | @ElonNewsNetwork

The Elon First Baptist Church is hosting several events this February in honor of Black History Month. Every year, the church organizes outreach and awareness programs to unite members in faith. This year marks 96 years of the church's operation.

The Gospel Choir will be holding a Black History Month performance on Elon University's campus on Sunday, Feb. 18. This Sunday, the church will also be hosting an event called "African Attire" day, where members come to church in traditional African dresses, headdresses and cloths. The congregation hopes to instill a sense of African-American pride in its youth, and encourages them to continuously do good in their lives.

Despite the national designation of February as Black History Month, the church maintains the memory of its ancestors more than one month out of the year.

"Black History month is everyday, and we make that known to the members of our church," said the Rev. James Wilkes of the Elon First Baptist Church. "The history of our church is always accessible."

Founded in 1922, Elon First Baptist Church was the first African-American church established in Elon. John McMullen, a former slave, founded the church at Elon College in the early 1900s. The church was originally built on McMullen's land on Ball Park Ave. With the help of his congregation, McMullen remodeled the church from wood to brick.

In 1990, the old church was torn down and replaced with the current Elon First Baptist Church on 113 Lynn St.

The church works in partnership with several university organizations including the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education (CREDE), Teaching Fellows and Elon Athletics. On Jan. 14, the church and the CREDE sponsored a Burlington area middle school-wide essay contest in which students were asked to write an essay on Martin Luther King Jr. Three winners were selected, one from the sixth, seventh and eighth grade. The winners were asked to speak at the church's Martin Luther King Jr. event and were recognized at the following Saturday's Elon men's basketball game. Additionally, Elon University Teaching Fellows participate in a tutoring program at the



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILKES

Rev. James Wilkes said Elon First Baptist Church and Elon University will always have a connection.

church to assist children and teens in their academics. Elon Athletics also provides church members with tickets to women's basketball games. Billy Baker, Community Director at the Station at Mill Point, participates annually in the church's Hallelujah Night, an event in place of Halloween festivities.

Elon First Baptist Church provides several early childhood programs to its members as well. The church holds youth Bible study every Wednesday, and designates the fourth Sunday of every month as

"children's church," with classes for teens and younger children. It also offers a Sunday nursery program for mothers with children ages six weeks to 5 years old.

Marilyn Slade, program assistant at the CREDE, noted that although unconfirmed, the Elon First Baptist Church is said to be the oldest church in Elon.

"[The church is] inspirational, encouraging. . . sometimes it can be lively, we praise God," said Slade.

She emphasized the hospitality of the community, and that most

newcomers notice the friendly and warm environment above all else.

Slade acts as the bridge between the CREDE and the church, where she has worshipped since she was young. The church strives to make a difference through spreading good news and good work, and encourages its congregation to continue God's work in their lives.

"Whether you look like us, dress like us, whether you are from Elon, we always plug you into our family," Wilkes said.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELON ARCHIVES

Kappa Alpha Psi, chartered Dec. 5, 1986, was one of the first official NPHC fraternities at Elon.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELON ARCHIVES

Alpha Kappa Alpha, was one of the first NPHC sororities on Elon's campus in the NPHC, was chartered in 1987.

Black students find community in NPHC

Historically black fraternities and sororities leave mark on campus with community service

Maggie Brown
Reporter | @MaggieABrown_

Elon University is a predominantly white institution. Almost 6 percent of Elon students are African-American. In the 1980s, the National Pan-hellenic Council (NPHC) was established at Elon for the African-American community.

NPHC MEMBERSHIP

The NPHC has a total of 38 active members, according to the most recent fall 2017 report.

Seven of the nine organizations in the NPHC — Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc., Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. — are recognized on Elon's campus today. Currently, the NPHC has 38 active members according to the most recent fall 2017 report.

Seven male fraternities on campus are under the The Inter-fraternity Council (IFC), totalling 438 active members. Ten female sororities are under the Panhellenic Association with 1,381 active members.

Nationally, the NPHC was established in 1930 as a place for African-Americans to be able to participate in Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL). But it wasn't until the late 90s did Elon's IFC and the PA recognize the sororities and fraternities in the NPHC on campus and paired with them in events.

"The whole history of the NPHC is an organization that created community where there wasn't necessarily one," junior Dyanmond Howell, president of the Omicron Iota chapter of Delta Sigma Theta said. "It's kind of like having historically black colleges; black people weren't allowed to join white sororities and fraternities."

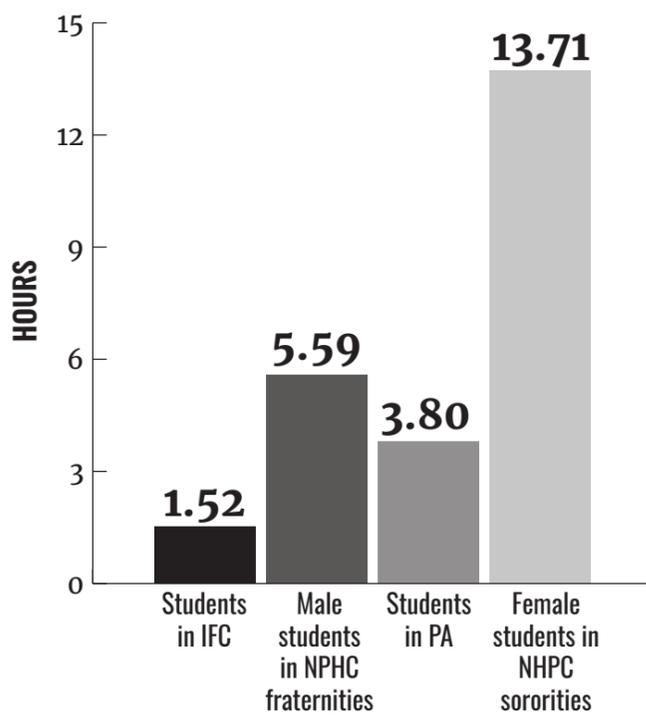
FSL is still a large part of Elon's campus today, with 42 percent of students involved in a Greek organization, according to Elon's website.

Though only 2 percent of students in FSL are in the NPHC, that 2 percent sees this as beneficial. Junior Samira Foster, president of Omicron Epsilon chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, loves the bonding that she gets out of her chapter.

"It is a very small, close-knit community," Foster said. "We are in unison, because there's not very many of us. It feels like you have a family."

Connecting to the community through

AVERAGE NUMBER OF FALL 2017 REPORTED COMMUNITY SERVICE



STATISTICS COURTESY OF ELON FALL 2017 COMMUNITY REPORT
KAITLYN FU | DESIGNER

service is a draw for many students when joining an organization in the NPHC over one in the IFC or the PA.

New president of Sigma Phi Epsilon, junior Nicholas Smith, said his fraternity also serves at the local boys and girls club. He said he would love to see fraternities under the IFC and NPHC coming together and

hours than a student in the IFC or PA, according to an ENN analysis of the fall 2017 report.

Alpha Phi Alpha serves with the Boys and Girls Club as well. Sophomore Xavier Bryant, treasurer of the Sigma Delta chapter said, "You can tell that they really appreciate it, for the children they like seeing

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I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT WE ARE A VERY WELL-ROUNDED COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE, AND WE DO MORE THAN STROLL AND STEP.

DYAMOND HOWELL
PRESIDENT OF THE DELTA SIGMA THETA CHAPTER

pairing up for more events.

"I definitely want to partner with the NPHC in the future," Smith said. "I see lots of similarities between us and Alpha Phi Alpha."

Smith sees it as important in improving diversity for organizations in the IFC to partner with the NPHC. He hopes to do more as a new leader in his fraternity.

In the most recent fall 2017 report, on average a student in the NPHC does more than three times more community service

older African-Americans that are in college. We kind of serve as mentors and role models without really even knowing it."

The NPHC emphasizes that students are making a lifelong decision that will affect their future when they join an organization.

"Joining this organization in particular along with their values, it gave me a lifelong sisterhood that I get to use beyond college," Foster said. "This is literally a lifetime commitment."

Students in the NPHC want to stay con-

THE FOLLOWING GREEK ORGANIZATIONS DECLINED TO COMMENT FOR THIS STORY:

1. Alpha Chi Omega
2. Alpha Omicron Pi
3. Alpha Xi Delta
4. Delta Delta Delta
5. Phi Mu
6. Sigma Kappa
7. Sigma Sigma Sigma
8. Zeta Tau Alpha
9. Beta Theta Pi
10. Delta Upsilon
11. Kappa Alpha Order
12. Kappa Sigma
13. Sigma Chi
14. Zeta Beta Tau

nected to their organizations after college.

"When you graduate, you still see people wearing their letters from the NPHC," Howell said.

The majority of those attending the NPHC's events are from the African-American community. But the NPHC wants to expand their audience and educate the general public on issues, rather than speaking to the same people.

"AKA's were talking about the dynamics of the black family, but there are only black people coming those events," Howell said. "We as a community already know what needs to be discussed and talked about on Elon's campus. But the people who need to learn about it don't show up."

Foster said her favorite event during Alpha Kappa Alpha's programming week this fall was the N-word forum, where her sorority partnered with the Black Student Union. The forum discussed the sensitive topic of using the N-word, its history and how people have become desensitized to it.

"I would like to see more white people coming in particular just because those are important racial conversations we have there," Foster said.

Students in the NPHC believe that improving in understanding is where to begin in increasing inclusivity on Elon's campus. Foster hopes to pair more with other PA organizations in the future to gain a better understanding of their organizations.

"There's a lot I don't know about their sororities and there is just as much that they don't know about ours sororities," Foster said.

The NPHC is famous for hosting the strolling and stepping dance offs, where all three councils join to teach different types of dances. But many of the chapter members want to be known for more than just that one event on campus.

"I think it's important to know that we are a very well-rounded community of people, and we do more than stroll and step," Howell said.



CAROLINE BREHMAN | ELON NEWS NETWORK

ADVERSITY IN ATHLETICS

How black athletes at Elon feel like their day-to-day is different

Alexa Baer
Reporter | @ElonNewsNetwork

When senior Bryanna Hames speaks, her teammates on the Elon University women's track and field team listen.

Aside from her contributions in leading the Phoenix

DIVERSITY IN ATHLETICS

According to Elon Phoenix Athletics, during the same 2016-2017 school year, 20 percent of student-athletes identified as black or African American.

Championships in May.

But in 2016, Hames once demanded her team's attention for something other than athletic reasons.

She called for something much bigger.

On Sept. 23, 2016, when hundreds of Elon students participated in a Black Lives Matter march, Hames and some of her teammates joined the rally. None of them were white. Hames, who is biracial, said she was frustrated with the lack of support from her white peers. And at a team meeting, she let them know exactly how she felt.

"You don't have to walk out the door and get stared at," Hames said to them.

"You don't have to walk out the door and feel unsafe. Most of you aren't dating black men, so most of you aren't having the issues, or having to go home and watch your man cry, or be upset or listen to them talk and tell stories and even personally go through it."

She says that statement sparked the conversation.

"That was like the first time our team had actually talked about it," Hames said. "Like 'Hey, these racial issues exist. We don't feel comfortable in our environment. You guys are supposed to be our support systems and we should love each other unconditionally.'"

Hames said her team was very apologetic, and if a similar situation happened, her teammates would "110 percent be there." But even if that's the case, Hames and other student athletes say they face the same trouble as other students of color on a predominantly white campus.

According to the Elon Fact Book for the 2016-2017 school year, more than 80 percent of the student body on Elon's campus identifies as white, with only 5.3 percent of students identifying as black or African-American. Just 2.3 percent identify as multiracial.

Hames said she feels supported by her teammates, but that doesn't change that she feels overwhelmingly outnumbered.

"I came on a recruiting visit so I met all the athletes who straight up told me that 'everybody is white, just know this,'" Hames said.

For many students the lack of diversity can be quite the culture shock.

Some students come from high schools where they were one of many and are now in a place where they are one of the few.

"It was definitely a shock because obviously they talk about diversity and everything, and then you look around and it's not as diverse as you would hope at times," said sophomore Tyler Stanley, an outfielder on the base-

“

DIVERSITY IS NOT GOING TO CHANGE IF YOU KEEP BRINGING PEOPLE IN THAT LOOK EXACTLY THE SAME. THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE ANY DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT IF WE'RE SITTING AROUND THE SAME PEOPLE.

BRYANNA HAMES
SENIOR THROWER

ball team. "You do feel like you're the only black person in the room or in class or anything like that, and that can get tough."

Minorities on campus are often subjected to a slightly different experience from their non-minority peers. Athletes say they face the same struggles, but in a different way.

"I think you find a lot more blacks on campus are on sports teams," said senior pitcher Kiandra Mitchum, a member of the softball team. "I think if I weren't an athlete, I'd really have to go out of my way to find that — different things to be a part of where I'm surrounded by people like me."

According to Elon Phoenix Athletics, during

the same 2016-2017 school year, 20 percent of student-athletes identified as black or African-American, a substantially higher percentage than the rest of Elon's campus.

Student-athletes spend a lot of time with their team. From practices and weightlifting to team events and games, for some athletes their team can be their support system. For

Elon. This is daily. I overhear it, and you almost become immune because you're like, well yep. My first year it was much more of a, 'Oh dear God, you're ignorant.'"

Oftentimes, black students at predominantly white institutions (PWI) say they feel as though they need to prove themselves and prove that they can handle academic pressure and their extracurriculars to be the perfect "black student." For black student-athletes at Elon, it is no different. At times, it can be worse because they feel they have to prove themselves in the classroom and in the athletic arena, they said.

"I feel like in most of my classes, I usually don't behave as I guess you say a 'typical athlete' would," Stanley said. "I try to separate myself apart by being at the top of the class grade-wise and making sure I do my part to not give them the opportunity because if I do try to put myself in stereotypical athlete or black athlete, then that will allow them to kind of respond with the prejudice that they might have."

All the stress and pressure of holding oneself to a high standard can severely impact one's mental health. According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African-Americans are 20 percent more likely to experience serious mental health problems than the general population.

This year's freshman class is the most diverse class in Elon history, with 19 percent of students being students of color, six percent identifying as Afri-

Senior pitcher Kiandra Mitchum delivers a pitch to a North Carolina State University batter last season.

CLASS OF 2021 STATISTICS

1. Nineteen percent of students are students of color
2. Six percent identify as African-American
3. Four percent of students identify as multiracial

can-American and four percent of students identifying as multiracial.

Black student-athletes here at Elon still think there is more the university and the student body can do to improve the diversity on campus.

"Do a better job of bringing diverse students that are not athletes. We're not your charity case... do a better job of making scholarships because the thing is this school is expensive," Hames said. "Diversity is not going to change if you keep bringing people in that look exactly the same. There's not going to be any diversity of thought if we're sitting around the same people."

Sometimes the best way to enable change is to start it yourself, the athletes said.

"My hope for the future is that everybody does do their part and doesn't depend on somebody else to step up and do something," Stanley said. "If you see something that's wrong or you see something that you feel like should be changed, step up and make that change. I know my dad told me that if you see something you need to stand up for, stand up for it no matter what the consequences may be — and that's what I'm going to try and do."

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2018
ELON, NORTH CAROLINA

THE PENDULUM

FIGHTING THE FLU

National wave of flu affects Elon, infecting 3 percent of students

Sam Casamento
Elon News Network | @SamCasamento

The 2017-2018 flu season is the worst in more than a decade.

Nationally, there are more than 215,000 confirmed cases of the flu. One out of every 14 doctor's visits nationwide were related to flu symptoms. And as of Wednesday, 53 children died from flu-related symptoms.

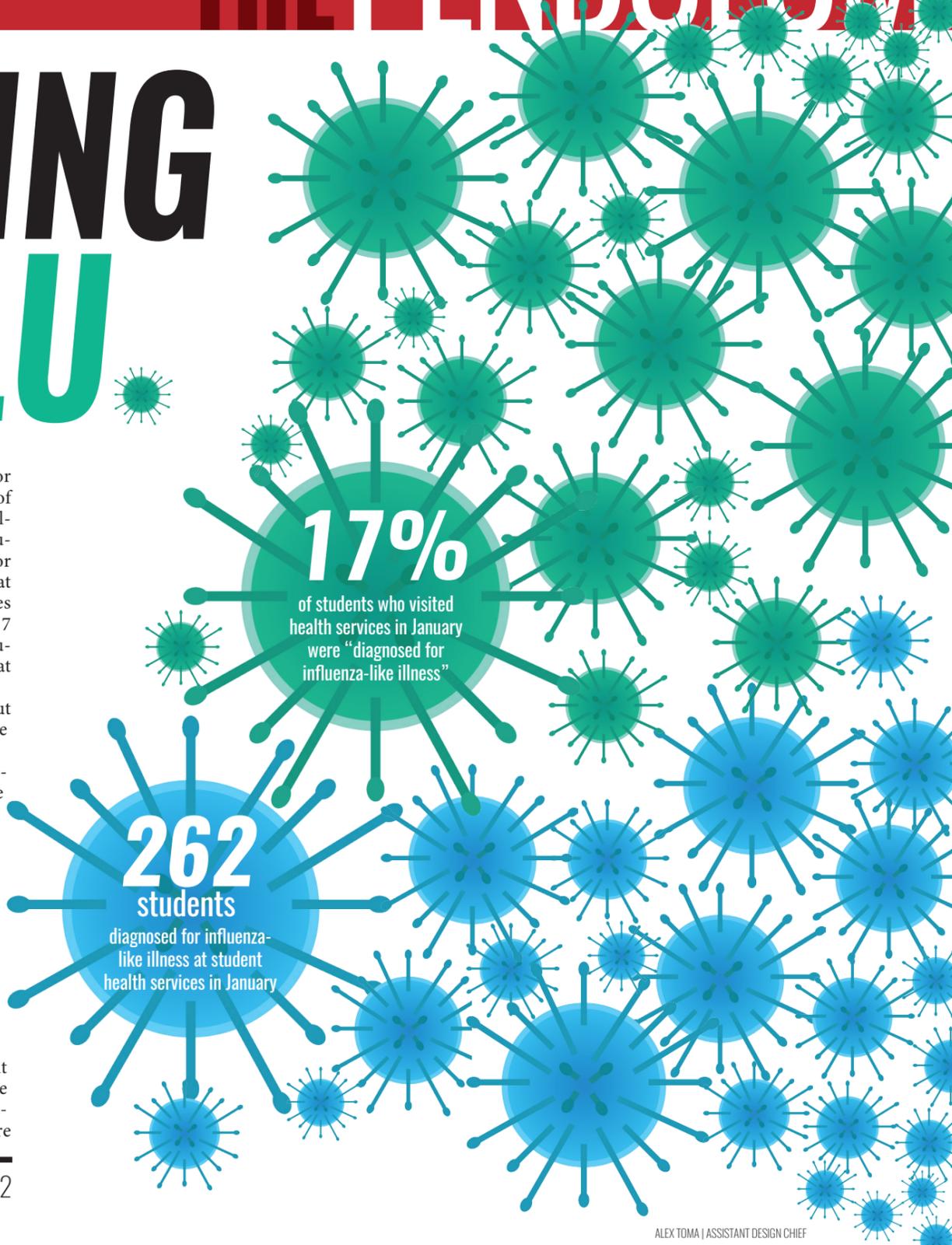
Here at Elon University, the disease is spreading, too. Jana Lynn Pat-

erson, vice president for Student Life and dean of student health and wellness, said 262 Elon students were "diagnosed for influenza-like illness" at Student Health Services in January — which is 17 percent visits to the Student Health Services that month.

In total, that's about 3.7 percent of the entire student population.

Amber Smith, a registered nurse at Alamance Regional Medical Center, said the best way to combat the flu is by simply getting a flu shot. But this year, the shot has been proven less effective. A report by Canadian scientists says the vaccine is only 17 percent effective against the H3N2 strain, which causes about 80 percent of the virus. Still, while this report isn't conclusive against the entire

See **FLU** | pg. 2



Raising the pressure

GPA raise prevents some freshmen from joining Greek life

Nina Fleck
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork

Bigs. Littles. Tons of glitter. Each spring, girls at Elon University eagerly anticipate a mega change to their college social lives: the opportunity arises to join a sorority.

But a change in the minimum GPA requirement for girls to go through Panhellenic sorority recruitment disqualified a number of girls from fulfilling their

hopes of becoming part of a sisterhood.

This school year, Elon's Panhellenic Association opted to raise the minimum GPA requirement for girls to go through recruitment from 2.8 to 2.9.

According to Jordan King, the interim director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, the Panhellenic Association made the change to reflect "the trends at Elon with how the GPA has risen."

Though this year the admissions office boasts a freshman class that was accepted with an average high school GPA of 3.98, the minimum college GPA necessary for girls to be eligible for recruit-

SORORITY GPA

2.9

The spring 2018 Panhellenic recruitment minimum GPA requirement. In spring 2016, the requirement was 2.75 and in spring 2017, the requirement was 2.8.

ment was unattainable for some, such as freshman Tyler Johnson and sophomore Maria Benton.

Johnson and Benton share a few similarities: Greek life was an import-

See **BID** | pg. 2

Relief with Responders

First responders relieve stress with unique Yoga class

Sarah Johnson
Event Coverage Coordinator | @sarahjohnson05



Olivia Kvitne
Founder

The free yoga for first responders class at Feel Better Burlington Yoga ends each session with a simple head bow and an exchange of "namaste"—an acknowledgment of the light in each and every person in the room.

Every Saturday from noon to 1 p.m., a unique group gathers in this hot yoga studio in downtown Burlington to sweat out

the stress of the week. Everyone in the room is, or is married to, a first responder.

The concept of yoga for first responders is not unique to Burlington. In 26 locations across North America, the organization Yoga for First Responders (YFFR) offers community classes and trainings.

Olivia Kvitne, a journalist and yoga instructor, created the program to bring yoga philosophy to practical applications for first responders around the country. The movement started with the Los Angeles Fire and Police Departments and has

See **YOGA** | pg. 6



NEWS • PAGE 4

Damages to Smith residence hall reaches \$100,000



ONLINE elonnewsnetwork.com

Day in the life of an Elon cheerleader



SPORTS • PAGE 7

Basketball looks to veteran leadership ahead of CAA tournament

FLU | from cover

Northern Hemisphere, it shows how potent this year's flu is.

Still, Smith said students should take as much precaution as possible.

"The flu season goes from about October through February and March," she said. "It's not too late to

your flu shot if you haven't done it yet. Whether or not the flu strand in your vaccine keeps you completely protected, it can decrease your symptoms if you end up getting symptoms of the flu."

Smith said in addition to protecting you from the flu and its symptoms, the flu shot can prevent you from being at higher risk of getting other illnesses, like pneumonia and bronchitis.

"When you get sick, usually your body spends all of its energy trying to fight that initial sickness you have," she said. "Your immunity is already kind of is decreased because you just don't feel good, and you don't have a lot of energy to keep fighting some of those other things."

In addition to the



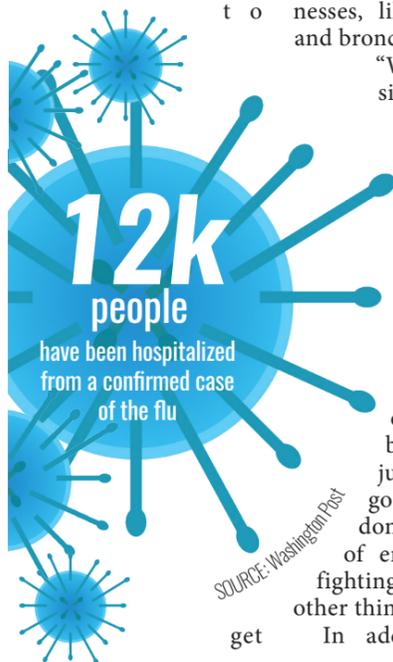
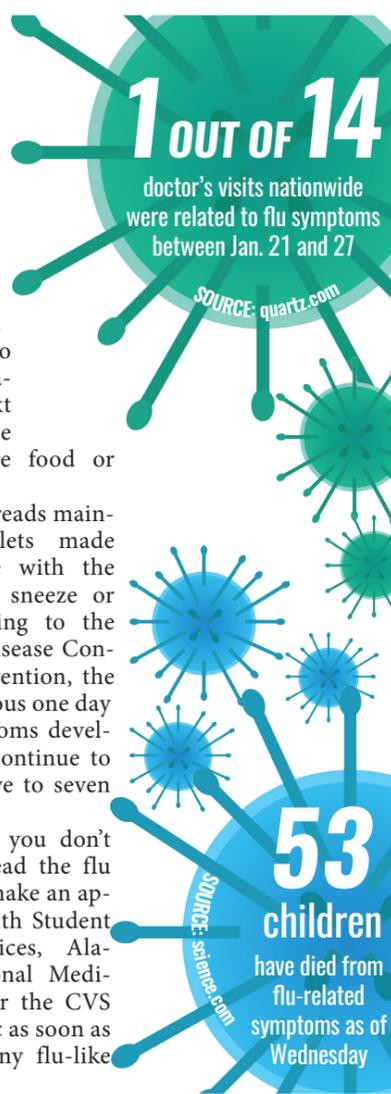
IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET YOUR FLU SHOT IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE IT YET. WHETHER OR NOT THE FLU STRAND IN YOUR VACCINE KEEPS YOU COMPLETELY PROTECTED, IT CAN DECREASE YOUR SYMPTOMS IF YOU END UP GETTING SYMPTOMS OF THE FLU.

AMBER SMITH
NURSE, ALAMANCE
REGIONAL MEDICAL
CENTER

vaccine method, some other ways to prevent illness are to cough into your elbow and to wash your hands frequently. Smith also said to be weary the next time someone asks to share food or drinks.

The flu spreads mainly by droplets made when people with the virus cough, sneeze or talk. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the flu is contagious one day before symptoms develop and can continue to spread for five to seven days.

To ensure you don't catch or spread the flu this season, make an appointment with Student Health Services, Alamance Regional Medical Center, or the CVS Minute Clinic as soon as you notice any flu-like symptoms.



NEWS BRIEFS

Elon senior arrested on drunken driving charges

Senior Meghan Ann McSharry was arrested Saturday morning for driving while impaired.

According to the Elon Police Department, McSharry was driving on West Lebanon Avenue when she struck an Uber parked on the side of the road. Two Elon students who were riding with the Uber were sent to the hospital with minor injuries following the crash.

McSharry claimed she was "checking her phone." The crash caused an estimated \$10,000 worth of damage.

McSharry showed indications of alcohol consumption and a drug analysis showed a blood alcohol content of 0.18, according to the Elon Police Department.

She was charged with one count of driving while impaired, and was released on a \$500 bond. McSharry did not respond to ENN's request for comment.

New Engineering program starting fall 2018

Elon University's new four-year bachelor degree in engineering will begin this fall. The university is proud of having a strong foundation in both the arts and sciences. The addition of the engineering program will provide students with a wider variety of options in the sciences.

For students who want to further explore their major, concentrations in biomedical engineering or computer engineering will be available. The program will eventually move to the new building being built adjacent to the McMichael Science Building.

Elon is pursuing accreditation of the program through Accreditation Board for Engineering (ABET) and anticipates we will be reviewed for accreditation in 2020.

"Engineers are being called upon to identify and solve increasingly complex problems in today's world, and learning in arts and sciences and environment provides them the necessary background to do that," said Provost Steven House.

Lumen scholars study yoga in Greensboro, Atlanta and India

Elon University Scholar Anya Fredsell '18, supported with a \$15,000 Lumen Prize, worked to study the impact of yoga cross-culturally. In January 2017, Fredell took Elon's course "India's Identities: Religion, Caste and Gender in Contemporary South India." This inspired her to travel to India four times for research.

Fredsell has logged hundreds of hours in participant-observation of yoga-culture. Now, Fredell she is hoping to continue her research in graduate school.

"Anya's Lumen Project brings her academic training and challenging coursework together with her own identity as a yoga teacher and practitioner, and will lay the foundation for her future graduate work and career as a teacher-scholar of South Asian religions," said Amy Allocco, Fredsell's research mentor and associate professor of religious studies.

BID | from cover

ant factor in both girls' decisions to attend Elon. Having both attended all-female high schools and participated in Girl Scouts for years, the two value the presence of sisterhood in their lives.

HIGHER STANDARD

After the minimum GPA required to go through recruitment rose from 2.8 to 2.9 this year, some girls were unable to join a sorority.

The two of them were crushed to learn they couldn't participate in recruitment because of their GPAs.

They were even more disappointed when their extenuating circumstances failed to persuade the

Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life to allow them to go through recruitment.

Before the start of Johnson's first year at Elon, she received some startling news: her mother had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

"That hit me hard during first semester, especially not being there in person to be there for her," Johnson said. "My mom is my best friend, so it was so rough."

Fortunately, the cancer was caught early on. Her mother had surgery and is now cancer-free.

"It was the best scenario for her," Johnson said. "[But] that's why my GPA wasn't the best."

Elon's spring recruitment page claims "exceptions are granted in rare cases when there are extreme extenuating circumstances with students who have a GPA between 2.6 and 2.9."

Lamentably, by the time Johnson learned she could appeal, the deadline had just passed.

"I had all the credentials to appeal," Johnson said. "I had a 2.75 before ... and I also have



Members of Sigma Sigma Sigma sorority participate in Bid Day activities Jan. 29.

the disability services, so I had everything I could've done to appeal. But I never even heard of appealing until [my friend] told me when it was too late."

Benton also attributes her insufficient GPA of her first fall semester at Elon, which kept her from being able to go through recruitment, to troubling circumstances — namely, fighting a case of sexual assault.

"I had to meet with a lot of faculty and members of the school, so meeting with them forced me to miss class time which thus lowered my GPA," Benton said. "I didn't meet the requirement for rushing. I tried appealing to Fraternity and Sorority Life, but they didn't allow me to rush because of the national standards set by the Panhellenic group."

She said she was given a "false sense of hope" since many of her friends with knowledge of the situation had encouraged her to appeal.

Benton ended the fall semester of 2016 with a GPA of 2.66. She presented all the emails and evidence she could to FSL in the hopes of rushing, but she was still rejected.

"It sucked because I had to give the details of the thing that happened to me," Benton said. "Sharing that with hundreds of people that you don't know and then to have them be like, 'sorry that that happened to you, but no, that sucks, too — to put your trust in somebody you don't know and still have them reject you.'"

Benton hoped to go through recruitment this year as a sophomore but was unable to, again, because of her GPA.

"The GPA requirement did go up just one point, and it doesn't seem like a lot, but ... it takes a lot to get your GPA up if you start really low," Benton said. "It's much better than it was last year, but I almost hated

it even more this year because I was even closer to the cut off."

Another frustrating factor was the encouragement she received to appeal again — after recruitment had already finished.

"I was told after rush ... that I should have appealed because I probably could have been accepted to rush," Benton said. "So it was even worse this year."

But Benton still sees the positive in setting the new minimum GPA requirement to 2.9.

"I think it's good that the GPA was set higher because I do think there's a stigma around people involved in Greek life who don't have high GPAs," Benton said. "They think that it's a lot of people who aren't passionate about their academics [who] want to be in a fraternity or a sorority, but I think having that GPA minimum really encourages students to focus on their studies before rush."

ELON NEWS NETWORK

Freshman Alicia Powell paints "Say their Names" onto a canvas expressing student thoughts on black culture during CREDE's first event honoring Black History Month Feb. 1.

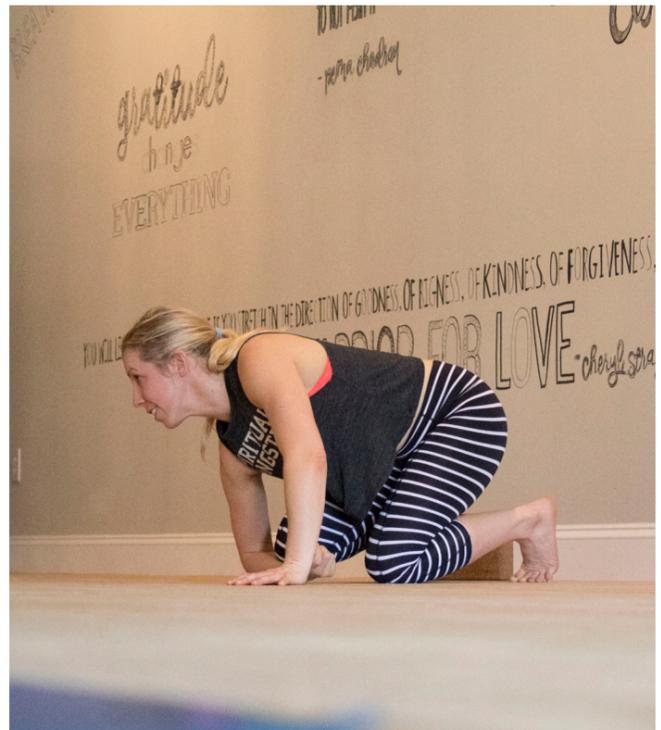


OLIVER FISCHER | ELON NEWS NETWORK



Juniors Leah Perez and Jessica Kuehl get comfy in Turner Theatre while watching the Super Bowl Feb. 4.

SOPHIA ORTIZ | ELON NEWS NETWORK



Instructor Heather Kasey leads a free yoga class for first responders through an hour of strength-building yoga flows, stretches and breathing exercises Feb. 3.

SEE MORE ON PAGE 6

JACKIE PASCALE | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Junior Zach Rosenberg enjoys snacks while surrounded by New England Patriots fans at a Super Bowl party Feb. 4. The Patriots lost the Super Bowl 41-33 to the Philadelphia Eagles.

ALEC MANDELL | ELON NEWS NETWORK

CHEAT SHEET

Super Bowl LII breaks record for lowest audience

David Bockino, assistant professor of communications, unpacks the effects of the superbowl's low audience ratings

Victoria Traxler
Elon News Network | @elonnewsnetwork



Professor David Bockino

David Bockino is an assistant professor of communication in the School of Communications. In an interview, Bockino discussed the ithe possible effects that the superbowl ratings will have on the future of the NFL.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

is going to wane too much, but in terms of who's viewing their actual shows and games it'll probably be a little lower next year.

Q: Do you think that mobile and online viewings makes up for what's been happening in recent years with cable cutting?

A: I don't think it makes up for it in a financial sense. They're definitely not getting as much money through that service. It's sort of what we always talk about in COM100, a fragmented audience. There's a million different ways to do stuff. There's millions of entertainment options available to people now. To get that many people in front of a TV at a certain time is harder for everyone. Cable and network ratings across the board are down—newscasts, popular shows — why should the NFL be any different than any of those other things? And it's not, it's proving to be not.

Q: How does the NFL measure viewership?

A: The NFL measures viewership the same way every other television network measures viewership. They look at mostly average audience, which is the average number of people who are watching the Super Bowl or watching a program during any minute. They are looking at how many people in general are watching the Super Bowl which would be a reach number, but the media and press usually report an average audience member which reports the average number of people who are watching the Super Bowl at any one minute. This would be the 103 number. Then they added the online audience which was 2.6 which came to about 106. That's the number that the NFL will use to compare to other Super Bowls.

Q: What factors do you think contributed to the low ratings this year of the Super Bowl?

A: I have no idea. I thought the number was going to be huge but I was wrong. I thought this was going to be the highest rated Super Bowl of all time; two really big markets, big game, a halftime show

that wasn't appreciated by a lot of people — but it didn't lose a ton of audience — it was at least middle of the road. I just think for whatever reason the NFL was down during the regular season. A lot of people will put that on the kneeling during the national anthem. I think that's part of the story, but I think the interest for the NFL may have just been down a bit this year. It was a surprise to me.

Q: How will these ratings affect the NFL?

A: They won't. It's still the tenth most viewed program of all time. The NFL is by far the strongest sport property in the country. It's the most viewed sports program all year, it's still a massive number and it'll be a rounding error eventually for sponsorships. They're still going to charge the same amount of money. I really don't think it's a huge deal and I don't think the NFL is going away any time soon. If I worked as VP of research for the NFL, I'd keep an eye on it and see what we could do to sort of bring people back because it was smaller than last year but it's not a plummet

like people would think it is. It's a lower rating than last year and you always want to grill, but because of what happened in the fall with lower ratings I think they should've expected this; and they probably expected this.

Q: Do you think that this will become a trend of decreasing?

A: I haven't seen NFL total yearly ratings. I think they're down a little bit but I don't think it's going to keep decreasing this much. I think maybe it's peaked because all sports peak and then they sort of settle in a little bit. But the NFL has a lot of issues, one of which is player safety and people are turned off because NFL players are legitimately having health issues after their career. Once people start to realize that, it kind of turns the sport off to a lot of people. I think that's a big factor. There's tons of commercials and I think they're trying to address that issue and trying to get people to interact more. There's also a lot of ways to consume the NFL with mobile sites and online services. Actually, watching the program on TV could be an issue. I don't think interest in the NFL

Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles (9) holds his son and waves during the victory celebration after Super Bowl LII on Sunday, Feb. 4, 2018, in Minneapolis, Minn.

Q: How might the NFL try and increase ratings in the future?

A: Make the game more fan friendly. Which probably means make less commercials which they're never going to do cause then they'll start losing money and the owners will be mad. I don't know if the NFL necessarily has to make a change, they just need to keep their current fans more engaged and engaged throughout the entire year. If gambling gets legalized, then you're good to go. Gambling will probably get legalized in the next five years or less. If people can gamble form their couches then that's what the NFL needs. It's no big secret that much of the NFL viewership is driven by fantasy football and gambling. If you took fantasy football and gambling away, then ratings plummeting is no surprise to anyone in the league. So make one of those things legal and easier for the vast majority of people to do for those who don't know how to use online booking sites, and then NFL would probably see their ratings bounce up. Now would that invite a whole other host of issues? Absolutely. But if we're just talking about ratings — that's ratings.

Smith residence hall experiences second wave of vandalism

Smith hall suffers over \$100,000 in damages to their amenities

Cammie Behnke and Maggie Brown
Elon News Network and Event Coordinator
| @cdbehnke and @MaggieABrown

Vandalism damages to the first floor bathroom in Smith residence hall are now over \$100,000, according to John Dooley, vice president of Student Life. Elon University is planning to charge all Smith residents \$300 at the end of the semester.

The first floor bathroom of Smith Residence Hall has been vandalized twice already this year. The first incident reportedly had "tens of thousands of dollars" of damage.

The university has been warning students since the fall. But in a recent letter to residents, Dooley said the charges will be added to the students' tuition unless those responsible are identified.

The cost includes damag-



A ripped urinal from the wall, damaged exit signs and broken ceiling tiles have been a part of the damages.

es from a ripped urinal from the wall, damaged exit signs and broken ceiling tiles in September 2017. The total cost does not include the University's installment of security cameras.

Since the installation of security cameras, Dooley stated that the actions of vandalism discontinued. But because of how severe the damages were at the beginning of the year, the uni-

versity had to take action.

Much of the reason the university is having to punish all residents of the dorm is because whoever did cause the initial vandalization is not speaking up.

"It is disappointing that no one has taken responsibility or provided information about the individuals involved," Dooley said in his letter.

Many residents are not

happy with this letter they received. Smith resident Michael Sloan said charging each resident is not fair.

"I physically was not on campus when this incident happened and I still have to pay \$300 for it," Sloan said.

According to the letter, the charges would be nearly \$1,000 per resident for the community damages, but they are only charging the residents \$300.

The university said if students were to provide information to Campus Safety and Police about the vandalism and destruction, those students would not be billed the \$300.

The University Housing Agreement states in section 3, residents are responsible for community damages "in halls or sections where the university has determined that there is theft or undue

SMITH HALL DAMAGES

\$100k

Total damages done to the Smith residence hall first floor bathroom.

\$300

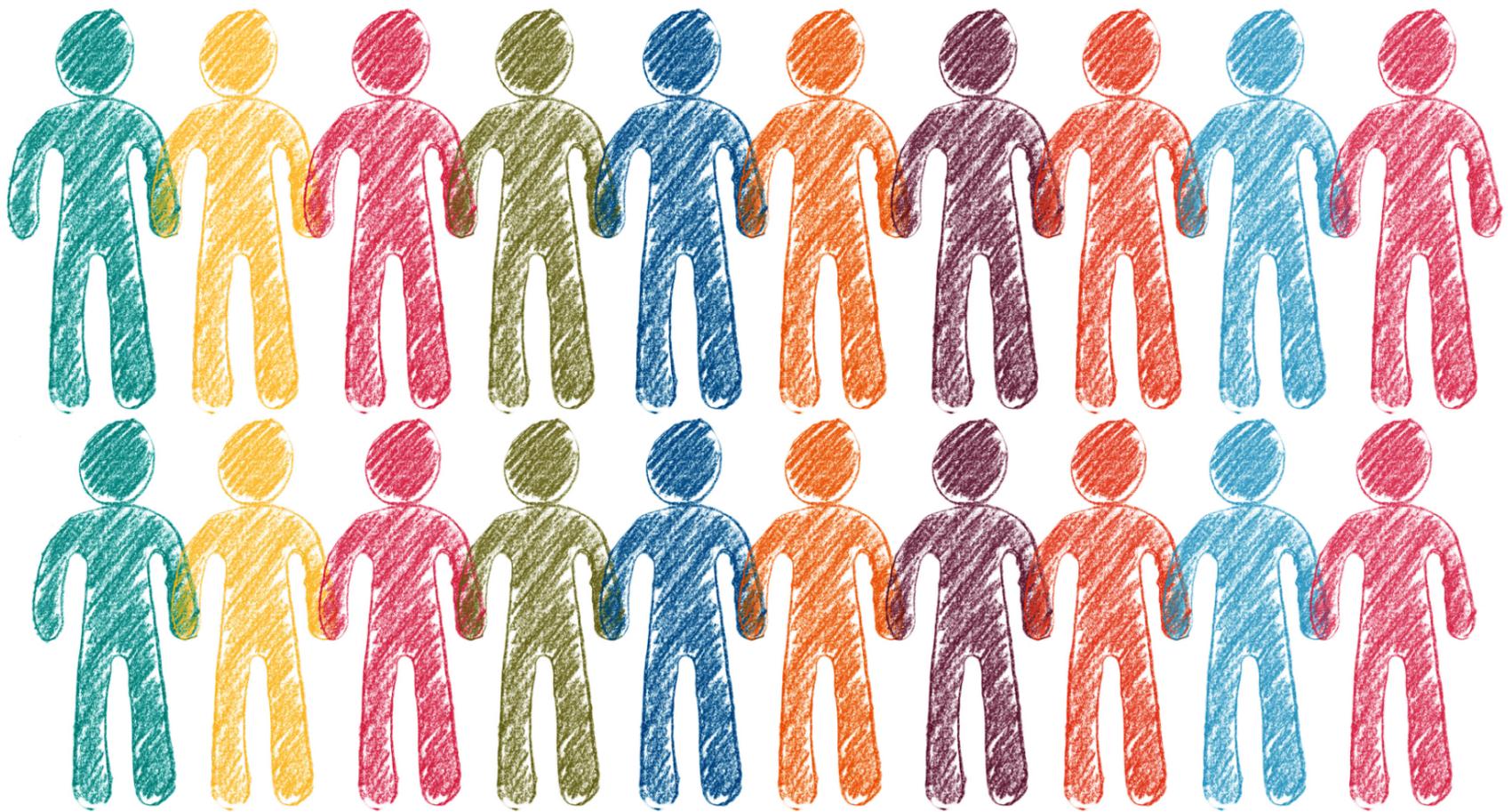
Amount Elon University plans to charge all Smith residents at the end of the semester. The charges actually amount to nearly \$1,000 per resident but they are only being charged \$300.

abuse of university property and the responsible individual(s) cannot be identified."

But students are still upset with this decision made by the university.

"I don't think it should be all on us to find the person [responsible]," Sloan said. "The investigation needs to keep going because it's unfair for everyone in this hall especially to have to pay when all of our stuff got damaged."

CAMMIE BEHNKE | ELON NEWS NETWORK



ELENA HERNANDEZ | DESIGNER

STAFF EDITORIAL

Discrimination accusations show need for reflection

HOW WE SEE IT

Recent accusations of racial discrimination from a former professor shows a need for open conversations on microaggressions.

In January 2017, former assistant professor Michael Rodriguez filed a lawsuit against Elon University for two counts of discrimination. In the year that has followed, this lawsuit has seemingly been swept under the rug, with Elon requesting the case be dismissed because Rodriguez did not, among other reasons, file an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission claim within the statute of limitations. The university denies all allegations of discrimination, and at the time the lawsuit was filed, issued a statement reaffirming Elon's

stance against discrimination.

Now, more than a year later, Rodriguez has a 2,270 page response to Elon's request to dismiss the case. In his response, he cited votes from the promotions and tenure committee, as well as reviews and praises from colleagues and supervisors.

Whether Rodriguez's claims of discrimination are proven in court, this lawsuit shows a dire need for more open conversations on subtle or subconscious ways people discriminate. Though it may be hard to admit, we live

in a society where we are taught racism and prejudice from an early age. Because of this, we often must actively try to unlearn this behavior to treat people more equally.

The faculty and staff members named in Rodriguez's suit may not have maliciously, or even consciously discriminated against him, but the claims made in his response give reason to investigate. Discrimination and prejudice is not always outright in forms of racial slurs or exclusion, but can also be more subtle, such as denying a well-deserved promotion.

The Elon community should continue to take Rodriguez's claims seriously and use this incident as a time to reflect on ways we may unintentionally discriminate against others.

The community should open up more conversations on this incident and fight to ensure that even accusations of discrimination should be a cause for concern.

If there is any evidence at all that points to discrimination of any kind, it should be investigated. Incidents like this deserve to be critically looked at.

We understand that Elon is thinking logically from a legal standpoint for wanting the case dismissed. If it did not happen, then legal proceedings may be a waste of time, in their eyes.

But this case is a lesson to us all. Even subtle acts can be viewed as discrimination. And as a university community, we need to ensure we are mindful of this.

CAMPUS VOICES

Harmful jokes about mental illnesses need to stop



Tara DeAngelis

At least 1 in 5 college students battle a diagnosable mental illness (NAMI, 2018). This challenge affects millions of people across the world. Mental illness is certainly not a laughing matter or something to take lightly. Unfortunately, mental illness can lead to suicide, serious physical injuries, life-threatening medical problems and intense emotional pain. This pain is intensified when peers make jokes about mental illness — and these jokes have made their way to Elon University.

As a teenager, I faced a variety of mental health issues. I battled anorexia nervosa, which led to many hospitalizations and some near-death encounters, as well as panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and depression. Throughout my experiences in treatment for my mental illnesses, I met individuals with post-traumatic stress

disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, self-harm addictions, alcoholism, drug addictions and countless others. I realized how prevalent mental illness was, and I became acutely aware of insensitive comments regarding these disorders.

My sensitivity prevailed and even grew deeper as I have been progressing through my time at Elon. While I found incredible support and a welcoming environment here, I couldn't help but notice my peers making hurtful comments. These comments were not directed at me, but hearing things like, "I skipped lunch, I'm so anorexic," and "I got PTSD from that test, it was so hard," cut deeply. After my time in treatment, I knew the pain that anorexia and PTSD cause to many, and I did not think these "jokes" were funny.

"While I realize that many

people may be unaware that they are making these 'jokes,' it is still important people understand the offensive and harmful effects they have that might affect others," sophomore Rachel LeFrock said. "I have witnessed this on campus often and I personally admit that I may have engaged in this type of behavior. I strongly believe something should change."

Sadly, many Elon students silently battle mental illness and endure these insensitive jokes almost daily. With the recent suicide of our own Harrison Durant, I thought the jokes would lighten up and eventually disappear completely. But I continued to hear peers say, "Ugh I have so much work to do, I'm going to kill myself." This shocked me. We lost a student to suicide and yet students still joke about taking their own lives.

With this recent tragedy,

I felt the need to stand up for those battling mental illness and start the conversation about why the previously mentioned jokes are hurtful. I wrote an article for my eating disorder recovery blog, *Honestly Free[ed]*. The post, "5 Jokes About Mental Health That Need To Stop," was written from a place of love and a genuine desire to make the Elon community a more comfortable place for students battling mental illness.

I am writing now with the same intentions. I don't wish to point fingers or accuse any student, and I do not intend to blame Elon University in any way. I think Elon is unique in that the culture here is friendly and inviting, with students and faculty continuously striving to do the next right thing.

I am sharing my message here with the hopes that we can come together as a cam-

pus to support one another and treat each and every person with compassion. I know jokes about mental illnesses usually do not come from a place of wanting to hurt another person, and in fact are not given a lot of thought. I strive to change this — I encourage students to think before they make a joke, to ask, "Does what I'm about to say make light of another person's serious pain?" The general rule of thumb is that if you would not joke about a debilitating physical illness, you should not joke about a mental illness.

I believe that Elon's student body can continue to grow and create a warm, welcoming environment for all. I sincerely hope that those who read this article will take action to end the "jokes" and that students will feel safe enough to call out their friends if necessary. Together, we can be the change.



Namaste:

the light in me honors the light in you

JACKIE PASCALE | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Instructor Heather Kasey leads the class through an hour of strength-building yoga flows, stretches and breathing exercises.

YOGA | from cover

now moved to locations such as Ontario, Kansas and Ohio. The group trains teachers and psychologists to manage stress and enhance resiliency.

According to their website, 25-30 percent of police officers have stress-based physical health

NAMASTE

Every Saturday from noon to 1 p.m. Feel Better Burlington has a yoga session for first responders.

18 percent of police officers say they have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, while it is estimated that 10-37 percent of those in fire service have dealt with the disorder.

Seeing this need, Kvitne trains and deploys instructors to fulfill the group's mission statement of making first responders feel supported, protected and prepared.

Brian Leventhal, a state trooper with the highway patrol, attends the first responders' yoga class at Feel Better Burlington every Saturday. He has worked in law enforcement for 18 years. When he was younger, Brian was chasing something fun and exciting, but as he and his career mellowed out, he now serves as part of the collision reconstruction special investigative unit — a position that requires work both in the of-

office and in the field.

In a typical day, Brian can expect to be at his desk writing reports one minute and out in the field conducting interviews, looking at crash scenes and vehicles and talking to people in an effort to piece together what took place to cause a crash the next minute.

"It's a little bit of a mix," Brian said. "You get the typical stresses of being in the office and sitting at a desk all day combined with the stresses of going out into the field. While working on the road, we're still in a marked car, and if we happen to be close to a situation we have to respond."

While Brian stays active through running, swimming and weight-lifting, he says before he started practicing yoga it could be hard to deal with the stresses of his job and achieve mental clarity.

Yoga's benefits are not exclusive to a specific group, but it can be especially beneficial for those in high-stress work environments — such as first responders — particularly when it comes to building mental clarity. When someone's life is on the line, first responders have to be able to think clearly and quickly.

"Mental clarity is import-

ant for anybody, but for first responders it is important to be aware of the situations you're in and be aware of what's going on around you," Brian said. "You have to look out for your safety and the safety of others."

Brian's wife, Erin Leventhal, first told him about the new class being offered for

Brian has become more calm and more patient. I think that breath is everything, so taking a minute to breathe before you respond has been really big for us."

Even Erin, a speech and language pathologist at South Mebane Elementary, has learned how to better deal with stress and apply techniques such as breathing to her classroom.

"Brian and I are both just able to deal with stress better, so we can breathe when things get a little tough," Erin said. "We both feel calmer so the stress level isn't quite as high as it usually is. We've realized that we need to take time for ourselves, so just having that self-care time is really important and it's always been a big thing for us."

Erin is no stranger to the challenges that first responders face. Her father was a firefighter, so she grew up in a first responder household and understands the stress that the job can put on a family.

"Just the idea of being able to come in here together and breathe and feel like we have that time to let everything go and just kind of be our true selves has been really important," Erin said.

By offering not only phys-



JUST THE IDEA OF BEING ABLE TO COME IN HERE TOGETHER AND BREATHE AND FEEL LIKE WE HAVE THAT TIME TO LET EVERYTHING GO AND JUST KIND OF BE OUR TRUE SELVES HAS BEEN REALLY IMPORTANT.

ERIN LEVENTHAL

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST AT SOUTH MEBANE ELEMENTARY

free to first responders. Erin had been attending yoga classes for almost a year when she was told about the new class. The couple worked around their schedule so that Brian could attend the class, and he has been going ever since.

"Brian and I have both noticed that, since we've both been taking yoga, the whole household is calmer," Erin said. "The stress level in our house has really gone down.

FIRST RESPONDERS STRESS LEVELS

25-30%

Of police officers have a stress-based physical health problem

40%

Of police officers have a sleeping disorder

10-37%

Of those involved in fire service suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder

18%

Of police officers suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder

ical and mental support, but also providing first responders, with a community of people with shared experiences, interests and stories, the concept of yoga geared toward first responders has, Brian says, benefited many in the community.

"It was really cool to see the room full of people who devote their lives to other people," Erin said. "I think this class is a great opportunity because their jobs are super stressful and it gives them the opportunity to relax and let go for an hour."

Veterans take charge as CAA tournament approaches

SPORTS BRIEFS

The Phoenix only has three home games remaining in the Alumni Gym

Erik Webb
Sports Director | @ErikWebbElon

The Elon University men's basketball team looked strong as they pulled off a wire-to-wire victory against the University of Delaware on Saturday, Feb. 3. The game, the first of a three-game homestand, was watched by a fan-filled Alumni Gym eager to see if the team would make it to the upcoming Colonial Athletic Association (CAA) tournament.

"This league is as crazy a league as I've ever been in," head coach Matt Matheny said. "It's wild – every game, every night."

"In this league, anything can happen on any night and it's important that you're ready to play every night," junior forward Tyler Seibring said. "We're trying to accomplish a big thing here and we need to work to do that, to play consistently and play our game."

After the win against Delaware, the Phoenix sits in sixth place in the league. If the standings stay as they are, Elon will not play until the final quarter-final game of the CAA tournament, facing off against Northeastern University on Sunday, March 3 at 8:30 p.m. The Phoenix fell to the Huskies on Jan. 5, the only time the teams have



ALEX MANDELL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The cutline goes here and here and here and must extend at least 2/3 across the bottom of the photo to look normal.

faced off this season.

Elon relies on its veteran leaders – the same starting five with which it began games last year. With the returners, it is easy to put trust in what they are able to do both on and off the court and are receiving high praise from the man in charge.

"Our captains are Brian Dawkins, Dmitri Thompson, Tyler Seibring and Dainan Swoope," Matheny said. "I think they form a very strong core group of leadership."

"We both take our positions seriously as captains on this team," Seibring said. "That doesn't always mean scoring a lot of points. We do our best to lead this team and do whatever is necessary. I know I trust [Swoope], and I think he trusts me, to come out every game ready to play."

At this point in the season, the team holds a 14-11 (6-6) record, losing four of its last six games. In those four losses, Elon has only been defeated by an average of 7.25 points.

"The way this league is set up, there's really no time to think about it," said Seibring on whether or not he was disappointed in Elon's record. "At this point, whatever happens – this is a great win, we're going to celebrate it – but we've got a big task next week. There's really no time for that – we're just ready to play the next one."

Seibring, the Normal, Illinois native, ranks sixth in the league with an average of 18.8 points per CAA matchup. The junior forward leads the league in make percentage from behind the arc, shooting 52.1 percent from deep in conference games. When

asked what he feels during CAA games, Seibring was quick to credit his teammates.

"I think our offense in general is flowing really well right now," he said. "It's creating a lot of good looks for a lot of people. We had a lot of different guys able to knock down shots. If anything, it shows how many weapons we have and opens up a lot of shots for me and all the other guys on any given night."

For the Phoenix, the next test will be Hofstra University on Thursday, Feb. 8. The Pride currently sits at fourth in the CAA standings, boasting a 7-5 conference record. A win for Elon would even the two team's records at 7-6 and jam up the middle of the standings as March approaches. That game will be one of only three remaining home games for the Phoenix in what is

Women's basketball defeats top team

The Elon University women's basketball team ended James Madison University's 11-game winning streak on Sunday afternoon, defeating the Dukes 50-43 in Alumni Gym. The Phoenix has now won five of its last six conference games and is tied for third in the Colonial Athletic Association with Northeastern University.

Senior center Malaya Johnson was picked as the CAA Player of the Week for the second time this season after scoring in double figures in six of the last seven games, including both games this past weekend.

The Phoenix will host a pair of home games on Friday, Feb. 9 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. against Drexel University and the College of Charleston, respectively.

Football holds signing day reception

After reaching the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) playoffs and falling in the first round, the Elon University football team will host a signing reception on Wednesday, Feb. 7 at 5:30 p.m. in the Walker Room inside the Alumni Field House.

The reception will honor the 10 new members of the team, as well as the players that sign during the second and final signing day on Wednesday.

Look for coverage of the event on ElonNewsNetwork.com and Twitter @SportsENN on Wednesday.

Hames throws her way to school record

After throwing her way into the NCAA Outdoor Championships in discuss last season, senior thrower Bryanna Hames set a program best in the shot put at the Camel City Invitational in Winston-Salem this weekend.

Hames recorded a toss of 49' 7.75" (15.13m), placed third overall in the event and qualified for the Eastern College Athletic Association (ECAC) Indoor Championships in March. The throw bettered the previous record of 48' 6" (14.78m).

The Elon University women's track and field team will be back in action on Thursday, Feb. 8 at the JDL Team Challenge in Winston-Salem before traveling to Lynchburg, Virginia on the Feb. 8-9 for the Liberty Invitational.

Phoenix teams open spring seasons

Three Phoenix teams will open their spring seasons this weekend.

The Elon University women's lacrosse team, ranked No. 21 in the Intercollegiate Women's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IWLCA) national poll, will make the trip to Durham to face No. 20 Duke University. That game is scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 11 at 1 p.m.

The Elon University softball team will start its 2018 campaign with a pair of doubleheaders this weekend. The first will be on Saturday, Feb. 10 against the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, followed by a pair of games against North Carolina Central University on Sunday, Feb. 11. Finally, the Elon University men's golf team will return to action, starting their spring season at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro's tournament at the Martin Downs Golf Club in Palm City, Florida Feb. 11-13.

THE PHOENIX FOCUS

MEN'S BASKETBALL

RESULTS	14-11
FEB. 1	WILLIAM & MARY/ WILLIAMSBURG, VA 92-99
FEB. 3	DELAWARE/ELON 89-76

SCHEDULE	
FEB. 8	HOFSTRA/ELON 7 P.M.
FEB. 10	JAMES MADISON/ELON 7 P.M.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

RESULTS	15-7
FEB. 2	COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON/ CHARLESTON, SC 77-55
FEB. 4	JAMES MADISON/ELON 50-43

SCHEDULE	
FEB. 9	DREXEL/ELON 7 P.M.
FEB. 11	COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON/ ELON 2 P.M.

TRACK AND FIELD

SCHEDULE	
FEB. 8	JDL TEAM CHALLENGE/ WINSTON-SALEM
FEB. 9-10	LIBERTY INVITATIONAL/ LYNCHBURG, VA

SOFTBALL

SCHEDULE	0-0
FEB. 10	UNC CHARLOTTE (DH)/ ELON 1 & 3 P.M.
FEB. 11	NC CENTRAL/ELON 1 & 3 P.M.

MEN'S TENNIS

RESULTS	3-3
FEB. 3	TROY/JACKSONVILLE, FL 4-3
FEB. 4	NORTH FLORIDA/ JACKSONVILLE, FL CANCELLED

SCHEDULE	
FEB. 9	NC STATE/RALEIGH 5 P.M.

MEN'S GOLF

SCHEDULE	
FEB. 11-13	MARTIN DOWNS COLLEGIATE/ PALM CITY, FL

WOMEN'S TENNIS

SCHEDULE	3-2
FEB. 9	LIBERTY/LYNCHBURG, VA 2 P.M.
FEB. 10	TROY/LYNCHBURG, VA 10 A.M.

LACROSSE

SCHEDULE	0-0
FEB. 11	DUKE/DURHAM 1 P.M.



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