

## Elon requires health insurance information before class registration, students to receive flag on OnTrack portal

Students have until tuition is billed or will be automatically charged for health plan

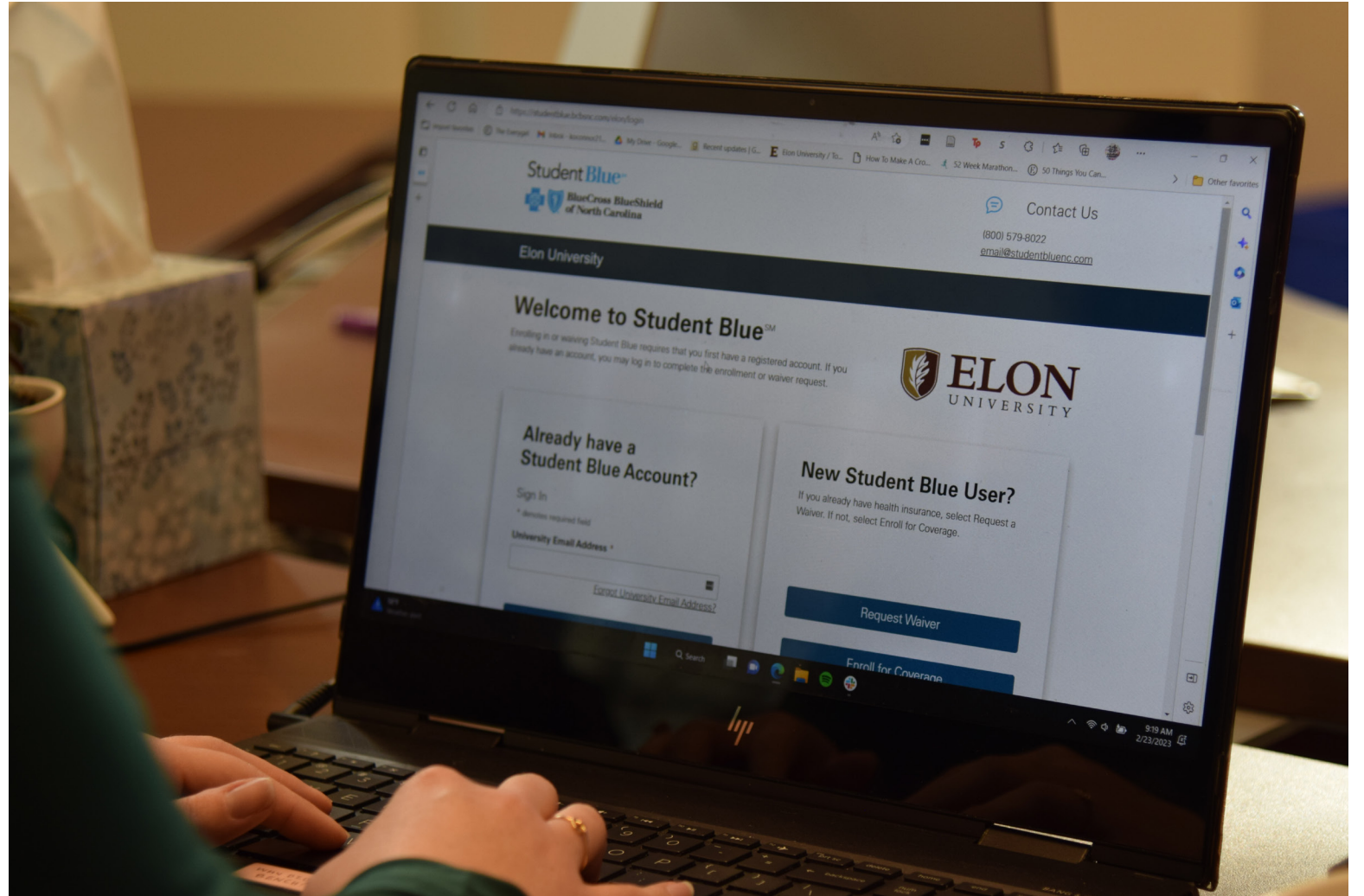
**Ryan Kupperman**  
News Editor | @RyAndKupp

Students who have not yet uploaded their health insurance information or enrolled in Elon University's new Student Blue health plan will be unable to register for classes until they have completed the health agreement form.

The form requires the student's signature and acknowledges that either the student must waive the new health plan and upload their health insurance information or enroll in the plan and accept the extra charge on their tuition bill — which is \$1,300 for undergraduate students and \$1,900 for graduate students each semester. Completing this form is separate from needing to upload one's current insurance information or having to enroll in the new plan.

While the original deadline for students to complete this process was March 17, Dean of Students Jana Lynn Patterson said students have until tuition bills are sent out to truly decide whether or not to waive or enroll. Students who do not waive or submit their current health insurance information will be automatically enrolled in the university's health insurance plan and will be billed accordingly.

According to Elon University's academic catalog, tuition bills are sent out July 1 and due the first Friday of August. Even after bills



KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A photo illustration of the Student Blue login page, where students will access the new health insurance option next fall.

are sent, Patterson said students have until bills are due Aug. 4 this fall to officially waive or enroll in the plan.

According to Patterson, the university will begin putting "flags" on students' OnTrack accounts who have yet to provide the needed information. Patterson said she predicts flags will begin to go up this afternoon

and will not allow students to complete their fall 2023 class registration until they have signed the agreement.

Outside of emailing students, posting reminders on Today at Elon, notifying undergraduates' parents and mailing postcards to students, Patterson said the university will continue to contact students who still need

to submit their information.

Approximately 5% of undergraduate and graduate students, or roughly 250 people, have yet to enroll or waive in the Student Blue plan — though Patterson said that number is consistently decreasing as the university continues to reach out to students.

Associate Provost of

Academic Affairs Jennifer Platania has also reached out to academic advisers, alerting them of the presence of the registration flags and encouraging them to push advisees to take the proper actions if they have not already done so.

"We really just want to avoid that situation, with folks being surprised," Patterson said.

## Town of Elon shares plans for downtown parking

Town downtown development director conceptualizes future downtown development

**Avery Sloan**  
Politics Editor | @AverySloan

Elon News Network spoke with Jill Weston, town of Elon's downtown development director, on the town's future plans for downtown parking. Weston spoke about adding additional spaces and what the current issues with downtown parking are.

### Are there any plans in place to add more parking currently?

There are and just let me say that every downtown has a concern about parking and the reality is, most downtown including ours does. We do have parking, it may not be right in front of the restaurant you want to eat. Actually the parking on West Lebanon, eventually that parking is going to go all the

way down to church street. But eventually as come available, we'll be putting it all the way down. And we've actually been surveying the parking at prime times to see if there's spots available even look what we have now.

And so far, we have not found the time that there was actually not a spot available, there has always been somewhere to park. It's just a matter of, you might have to walk a little bit, but in any big city, there's parking structure, you walk two or three blocks, and that's just part of downtown in general.

We're really lucky to have the Elon Community Church parking lot that in the evening is not designated university which it is during the week, but people can park in that lot and eat at the restaurants most of the time too, they allow that. So I think it's more of a perception than a reality to be honest.



AVERY SLOAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A one hour parking spot on the main block of downtown Elon where the downtown development director has been surveying parking availability during peak times.

See **PARKING** | pg. 5



THE PENDULUM

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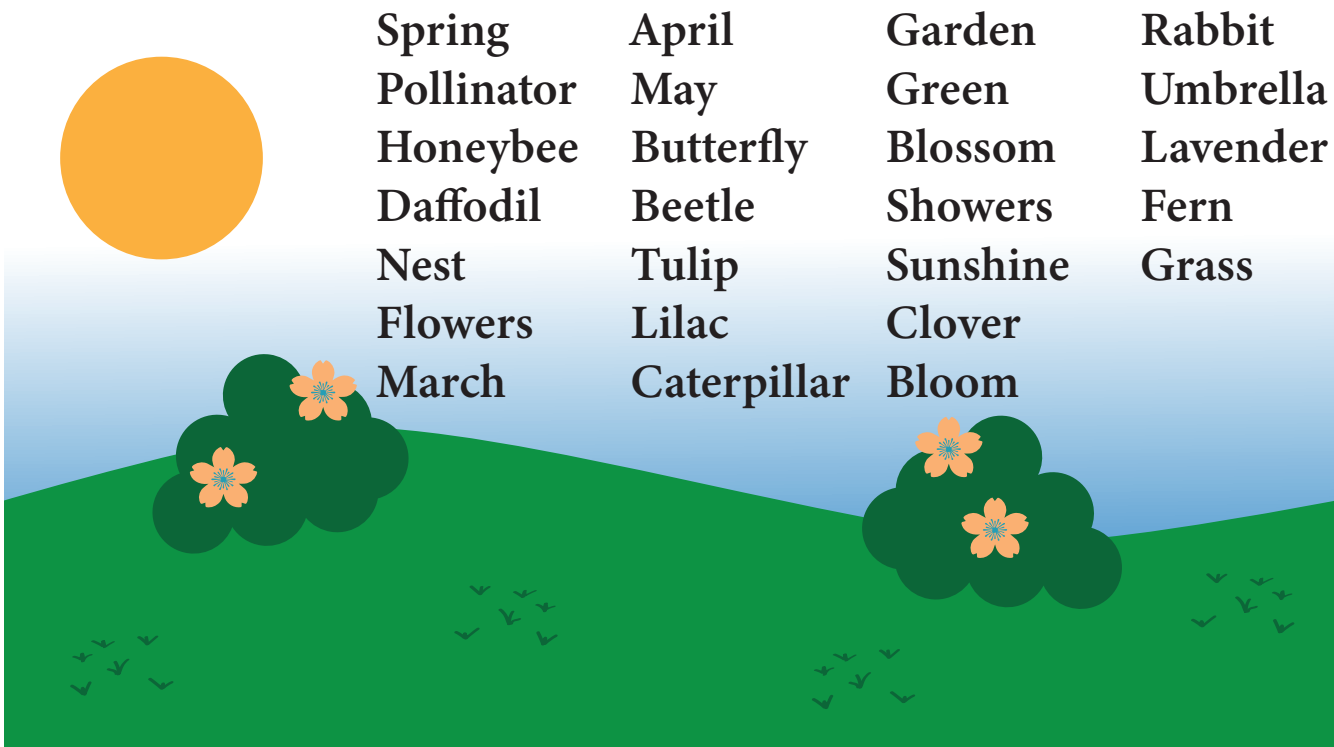
CORRECTIONS

In the last edition of The Pendulum, a caption for the MODA photo in Photos of the Week misspelled Lauren Jacobbe's name. Elon News Network regrets this error.

SPRING WORD SEARCH

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SARAH DAWKINS | DESIGNER







Sophomore right fielder Kenny Mallory Jr. celebrates in the dugout during the game against the University of North Carolina, Wilmington Seahawks on April 9. The Phoenix lost 7-6.

SYDNEY SPENCER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



The Elon University softball team listens to the national anthem prior to taking on No. 11 Duke University on April 10 at Duke Softball Stadium in Durham. Elon lost 4-0.

JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Firefighters from the Graham Fire Department stand on the roof of the Arby's restaurant at 806 S. Main Street in Graham on April 11 due to a fire.

JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



The Elon University dance team performs its hip hop National Dance Alliance routine at the dance team sendoff April 3. The team ended the championship in second place.

JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



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

# Environmental policy affects climate change

In wake of natural disasters in Southern U.S., political science professor shares how federal, state environmental policy can mitigate climate change effects

Avery Sloan  
Politics Director | @Averysloan



Aaron Sparks

It is tornado season in the Gulf Coast, leaving many states vulnerable to high winds, rain and destruction. Not only do natural disasters like tornadoes impact the environment, but they are also costly: According to data from the National Centers for Environmental Information, 2022 tied 2017 and 2011 for the third highest number of billion-dollar natural disasters.

At the end of March, a tornado touched down in Mississippi and Alabama and killed 26 people. There were over 24,000 power outages across Mississippi and the path of destruction is about 100 miles long.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, increasing temperatures lead to an increase in the possibility of natural disasters. This, combined with rising sea levels, can lead to more natural disasters in places that aren't as commonly hit. Aaron Sparks, Elon professor of political science, spoke with Elon News Network about how environmental policy can help mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

**Part of the reason for the recent tornadoes in Mississippi were higher temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico. How would higher temperatures continue to have an effect on natural disasters in the future?**

It can touch on policy in a few ways. We think about climate change policy in these two ways; Adaptation and mitigation. Adaptation is about resiliency. How do we adapt to this world in which the climate has changed, and is bringing about more natural disasters and everything else that comes with that? With hurricanes, we know that sea-level rise is a problem, so we can prepare for that by building sea walls and expanding levee systems. We've seen coastal communities and low lying areas do a lot of that since Hurricane Katrina, so close to 20 years ago. Now, with thunderstorms, it's sort of more random, but if we're seeing them become tornadoes, and are starting to affect different areas more commonly, then you would probably expect to see some early warning signs, and flooding infrastructure to deal with flooding and wastewater or runoff. We'd expect to see shifts in funding that kind of stuff. If tornadoes become more common in certain areas, then you would hope to see those kind of warning signs

that would at last save lives here if not saving property. And then in terms of mitigation, that's like pretty much what do we do to actually prevent climate change from getting worse, and so reducing carbon emissions. I did research with Doctors Usry and Hussar. Hussar runs Elon Poll and Usry is like second in charge. They did pre and post Hurricane Michael in 2018 of surveying North Carolina attitudes toward climate change, and preparedness and support for policies that would mitigate climate change. And so we used that as sort of a quasi-natural experiment to see how preparing and being affected by the hurricane shifted attitudes toward climate change.

We found that in general, when people experienced the hurricane they became more concerned about climate change and more supportive of policies to address it. With the exception that the sort of the most extreme Republicans went the other direction, they became more skeptical of climate change. And our speculation we couldn't test that was that they're sort of the ones that are most plugged in to the news. And so they're hearing you know, President Trump saying things like climate change is a hoax or this isn't climate change.

**Do you know what policies are in place in the federal and state governments to help in terms of mitigation against climate change?**

Last August, Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act, which has about \$380 billion toward climate policy. Some mostly centered around electrification and renewable technologies. So, it's mostly providing tax incentives for individuals and companies to move away from fossil fuels, moving away from internal combustion cars and toward electric vehicles, and away from coal and natural gas and towards solar and wind. ... Since that was passed, companies have invested 200 million in that too.

So, part of the idea is that the federal government is providing these tax incentives and spending money that way it encourages all this private investment into that market place too, because you can get those federal tax dollars if you're spending money in that area. So it's sort of a way to grow those businesses that are providing renewable technology.

Electric vehicles, going to heat pumps in homes; There's weatherization money, like especially for low income people to sort of make your house more weather tight, so heating and cooling bills are less expensive. There's money incentives to get induction stovetops instead of gas. So a lot of these kinds of consumer level things too. They're all different programs within the inflation Reduction Act.

At the state level, a year and a half ago they passed House Bill 951, Energy Solutions for North Carolina. According to Governor Cooper, it requires the North Carolina's utility commission, they're the ones who regulate Duke Energy, and many other power companies, the steps needed to get North Carolina a 70% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. It's not as aggressive as some of these states we've seen pass 100% clean energy laws, but it moves North Carolina a lot more forward than where we were. Those are the

biggest policies in place right now at North Carolina and the federal level.

**What do you think could be done, apart from living through a natural disaster, to get people to pay more attention to climate change?**

One thing I'd say is that the public actually is pretty supportive of climate policy, and rates it fairly highly among important problems. It's usually behind economy and jobs and sort of like the obvious day to day things like health care and education. It's usually up there. If you're trying to persuade someone who's kind of on the fence, the best way to do it would be to have someone who shares important parts of their identity with them, so if you want to convince, say, some, conservative farmers about climate change, have another farmer talk to them about it. You don't bring in the activist professor to talk to them because you're just not going to match on that. Or if you're talking to religious groups, having another pastor or religious people talking to them about it.

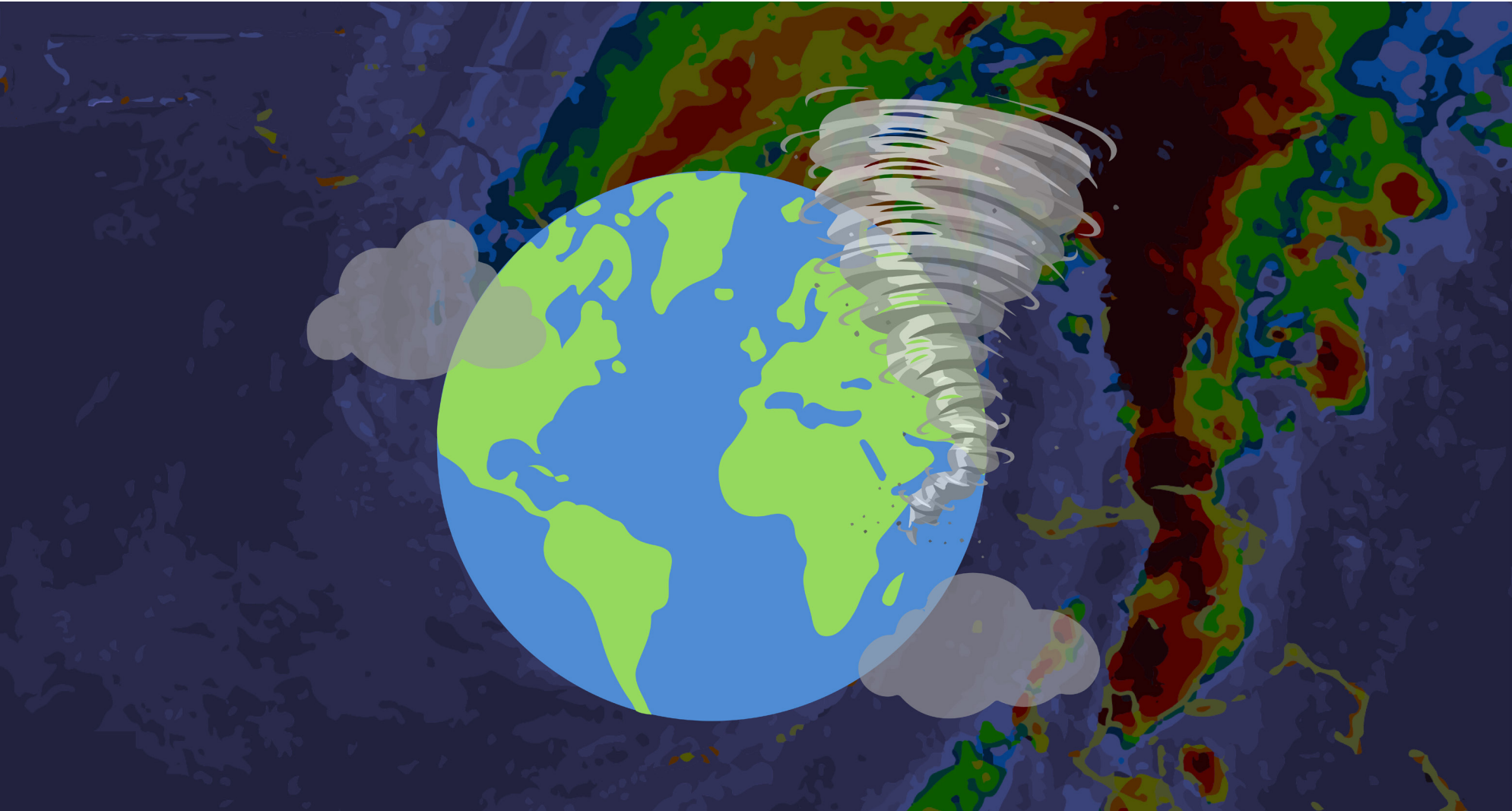
Also on this idea of threat is that a lot of the rhetoric around climate change can lead to despair. And you hear the term climate grief and young people especially are kind of in despair, like what can we do, the world that we're going to grow up in is going to be so changed and ruined. And so that using too much of that sort of extreme threat language demobilizes people, so they are less likely to get involved and active on the issue. When what you really want is for them to be active on the issue. So you have to make sure you're also talking about in positive ways, like here are the progress we're making, here are the things you can do that really make a big difference. So that you can encourage positivity around it rather than feelings of helplessness.

**Do you have any thoughts on ways that Elon could do a better job in sustainability practices?**

Well, I think our sustainability office does a really good job. I'd be interested in an energy report of where the biggest emissions from the university are. I would guess a lot of it is like all the cars on campus and probably even faculty travel to conferences and fundraising trips and things like that, because airline emissions are so high. Not popular necessarily with students but making it a little bit harder to have cars on campus and you're trying to encourage more people to not have cars and trying to encourage more people to not have cars.

I have an electric vehicle and I often have trouble getting a charging spot. And so investing in some more of those would make it easier for people to make the decision to switch to electric vehicles to commute. We could put solar on all these buildings that don't have shade all day long, so that would be something that I'd like to see.

Another big thing, thinking about travel, would be study abroad. And so figuring out what can we do to offset that travel. ... If you could, for every ton of emissions from travel abroad, put something in a fund to put solar on buildings or something.





# Future plans for downtown parking, metered parking

PARKING | from cover

## Would you say parking is not a top concern for downtown?

It is. What it is, I mean, it's something because people perceive that we don't have parking. So I think there are several lots that are private, lots.

So of course, as a town, we want to provide as much public parking as possible, which is why we want to extend that parking on Lebanon. We don't have any plans to do any big lots or parking structures, things of that sort. But we do want to extend that all the way down and that will create quite a few more spaces.

## Do you know when that will happen?

The next phase we're looking at doing we actually are trying to determine because we have funds available for sidewalk and or more parking spaces so we're trying to determine the priority and it's tough because we want sidewalks too and we just added on the one that goes all the way down Lebanon now that is completed and so we're going to do one on Trollinger and unfortunately, the project was a little more than we expected.

We thought we were going to be able to do both of those at the same time, which is why we're doing a headcount of parking spaces at different times to determine which is the priority. It is in the plan in the next couple of years to complete it all the way down, so that'll add probably 30 spots by the time we're done.

## Does the town have any ideas on how the issue of the perception of parking would be fixed?

Because the spots that are on Williamson in front of the businesses are kind of always taken, we do need to address it. We haven't determined if that is metered parking, limited time. But there are students that end up parking in prime locations and they park there all day long.

So that definitely is an issue when there are lots on campus for students

to park so I think the rotation of cars if we knew they were moving every couple of hours out of those spots, and then they're more available for people that are popping in to have lunch or want to go shop at one of the stores or something. So we know we need to take a look at some options on how to handle people that are parking in the prime spots all day long. That's probably the biggest issue we have right now.

## Is metered parking something the town would possibly do?

There's talks about what if, I think the public is maybe not so excited about that idea. We really haven't decided we're really looking for a recommendation from our firm that's doing our master plan and what they recommend. Do they recommend timed parking or you have a two-hour maximum or metered parking or what their experience works on a town our size and our unique situation with a university literally across the street. We're definitely not sold on any one thing but a meter is something we would consider.

## Do you have any other ideas to try and combat students parking in spots like all the different parking?

We have to label more of the spots that they have because some of them just don't say they're not limited. So nobody's broken any laws there. We definitely, in my opinion, need all of our what I consider prime locations, limited time. Two hours, three hours or whatever it is, and then also making sure that our business owners and their employees have a place to park.

### DOWNTOWN PARKING

## 1 & 2 HR

Town of Elon has a mix of both 1 hour and 2 hour limited spots.

Elon Community Church parking lot is open M-F 5 p.m. until 7 a.m. & Saturdays Unless otherwise posted.



Map of town of Elon parking and private downtown lots.

ERIN MARTIN | DESIGNER

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# THE WAR FOR INSULIN AFFORDABILITY ISN'T OVER YET



ERIN SOCKOLOF | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The three largest insulin manufacturers have all agreed to cap insulin costs at \$35 a month. While these decisions will benefit many diabetics, there are still outrageously high costs of certain types of insulin and medical devices.

## STAFF EDITORIAL

Big Three insulin manufacturers have announced they will cap in insulin costs at \$35/month, despite this massive victory, there's still a long way to go for Type 1 diabetics

**Erin Sockolof**  
Opinions Editor

I was distributing newspapers on the morning of March 1, 2023, when my earbuds suddenly paused my Taylor Swift playlist to bombard me with breaking news alerts: Eli Lilly, one of the biggest insulin producers in the world, had decided to cap their out-of-pocket prices at \$35 a month. I was standing in the middle of Global Commons, holding dozens of papers, when I broke down in tears at the sight of my phone. At that moment, an NBC news alert changed the trajectory of my life and informed me I could now afford to pursue my dreams.

When I was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at only two years old, I had no idea what lay ahead, the sacrifices I'd have to make, or how different my life would be from my friends'. Over the years, as I became more aware of these things, I also discovered how expensive life with diabetes is — or, should I say, was.

For as long as I can remember, I've wanted to become a doctor. However, once I started doing the math, I realized I might be unable to. On top of the ridiculously high cost of attending medical school in the U.S., I'd also have to pay for all my expenses related to diabetes. This reality only became more apparent as I started racking up additional chronic health issues and their coinciding expenses.

Naturally, when I saw the news that Eli Lilly would cap their out-of-pocket prices at \$35 a month, I was at a loss for words.

Up until this point, I planned my life around affording my insulin. I planned my life out of necessity, not desire because I didn't think I'd ever have the option to pursue my dream career.

Shortly after Eli Lilly's announcement, Novo Nordisk and Sanofi followed suit, and both agreed to join Lilly in cutting insulin prices by 70%, capping monthly out-of-pocket costs at \$35. The price capping will mainly benefit people with high deductibles under private insurance plans.

With Eli Lilly, Sanofi and Novo Nordisk controlling around 90% of the insulin market, these communiqués brought waves of relief to diabetics nationwide. However, for many people, these efforts arrived too late.

The current changes won't erase history. People have faced serious health issues, including amputations, kidney failure, Diabetic Ketoacidosis and more, because they couldn't afford insulin. Many people have died as a result of insulin rationing, an all-too-common practice where a diabetic will take less insulin than needed in an effort to extend the use of a vial.

On the surface, it may seem like Lilly is at the forefront of a movement to decrease expenses for people with diabetes. However, if you dig deeper, you will see



“  
INSULIN IS FAR  
FROM THE ONLY  
OUTRAGEOUS MEDICAL  
EXPENSE DIABETICS  
HAVE.

**ERIN SOCKOLOF**  
OPINIONS EDITOR

that might not be the case.

According to a New York Times article, over the past three decades, Lilly has raised the sticker price of Humalog, their most commonly-used insulin, by over 1000%.

Politicians and patients alike have been lobbying for years to lower the price of insulin, and only now have pharmaceutical companies listened. Even so, these changes only come on the heels of President Joe Biden's remarks during his State Of The Union address and last year's Inflation Reduction Act that imposed a reduction of out-of-pocket insulin prices to \$35 a month for people with Medicare.

Another essential thing to note is not all insulin will have its price capped at \$35 a month. The insulin that has been capped is vials of fast-acting insulin, generally given through an insulin pump or combined with long-acting insulins. Unfortunately, long-acting insulins have not had their price reduced, and neither have insulin pumps.

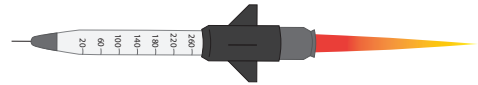
Additionally, Lilly's newer Humalog product prices have not been reduced at all. The company cited their pre-filled Humalog autoinjectors will still have a sticker price of \$530.

While this is the most progress people with diabetes have seen in the fight to

afford life, it is vital to recognize that there is still a long way to go. Insulin is far from the only outrageous medical expense diabetics have.

According to the National Library of Medicine, the average annual cost of being a Type 1 diabetic in the U.S. is over \$17,000 as of 2016, with insulin costs accounting for just over \$6,000.

So though I am forever grateful to Eli Lilly, Sanofi and Novo Nordisk for capping costs, I also want to recognize that we still have a long way to go before our basic survival needs become truly accessible.



## BY THE NUMBERS

600%

Average Insulin prices rose by 600% in past 20 years, according to NPR.

1.45  
MILLION

People have Type 1 diabetes in the U.S., according to Junior Diabetic Research Foundation.

2.1 MILLION

People are expected to have Type 1 diabetes by the year 2040, according to JDRF.



# LIFESTYLE

## NewWorks to debut set-specific student productions

Each piece will be performed at a different campus location starting April 23

**Sarah T. Moore**  
Elon News Network | @SarahTM27

Elon University’s club for student playwrights, NewWorks, is set to premiere a series of site-specific theatrical pieces written, directed and performed by Elon students April 23 to 25.

These performances will not take place on stage and will instead be scattered throughout campus in spots that directly represent the sets of the five different scenes.

The students in NewWorks have been working to bring these scenes to life since late February. Freshman Brooke Gustafson said that it started with group readings of submitted works and said that the casual environment of working with peers helped make the process fun rather than stressful.

“It takes away the fear behind perfection and that’s what I think is beautiful about NewWorks,” Gustafson said. “It just puts more work out there and it lets students tell stories that they want to tell and not

just the stories that have been produced by Elon.”

Gustafson said that performances produced by independent student groups, rather than the performing arts department, often get to experiment more with different stories, styles and techniques. Set-specific theater, for example, connects the audience with the performance more intimately as everyone is in the space where the story is set rather than watching performers on a stage.

Gustafson is directing two of the five pieces, “Tenured” written by junior Matthew Bobzien and “The Rest of Our Lives” written by senior John Luke Farah.

“Tenured” takes place in a hallway in Center for the Arts and follows the story of two friends who want to report a tenured professor for sexual assault. In contrast, “The Rest of Our Lives” is a comedic piece about a student trying to propose to his girlfriend by Lake Mary Nell and enlisting his friends for help.

Gustafson said that working on these pieces has been an exciting experience, since set-specific productions incorporate the Elon community and campus in ways that the performing arts department usually doesn’t.



Brooke Gustafson at a NewWorks rehearsal for “Tenured,” a student written set-specific scene.

She said that the student-driven productions, such as “Tenured” and “The Rest of Our Lives,” allowed her to start directing and working on pieces as a freshman.

“Coming in as a freshman, I had no idea if I would be allowed to or get access to a lot of the opportunities I have this year,” Gustafson said. “I was just really shocked. ... It’s just such a fabulous feeling to be involved so early on.”

The performances will be free to attend and while each piece will be performed at a specific location on campus, Gustafson

said attendees can meet at Medallion Plaza at 8 p.m. April 23, 24 or 25 and will be redirected to the locations of the five scenes throughout the night.

**IF YOU GO**  
**NewWorks Performances**  
**Where:** Medallion Plaza  
**When:** April 23, 24 and 25 at 8 p.m.

## Students call for chess club after popularity increases

Elon community, students question why there is no chess club, despite interest

**Anjolina Fantaroni**  
Elon News Network

Sophomore Nic Boinet’s love for chess started with the lessons from his late grandfather when he was seven years old. Boinet said even though he never beat his grandfather in chess, his love for the strategy game developed quickly.

Chess is played with two players, each moving their appropriate pieces during their turn. The objective of the game is to put the opponent’s king in “checkmate” — a move where the king can no longer escape without losing the match. Currently, many players are opting to play online rather than in person on a computer or on a mobile device.

Chess.com is a popular online gaming service devoted to making chess enjoyable, a learning experience for beginners, and tournament styled for more experienced individuals. On the website, players can make an account to save their progress,

play with friends, see analytics from each game and learn over 1,500 different lessons from masters.

Boinet said that he is now in the 96th percentile on chess.com, and the website has helped tremendously. For Boinet, chess feels like a productive hobby, as he said other hobbies have little benefits.

“When I started really getting into the sport competitively in 2020, ‘The Queen’s Gambit’ was a huge factor for me, and so were Youtube, Instagram reels and TikTok videos which have risen in popularity in the last few years,” Boinet said.

Boinet says because of the popularity of “The Queen’s Gambit,” social media trends and ways to play chess on-the-go, the game is not being viewed as a nerdy activity anymore. Now, people are respecting the time commitment of the game, as well as supporting the chess community.

“I’m actually planning on starting a chess club next year — stay tuned for that. I think the reason why we don’t have one already is because the campus population isn’t involved in those activities,” Boinet said. He thinks another reason that Elon doesn’t have



Interest in chess has increased in the last few years, with in-person tournaments and on chess.com.

a chess club is because it’s not linked to Greek life.

Elon University does not have a chess club, although there are many players within the community. Junior Taylor Dunfee is hoping that a chess club is in the future for Elon’s long list of organizations.

“I think because of the small campus size, and not having enough widespread interest, there was never a huge club,” Dunfee said. “But with the recent surge in popularity, I think it’s more and more likely that we can get enough people together to really bloom here.”

Elon University has over 250 student organizations, including a board game club, but it does not focus on chess as a sport itself. Dunfee started playing chess in elementary school when he was a member of his school’s chess club. He has been playing heavily in the past two years, and has even been to a tournament in Las Vegas, where he had the chance to meet masters and well-known players.

For many, chess is a well-valued and pleasant game, but Dunfee said it can be challenging if studying the sport. Theories, such as the “chess opening move” are moves an individual

can memorize beginning from a piece’s starting position. Dunfee said if somebody is committed to the game, they’ll learn to play well and have fun, expanding the community.

“Just this January, there was another surge of popularity, which has to do with chess.com and online chess tournaments. Because it’s so accessible, more and more people have been playing. You no longer need to track down an opponent, or go to the tournaments — you just pick up your phone or computer and play whenever and wherever you want,” Dunfee said.

ERIN HRONCICH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# SPORTS



## Elon hosts Special Olympics Alamance County Spring Games

For the first time since pandemic, university hosted event on Belk Track

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One of the athletes that competed in the 2023 Special Olympics Alamance County Spring Games was Patrick Wigfall, a 17-year-old with autism.

Patrick's father, Alvin Wigfall, loves seeing his son cherish these moments and said all the children need something fun like this. Alvin is appreciative for all the hard work that all the Elon students put in for his son and all the other children.

"This is what it's all about these kids: They need help. They need our help," Alvin said. "The children of the world today need us."

Elon University hosted the 2023 Special Olympics Alamance County Spring Games for the first time since the pandemic, bringing together children with disabilities.

Alvin said thanks to the Elon students and other volunteers he is much more relieved as a parent knowing there are people that care for Patrick. He loves that his son is able to be cared for in many different activities that Elon volunteers help with: bowling

on Mondays, swimming on Wednesdays, soccer on Thursdays and basketball on Saturdays.

"It has taken such a weight off my mind knowing that when I go someplace that he sees that people treat him with joy and love and respect. I have not run into one Elon student that I cannot say does not hold high standards to every one of them," Alvin said.

Alvin said he does whatever it takes to make Patrick happy and wants him to be able to do whatever he wants in life. Seeing a smile on Patrick's face makes Alvin feel like he is doing his job as a father and that feeling, according to him, is worth more than anything. Alvin never thought he would see a community of volunteers that would take as good of care of Patrick that he does as a father.

"Not in a million years. I'll tell you, growing up with an autistic child or a special needs child. You know, your biggest fear is, what's going to happen to him? Where's he going to go? Are people going to be nice to him? Because there are mean ones out there and there are people that will pick on him. But there are more nice ones than there are mean ones. Thank God for that. Because there's always going to be somebody there to protect," Alvin said.

Patrick won the 100 meter dash and with a big smile across his face had one thing to say as he walked away with his medal.

"Nailed it," Patrick said.



Dana Branch won gold in the softball toss during the Special Olympics. The Branch family is new to Alamance County and Dana was chosen to do the torch run to signify the start of the games April 6 at Elon University's Belk Track and White Field.



LEFT: Vanessa Chavez runs the 100m dash during the Alamance County Special Olympic Games.

ABOVE: Patrick Wigfall raises his fist in celebration after he won the 100m dash at the Alamance County Special Olympic Spring Games held April 6. Elementary school students, adults and those with disabilities competed in the Spring Games and activities included a softball toss, long jump and a 100m walk/run/roll.