

# THE PENDULUM



JENN KRZEMINSKI  
LUKE JOHNSON | ELON NEWS NETWORK

# FALL SPORTS EDITION

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CHANDLER BRAYBOY  
ENN FILE PHOTO

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# THE PENDULUM

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

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## CORRECTIONS

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

## CHEAT SHEET

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

# Buying into Biden's bill

Professor Dillan Bono-Lunn examines new legislation, discusses possible changes overtime

**Ryan Kupperman**  
Elon News Netwok | @RyAndKupp



Dillan Bono-Lunn

President Joe Biden signed a sweeping bill on Aug. 16 focused on counteracting climate change, as well as Medicare and health provisions and IRS resources, through the biggest investment in U.S. history. The \$740 billion package consists of \$80 billion to be pumped into the IRS and around \$700 billion to be used for new spending and easing deficits.

Professor of Political Science and Policy Studies Dillan Bono-Lunn discussed the intentions and likely outcomes of the bill, as well as the importance of its passing to the country.

## What is Biden's new bill?

"You can describe this piece of legislation in three categories. You have some climate investments — including clean energy tax credits, environmental justice grants and some drought resistance funding. You've got healthcare investments, including Medicare being able to negotiate prescription drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries, extending Affordable Care Act subsidies ... Finally, taxes. The biggest aspect of the bill, in my opinion and in any case, is this big investment in IRS tax enforcement. So there's other provisions that do make a difference, like new corporate minimum tax of 15% and a new 1% excise tax on stock buybacks. There was no tax on stock buybacks before.

So those are in their own right consequential, but probably the largest piece of the bill regarding taxes that have gotten lots of attention is around this big increase in the IRS tax enforcement budget. So this is \$80 billion over 10 years. It goes to enforcement activities like hiring and training auditors, IT systems modernization and taxpayer services. Even without any changes to the tax code that I just mentioned, investing \$80 billion in the IRS over the next decade is estimated to produce \$203 billion in terms of additional revenues to the government. This was, as far as I can tell, exactly what was proposed last year, so it's interesting that this hasn't changed at all.

The IRS budget has been in decline since 2010, and that's resulted in some pretty sizable tax gaps, the gap between what people ought to be paying and what they are paying. It amounted to around \$440 billion between 2011 and 2013 alone each year, but that estimate has ballooned to where — without this bill between 2020 and 2029 — we were looking at a tax gap of maybe \$7.5 trillion, so this is certainly a really fiscally positive aspect of the bill. Having said that, it's an unprecedented investment in the IRS budget. This is like more than 90% of the IRS budget is being increased. We're more than doubling the number of IRS staff. So it reasonably has gotten a lot of attention because of what really is unprecedented."

## What kind of effects do you see the bill having?

"In terms of the bill's ability to address inflation, it's pretty limited, especially in the short term. Average Americans will not discern an at least a noticeable

difference in costs, or prices. In the long term that might be a little bit different. If we're sort of thinking about macro economic trends, prices in five, 10, 15 years — we might see an impact. Some of the best estimates are really around it being at least inflation neutral, maybe moderately reducing inflation, but by a really small amount. So likely the name was political more than anything else. In terms of climate investments, this is a really big deal. An estimate I believe that came out of Senator Chuck Schumer's office is that these climate investments will reduce carbon emissions by 40% from their 2005 levels, and they'll reduce those emissions by 2030. So that's actually a relatively immediate effect to see such a large reduction in carbon emissions.

We'll certainly see an increase in taxes collected. I think the devil is in the details. There's some interesting Op Eds around whether or not the IRS, as it is sort of structurally set up, can really enforce the tax code as complicated as it is — even with additional funding. The hope is obviously that not only do we collect more taxes, especially from our sort of high value, high income earners, but that we also improve services to average taxpayers who are just trying to get help, when they get audited or when there's some discrepancy in their taxes owed. We've certainly seen as the IRS budget has declined in the last 15 years or so that increased audit activity has fallen on to less complicated low income people as opposed to more complicated high income people. Right and so, I think the hope is that we're a little more equitable in terms of our IRS enforcement activities, that this goes to people who have more than they need and who aren't paying their fair share.

That's a really political point of view to take. But I think that's probably why it has been able to pass, when in previous years there is no cheerleader for a tax collector, right? The ACA subsidies make a huge difference, right? And we're sort of kicking the can down the road an additional three years and I wouldn't necessarily be surprised if we extend those subsidies yet again. We have a lot of Medicare beneficiaries and so that really affects them. I think what I'm trying to say by all of the health care stuff, is that this is really consequential for those who are targeted by these provisions. So Medicare beneficiaries, especially, that will make a huge difference in their lives. Will it make a big difference in sort of macro trends or the entire country? Probably not."

## Why should Elon students care?

"The biggest thing is that, as far as I've seen, Elon students are really motivated by issues around environmental sustainability and climate change, and so they certainly should care because this is an example of the government recognizing a problem and passing big

policies to address it or at least putting a lot of money towards addressing it. Does it change how we live our daily lives? No. Should it? That's an interesting question. So students should care from the perspective of the government finally passing some large investments around climate change. I think students should also really care with regards to IRS tax enforcement. It's just really interesting to see how this is going to change people's daily lives ...

It's death and taxes, that's the inevitable thing in everybody's life. So I think that's important ... The tax rate for corporations, the minimum tax rate is 21%, but many dozens of corporations don't pay that. Companies like Exxon, or Amazon or Merck pay virtually 0% of their book income in taxes, and this 1% excise tax on stock buybacks is also really interesting, especially in the past few years, when we've seen companies buying back a lot of their stock. So I think from an economic fairness aspect, students should also care about this. That there is a tendency to be despondent that the government isn't doing anything with regards to the bigger issues of climate change, or people paying their fair share. If we don't recognize at least what steps the House, Senate and the president are doing in that, I think that we're not taking a nuanced understanding of science."

## Do you think we can expect similar bills in the future?

"To be honest, these two pieces of legislation, the infrastructure bill and the Build Back Better / Inflation Reduction Act, were two really big pieces of legislation that Biden started with when he came into the White House. I think we can still expect to see some pieces of legislation coming down the pipe. We're certainly not going to see things nearly as large as the Inflation Reduction Act or the infrastructure bill — at least in the next two years. You're also finishing out Biden's term, and after midterms in November, I wouldn't expect to see such large pieces of legislation. I think we'll continue to see Biden and Senate and House Democrats moving down their wish list of what they should address while they still have some latitude.

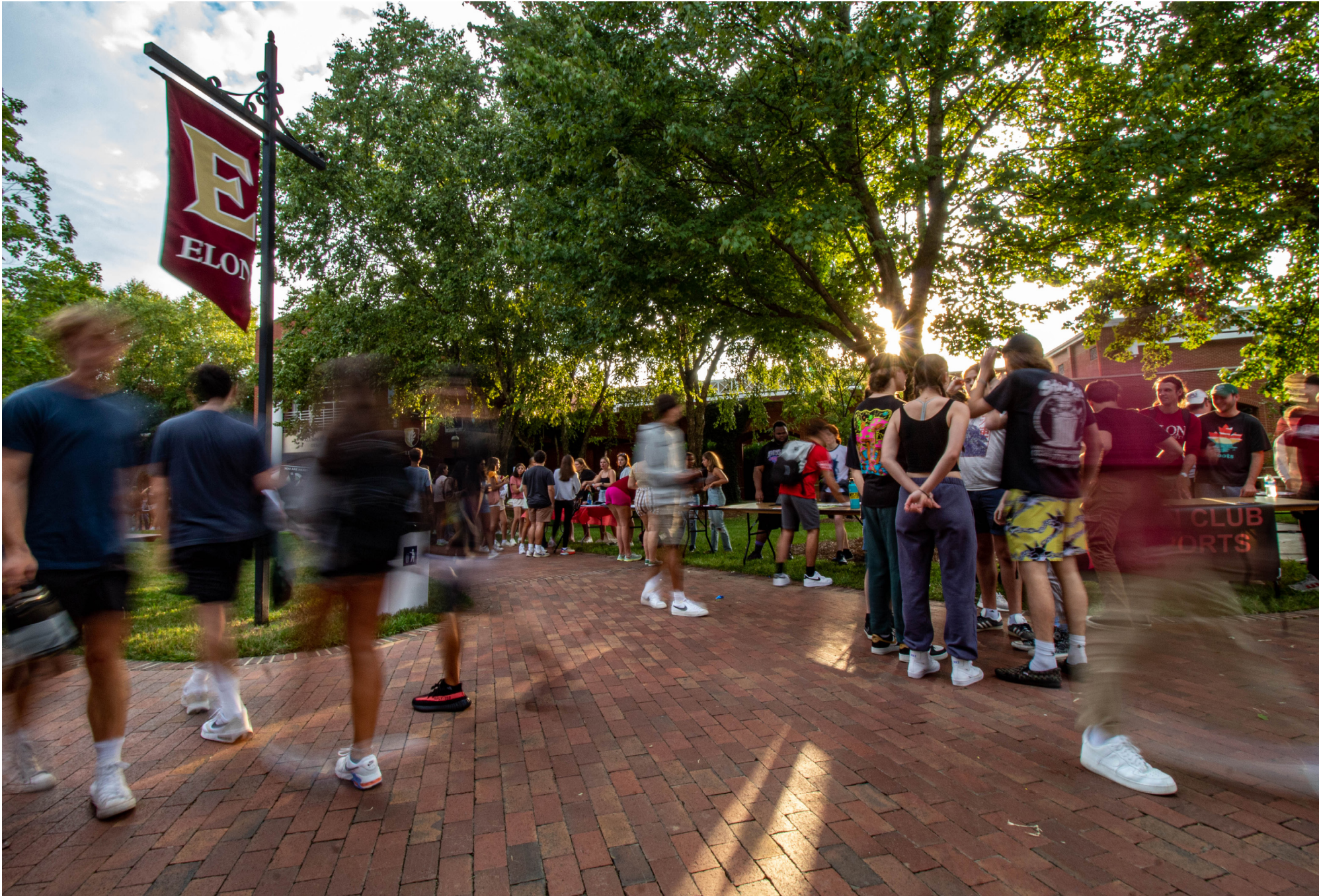
A lot of it will depend on the results of the midterm elections. So right now, there is a slim majority in the Senate and a slim majority in the House. It remains to be seen how the midterms will go. Typically midterm elections in a president's first term will go to the opposing party, so Republican wins or Republican gains are expected. However, with some recent issues, like the overturning of Roe v. Wade, I think it's a little less clear. A lot will be dependent on whether or not Democrats can hold on to those majorities. If they can, we can probably expect to see new proposals or new proposed pieces of legislation on the agenda."



RYAN KUPPERMAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

President Joe Biden visited Greensboro, North Carolina, on April 14 at North Carolina A&T State University to deliver remarks about HBCUs, increasing manufacturing jobs and handling inflation with his Building a Better America Plan.





Elon University students walk around Young Commons during the fall organization fair on Aug. 25.

JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Special education teacher Bob Grant and physical education teacher John Gillis greet Haw River Elementary School students getting off the bus for their first day of class on Aug. 29.

CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Ellis Chandler | Staff Photographer  
Joey Gizzi '18 and Steven Lannum '18 pose with students following the recording of a segment for their viral platform AreYouKiddingTV on Aug. 26. The platform has over 4 million followers on TikTok, where the segments are often posted.



The Elon University men's soccer team celebrates a goal by graduate student defender Michael Clow in the team's season opener against the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee at Koskinen Stadium in Durham on Aug. 26. Elon won 2-0.

JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# Elon University reports uptick in COVID-19 cases

The university reported 189 cases between Aug. 23 and Aug. 29

**Sophie Rosenthal**  
Managing Editor of The Pendulum | @sophrosenthal

Sophomore Izzy Jacobs wasn’t concerned about community COVID-19 spread when she arrived on campus last week. She moved into her residence hall, began classes and saw friends she hadn’t seen this summer.

Then, over the weekend, Jacobs started to hear about people testing positive around campus. On Aug. 29, she was identified as a close contact and decided to get a test. While at Student Health Services, she got the results: she had contracted COVID-19.

Elon University reported 189 cases in the week ending Aug. 29, up from 23 the week before. An email from Vice President for Student Life Jon Dooley Aug. 29 informed students of the uptick in cases. University physician Dr. Ginette Archinal said the increase doesn’t surprise her.

“There is always an increase in respiratory disease in the first month after students return to campus,” Archinal said. “It’s because people don’t watch their behavior. They share drinks. They have friends they haven’t seen in forever, they hang out with people they haven’t seen in forever. They go to class when they’re sick without wearing a mask.”

Going into the fall semester, the university kept the indoor mask optional policy in place since March and continued to require vaccinations for all students. An email from Dooley sent on July 28 recommended students take at-home tests before returning to campus but stopped short of requiring it. Archinal said this is because the guidance has not changed.

“At this point, based on where COVID is now, there is no rationale to wear masks in the classroom,” Archinal said. “But at any

time, it is optional. People are always if they want to wear one they can and certainly, if somebody is feeling sick, doesn’t matter what you’ve got going on. Wear a mask and have respect for each other.”

Dooley’s Aug. 29 email recommends that students, faculty and staff carry a mask at all times and consider wearing masks indoors and in crowded areas.

The university’s COVID-19 dashboard updates every Tuesday by 4 p.m. with data from the previous week. Had Jacobs known about the increase in cases earlier, she said, she may have been more careful.

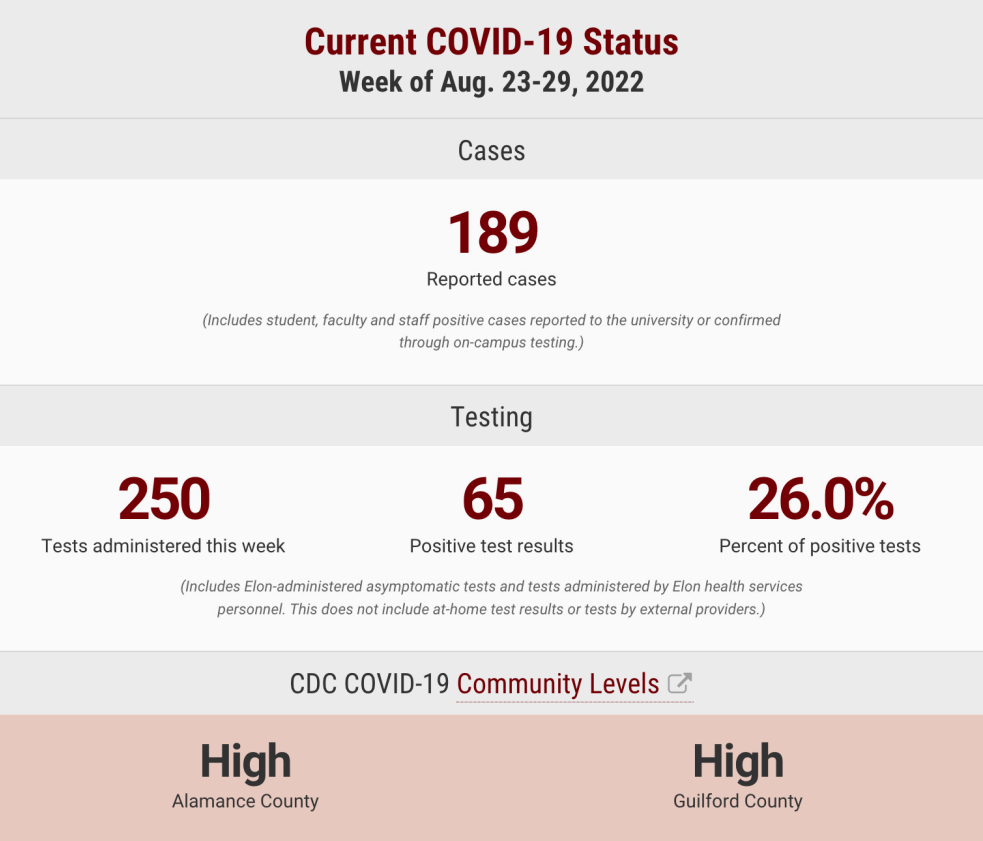
“I would’ve been a little more hesitant to be as close to people as I was. Even just sitting in as close proximity that I was or some of the activities we’ve been doing in classes, where that involves touching,” Jacobs said. “I probably would have been a little more cautious. Definitely had a mask on hand for sure.”

University spokesman Owen Covington wrote in a statement to Elon News Network that the decision to update the dashboard less frequently than it was earlier in the pandemic was “representative of the move away from a crisis phase toward a mitigation and management phase.” The state of North Carolina, Covington wrote, also moved to a weekly count.

Since the dashboard is only updated once a week, it stated on Aug. 29 that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified Alamance County had medium spread. It did not reflect the CDC’s Aug. 25 update, raising the county to high community spread.

At the high community spread level, the CDC recommends everyone wear a mask indoors in public. Jacobs said she was alarmed to see the CDC update and thinks it would be useful for the university to update the dashboard when the community spread level changes.

Elon offers both symptomatic and asymptomatic testing through Student



The Elon University COVID-19 dashboard, as of Aug. 30. The web page is updated every Tuesday by 4 p.m.

Health Services, but with at-home antigen tests now widely available, the university isn’t automatically aware of all cases. Archinal said this could contribute to under-counting cases, but said that would not be unique.

“The entire nation, the entire world, is under counting positive cases, and has been for as long as at home tests have been available,” Archinal said.

Sophomore Ciara Bradley tested positive with an at-home test on Aug. 28 and reported her case to quarantine support. Bradley said she thinks the issue isn’t that students won’t report a positive test, but that they won’t test at all. As the severity of symptoms lessened

with variants, she said, she thinks many people aren’t taking the virus seriously anymore.

“A lot of people are in the mindset where it’s like, ‘It’s your choice to test and if you don’t test then you’re not positive,’” Bradley said. “I think that’s just honestly causing the problem of it spreading more.”

Archinal said it’s important to remind people that COVID is still around.

“Because people are vaccinated, the risk of severe disease is so, so low in any of our students. That makes a huge difference, but it doesn’t mean we ignore COVID,” Archinal said.

# New proposed changes to Title IX adds protection

President Joe Biden proposed increased protections for Title IX the day before Roe v. Wade was repealed

**Avery Sloan**  
Politics Director | @AveryLSloan

Molly Zlock, Elon University director of HR compliance, equal opportunity and Title IX, said that the proposed changes to Title IX will likely provide increased protections — specifically for people in LGBTQIA+ communities and people who are pregnant.

Title IX serves to protect against gender discrimination in any program that receives federal funding, including schools. It was established in 1972, and a person’s right to have an abortion was established in 1973 in the ruling of the Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade. Zlock said she felt the proposed changes to Title IX came over the summer to offset Roe v. Wade being overturned in June.

“This proposed rule was released the day before the Roe v. Wade decision,” Zlock said. “With those increased protections for pregnant or parenting students, it’s obvious that they were anticipating the ruling. ... Wanting to put those protections in place was something that’s obviously very important to this administration.”

Zlock said Title IX was changed in a large way under former President Donald Trump in 2020 in which regulations became legal binding — as opposed to Title IX regulations acting more like guides pre-Trump Administration.

“So the Trump administration

took a different route and said, ‘Well, we’re going to codify some of this stuff that we want changed in Title IX,’” Zlock said. “And so they put forward these 2020 regulations, which, amongst other things, require live hearings in certain cases. The 2020 regulations changed the behavior that falls under Title IX, narrowing the definition.”

Joe LeMire, chief of campus safety and police, said knowing what Title IX entails is crucial as campus security are generally the first people to respond to an event such as sexual assault. LeMire said while campus safety is separate from the Title IX office, they work together to make sure students know what resources are available to them.

“You have to offer resources, you have to offer accommodation,” LeMire said. “If somebody was sexually assaulted, we have to make sure that maybe if they lived in the same residence hall, they’re separated. And some of this stuff is possible because sexual assault may come in in the middle of the night, where some of the administrative resources on campus obviously aren’t working, so our part is making sure that we understand that process.”

Zlock said while the proposed changes have not been released yet, these changes are to expand some of the protections that were taken away in 2020. After Title IX protections were narrowed following 2020, Zlock said it was a process to change how Title IX would function at Elon. Now, Elon has both a Title IX policy and sexual misconduct policy, which helps to cover the aspects of Title



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | NYAH PHENGSIITHY | DESIGNER

Molly Zlock, director of HR compliance, equal opportunity and Title IX, predicts Title IX changes at Elon will take effect next school year.

IX that were removed.

“Revamping all of our policies in response to the 2020 regulations was not an easy feat,” Zlock said. “It took a lot of resources, university resources, having that all changing and then future administration to possibly change it back again, we want to create something that’s going to be stable through any kind of political change.”

LeMire said campus safety has been understaffed until this week, and he is now working to finalize the sensitive crimes team. He said this team will consist of six people and campus safety will be working to see what training their staff is

missing and figuring out the best way to train the new team.

“Some of the areas that they’ll receive special training will be interview interrogation, trauma informed interviewing skills, evidence processing cases involving strangulation, suffocation, LGBTQ allyship training, and other sexual assault, response type stuff that those will be our go to people,” LeMire said. “When we have such a case that we’ll be able to call people in or use the people on shift that have developed the right skills to investigate such cases so we can support people the best that we can.”

Zlock also said apart from minor tweaks, Title IX has not seen major changes at Elon, and she expects the proposed changes will take effect next school year.

“The Title IX office is here to respond to the impact of sexual misconduct within our community,” Zlock said. “So anybody who’s been impacted, we have supportive measures and resources that we would love to offer them to help them process that impact. ... I would suggest anybody who’s been impacted by sexual misconduct, to contact Safeline and to talk over their options with Safeline as well.”



# Third-party representation grows in N.C.

Green Party addition to ballot makes waves for third-party representation

Abigail Hobbs  
Elon News Network | @AbigailHobbs

The Green Party has been added to the North Carolina ballot for midterms Nov. 8 after a long fought battle against the Democrats that included lawsuits and alleged fraud. Previously, in order to vote for a Green Party candidate in North Carolina, the only option was to write them in. But after the North Carolina State Board of Elections certified the Green Party Aug. 1, residents can now register as unaffiliated or a member of the Democratic, Republican, Libertarian or Green parties. Matthew Hoh, North Carolina's Green Party's candidate for U.S. Senate, said he believes the certification is a step in the right direction. "Keeping with the status quo is only going to deliver the same, and the lesser-of-two-evils-voting has gotten us to this place where millions and millions are suffering, and things are getting worse," Hoh said. "The only thing to do is to create the change that we need because it's not going to come just by hoping that the system by itself gets better." According to the North Carolina Green Party website, their values include democratic and economic reform, social justice and equal opportunities for all, as well as demilitarizing society and protecting the environment. Jason Husser, professor of political science at Elon University, said that the U.S. has a political system made for only two political parties, and nothing can change while that system is in place. "A key thing to remember is that in the United States, we have single-

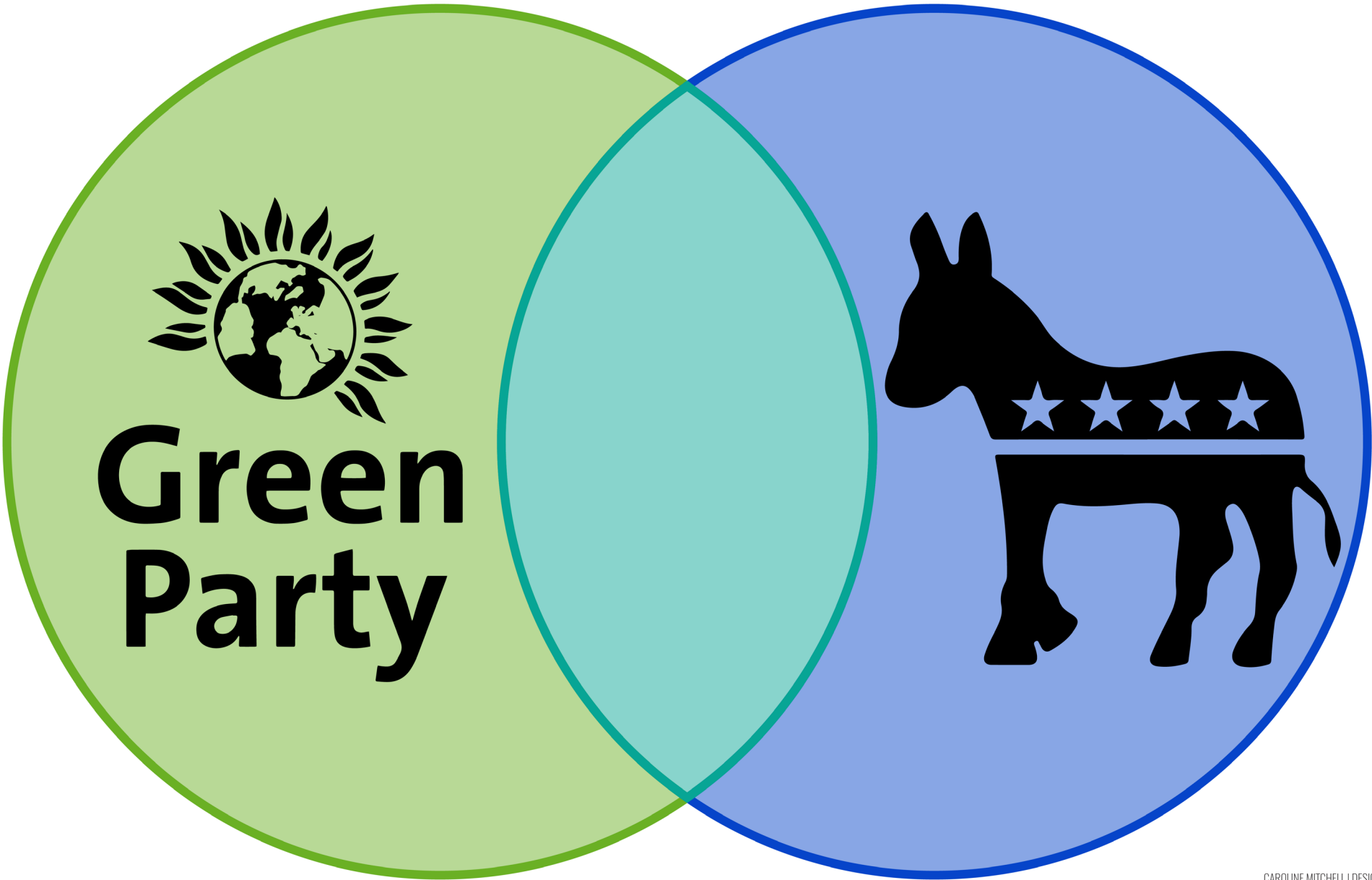
member districts with a winner-take-all system, and as a result of that we have a two-party system," Husser said. "In order for third parties to be effective in a really sustainable level over decades, we have to move to a multi-member system with proportional election rules." Shannon Bray, North Carolina's Libertarian candidate for the U.S. Senate, is happy to see more representation on the ballot. "Both parties are losing support in favor of third parties because it is clear the two in power are not representing the people. ... I appreciate that Mathew is standing up for the voices he represents and he and his party have every right to be there," Bray wrote in a statement to the Elon News Network. "Not having the Green Party on the ballot would have been a misjustice." According to its website, the Libertarian Party has been on-and-off the ballot since 1996 but has maintained its status as a party annually since 2017. Even though their political beliefs do not completely align, Bray and Hoh both said they have a common enemy. "When you hate the choices given to you by the Republican and Democratic parties, you show them your discontent by voting your principals. The Republicans and Democrats are forced to pick up issues we care about when their voting numbers lessen," Bray wrote. "Different polling numbers get us invited to the bigger tables because the rules are written against us." Hoh said that because Democrats and Republicans answer to their major donors, they refuse to have strong opinions. "They don't want the issues that we propose, the things that we want to talk about, to be spoken about during the campaign. Because if we're not in the race, then housing and health care and

education and jobs are not spoken about," Hoh said. "Those things that have a real impact on the lives of millions of North Carolinians are not discussed because those discussions are inconvenient for both the Democrats or Republicans because that affects the Democrat and Republican major donors." The Green Party, including Hoh's campaign, does not take donations from corporations or political action committees — only from individuals. Hoh said because it does not answer to donors, the Green Party is able to take more distinct stances on issues than the Democratic Party. "All these things that have a very real consequence on people," Hoh said. "People always say it's like a deadly status quo because those are the things that the Democrats are not going to change and those are the things that are killing people, that are causing families to drown in debt, that are causing people to lose their homes, that are contributing to the worsening situation for the working class and middle class." Husser said that "third parties have a very, very minor impact on U.S. elections," but Hoh said he believes that the Democrats worry that the Green Party will take some of their votes. "Political parties are a long term stable psychological attachment," Husser said. "It's not as simple as they get more money, and that's why they win." Hoh believes that the addition of third parties will help the start of changing the system. "By having these independent campaigns, you put stress on the two-party system, and that forces the change because unless you force it to change, it's not going to change on its own," Hoh said.

**Fighting for Certification:**  
Certification is the only way a

political party can appear on the ballot. This can happen one of three ways, according to the North Carolina State Board of Elections. First, the group can qualify with at least 2% of the entire vote cast in the state in the most recent general election for governor or president. Alternatively, a candidate must be nominated on the general election ballot in 35 states in the most recent presidential election. The last option — the one the Green Party chose — is to file a petition with signatures from at least .25% of all registered North Carolina voters who voted most recently for governor, with at least 200 registered voters signing from 3 congressional districts. According to NPR, in this election .25% of all registered North Carolina voters who met this qualification is 13,865. National Democrats questioned the validity of signatures on a petition to certify the Green Party in North Carolina over the summer. On June 30, the State Board of Elections voted 3-2 against adding the Greens to the ballot, with all three Democrats on the board voting against. After an investigation from the board, 481 signatures were deemed invalid, either being signed after the cutoff or because the signatures did not match. However, the party still had 1,600 valid signatures above the minimum of 13,865. The Green Party protested, claiming the Democrats were trying to protect their Senate candidate, Cheri Beasley, from competition. It filed a lawsuit against the board, claiming the denial violated First Amendment and due process rights. Because the petition still had more than enough signatures, the State Board certified the Green Party on Aug. 1. However, due to the investigation, it missed the July 1 deadline to be included on the

ballot. On Aug. 5, the U.S. District Court decided that the Green Party will appear on the Nov. 8 ballot. According to the Associated Press, during the investigation Democrats canvassed and called those who signed the petition, asking them to reconsider because the Green Party may take votes away from Democrats. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee admitted to contacting signatories. The Green Party has filed a lawsuit, alleging Democratic interference. Hoh denied allegations that the Green Party's signatures were fraudulent. "The fraud that was committed, was committed by the Democratic Party by trying to keep us off the ballot through a number of things, one of them including these false allegations that we had committed fraud in order to get our place on the ballot," Hoh said. "I think most people see right through that, that most people understand that this is the nature of the two-party system, that the two-party system is corrupt, it's undemocratic and it's harmful." The N.C. Democratic Party has also filed a lawsuit against the State Board of Elections, claiming it should not have certified the Green Party while fraud was still being investigated. Husser, on the other hand, said the possibility of the Green Party taking substantial votes from the Democrats is small. "They do have some impacts on the margins," Husser said. "They can push the members of the two-party system to the left or right on certain issues, and they can take votes away from the two-party candidates that may tip an election or, at least, has the theoretical possibility of tipping an election. But most people aren't paying attention to them because they don't matter that much."





# LIFESTYLE

## Celebrating a leap of faith

Tina Mardis, a Gibsonville resident and business owner of A Quiet Life Handmades, will celebrate one year of business Sept. 15

**Kyra O'Connor**  
Executive Director | @ko\_reports

When she found herself sitting in a hospital supporting her loved ones through chemotherapy treatments, Gibsonville resident and small business owner Tina Mardis said she needed something to keep her mind and hands busy. A lifelong crafter, Mardis decided not to turn to books or games, but to her love of crafting, to help her through the dark moments.

“I love to read, but I couldn’t focus on the storyline because I needed to focus on what was going on around,” Mardis said. “So, I started working with many hands, and I like to think that even though it was during an ugly period of time, something beautiful came from it.”

Mardis said the few items needed to make one scarf — just a loom, a crochet hook and yarn — made it the easiest craft to take with her. The nurses at her husband’s treatments began to take notice of Mardis’ crafting, and before long, she began knitting scarves for them.

“I needed something that was going to be familiar, repetitive and something that I could see making good progress, because nothing else was making good progress during that period of time,” Mardis said. “It’s kind of like a piece of pottery going through the fire. It’s really ugly when it goes in. But then you go through that heat, and it makes you stronger and you come out better on the other end.”

For Mardis, crafting is more than a pastime or hobby. It kept her going through a dark time in her life, a part of her story she said she is happy to share with others.

Now, in 2022, Mardis is celebrating a different part of her story: the one-year

anniversary of her shop, A Quiet Life Handmades, being in business.

Mardis said crafting has always been in her life — from sewing, cross-stitching and making Christmas ornaments in 4-H, to knitting when her mother and her husband were in the hospital for chemo treatments. She has taken her work with her through good times and bad, selling items at craft shows, and now in her downtown Gibsonville storefront.

“There have been some slow times, and there have been wonderful, profitable times,” Mardis said. “I’ve been working within crafts, making crafts for years, and it just kind of developed itself.”

A Quiet Life Handmades, located at 114 W. Main St. in Gibsonville, was “a leap of faith,” but one she is looking forward to celebrating on Sept. 15, one year since she first opened her doors to the community.

“People need to know that there are faces behind everything they purchase when they purchase from a small business,” Mardis said.

Mardis is one of several vendors available in her shop. Her specialties are scarves and jewelry — both knitted and one of a kind wire creations — though she is familiar with many types of crafting. There are handmade signs, dog bandannas, plastic bag holders, scrunchies and clothing available for purchase at A Quiet Life Handmades.

“I try to have a space that’s something different,” Mardis said. “The one thing I did not want for my shop is to be cookie cutter and look like everybody else’s.”

Mardis started sewing in grade school. Learning from her mom and practicing in her local 4-H youth group, she began to fall in love with crafting.

After retiring from teaching special education in McLeansville, North Carolina, Mardis took on a job at Michaels, where she took classes on crafting styles she hadn’t previously tried. She took her crafts on the road, setting up and tearing down to go to multiple craft shows in one day.

While she said she loves the energy of craft shows, as she grew older, the work involved with traveling to craft shows began to take



Tina Mardis sits in the front of her shop on Aug. 27, knitting a new scarf on the loom. Scarves are one of the products Mardis personally sells at her shop, along with jewelry.



Tina Mardis creates one-of-a-kind jewelry for her shop, using items she finds to create pieces like the one above, or a wire wrapping technique to produce another type of jewelry available in the store.

its toll. That’s ultimately why, when Mardis saw the for rent sign in the window of her now storefront, she knew she wanted to learn more about opening up a permanent shop.

“It’s fun, it’s therapy, and it grows over time,” Mardis said. “The more you do, the more ideas come to you. And I’m looking forward to another year.”

As she prepares to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the storefront opening and the start of fall — one of the busiest seasons for the shop — Mardis said she thought back to last year and the challenges she faced before opening.

Mardis said COVID-19 posed the biggest challenge to her. When she tested positive Sept. 1, 2021, she had to delay her opening for two weeks. But she said she feels lucky that supply chain issues and inflation have not impacted her as much as they have other small businesses.

“I would have had [problems] if I hadn’t hoarded craft supplies all my life!” Mardis said. “I’ve tried to be wise and be a good steward of my money, but I do shop clearance and thrift stores. Everything in here as far as displays go has either been gifted, thrifted or handmade.”

The one-year celebration on Sept. 15 will include sweet treats and sales for customers throughout the day. To learn more about A Quiet Life Handmades, visit the shop’s Facebook or Instagram page @aquietlifehandmades.



# All That JAS celebrates 20 years of business

The store recently underwent indoor renovations, transitioned to new ownership

**Ellis Chandler**  
Executive Producer of Elon Local News | @ellis\_chandler

It's still business as usual for Michaelle Graybeal, the owner of All That JAS in Downtown Elon, but it won't be for much longer. As she celebrates 20 years of business, she's also getting ready to celebrate her upcoming retirement.

"It went by in a flash to tell you the truth," Graybeal said.

Since opening, the store has moved locations three times. It started in Graybeal's basement before moving to downtown Burlington. It relocated to the Faucette House on E Trollinger Ave. before finding its latest home at the downtown Elon location, where it's been for at least 10 years. The idea for the name came from the original location, which sold cheerleading uniforms. The women who worked there encouraged Graybeal to start making sorority apparel.

"We were like, 'Well, what are we going to name it?' because my cheerleading company was jump and shout— JAS," Graybeal said. "So then we were like, 'Well, okay, it could mean join a sorority, you know, jewelry, accessories, shirts, it could be all that so we ended up with All That JAS.'"

Graybeal said she wanted to retire so she could spend more time with her four grandchildren and her family in High Point. But, she didn't have to look far to find her replacement. The new owner is Kaitlyn Brooks, a family friend and former employee of Graybeal's. The two reconnected last year through family and friends.

"I just wanted to be back in my hometown, Brooks said. "I wanted to be a part of the community, I wanted to be involved on that kind of level and so it's very different from what I was doing before."

Growing up, Brooks lived around the corner from Graybeal. She went to high school with Graybeal's son and worked at All That JAS when she would come home for the holidays in college. A former attorney who practiced criminal law, Brooks recently relocated to Elon from Apex. She wanted to pursue a career that was a better fit for her family, and have more time to do things like pick up her children from school every day.

One of the first tasks Brooks took on was renovating the store. From new paint and shelves to a new register and inventory, Brooks is making the gift and apparel store her own. Graybeal said she was excited that Brooks wanted to change the yellow walls in the store. It's something Graybeal has wanted to do for years now.

"I still feel like we've got really cool things that we can still offer, but I was looking for somebody that could carry on what we've been doing for 20 years and take it to the next level," Graybeal said. "I think Kaitlyn is definitely that person."

Brooks said some of her favorite products in the store right now are colorful bags with customizable patches. Customers can choose letters, symbols or emojis to make it their own. She also likes all of the earrings.

"It's just so much more fun and colorful than what I was doing before," Brooks said. "I think it fits my personality. I'm just excited to be a part of the community."

Being a small-business owner allows Brooks to work in a career that is still fast-paced, but not quite as high-stress as what she was doing before. She said she likes working with customers to give new color and design options to what they're envisioning for their purchase. Making samples for the display cases is how Brooks likes to show customers what all is possible.

All of the employees are staying on staff at All That JAS during and after the transition of ownership. Brooks said she's loved getting to

know them so far. According to Graybeal, most of the staff has been with her for at least 10 years. There's no set date for Graybeal's retirement, and she said she's always thinking of new tips and things to remind Brooks of.

"There is that every moment of the day, it's 20 years worth of stuff in this brain," Graybeal said.

Graybeal said an Elon intern worked with the employees this summer to create a manual detailing inventory, accounting, customer service and other departments so all employees would know how to do one another's jobs.

"I need to continue to do something on a daily basis anyway, so it's great to continue to be here and be able to help," Graybeal said.

Graybeal said one of the aspects about running a small business she'll miss most is the ability to jump on trends as quickly as they evolve. She said 90% of their business used to be stitched letter shirts for sororities and fraternities, but now, no one knows what a stitched letter shirt is.

"It's fun to be able to change on a moment's notice, which you can do when you're a small business," Graybeal said. "You're wearing a million hats and having to learn to do all these different things."

As the new academic year and a new recruitment season begin, Graybeal encourages students and community members alike to come into the store to support Brooks and see the changes. She said regardless of academic year, greek affiliation or age there's something for everyone.

Graybeal said she and her employees keep up with student employees and community members, and that's something she'll continue to do after she's retired.

"We get to see what they've done in their lives and their children," Graybeal said. "I mean, 20 years, these kids have kids that are going to high school, some of them and that's exciting to see where my people have ended up and what kind of jobs they've done and what their lives look like, as well as mine."

# The buzz about Fizz

New anonymous social media app fizzing up on Elon's campus

**Claire Schoenfeld**  
Elon News Network



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | KYRA O'CONNOR | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Fizz is an anonymous, local messaging board moderated by students.

Fizz, a new anonymous social media app that has found its way onto Elon's campus, was coined the "anti YikYak," by its co-founder Teddy Solomon. The app, which launched on Aug. 23 for Elon students, allows users to post text, photos, gifs, memes, and polls, as well as message other users anonymously.

"The premise of the platform is hyper-local news and hyper-local content," Solomon said. "It's one that was essentially built to be private, engaging and safe."

The app was created in 2020 by Teddy Solomon and Ashton Cofer. The two were incoming freshmen at Stanford University but due to COVID were not allowed to come on campus and felt disconnected from the university's community. Their solution to this disconnect was to create a centralized platform for other students to connect with each other. Fizz currently has branches at 13 other universities.

"You can express yourself on Fizz into a community where you know who's in the community," Solomon said. "You just don't know who's who in the community."

The app follows a similar format to YikYak but utilizes paid student moderators to track and take down content that goes against the app's community guidelines. Funding for the app comes from venture capitalists and angel investors which pays for campus moderators and ambassadors. All users are required to sign up using their university email addresses, but the app is not directly affiliated with Elon. The moderators, who are also anonymous, are trained on objectivity and learn what is deemed bullying, doxing, hate speech, spam and illegal content.

Sophie Cline, head of community management at Fizz, helped create the community guidelines for the app, identify moderators for Elon's campus on LinkedIn and train them.

"We want to ensure that those communities are safe and don't become toxic," Cline said. "It's best for us to be coming up with those guidelines because we know what to expect from these communities and from students coming onto the platform."

Senior Rebecca Potters worked as a launch day ambassador for Fizz on the first day of classes, handing out donuts and hats to students who downloaded and shared the app. She said she wasn't expecting to interact much with the app after the launch but now frequently visits the platform.

"I genuinely have been posting and looking at other people's posts, and I just had a post that had almost 500 upvotes," Potters said. "I'm shocked at the amount of numbers that we're seeing."

Potters said one of the positives of the app is that it is meant for only Elon students, so there are no outside individuals trying to incite drama toward students. Potters said that one of the negatives, however, is the app is primarily used for humor rather than community building.

"I hate to admit it, but apps like this solely exist because you go on and you expect funny content from people you can relate to," Potters said. "The anonymity aspect of it allows people to say things they normally would be afraid to say."

For junior Tim Houlahan, the humor strictly from the Elon community is what got him hooked on the platform. Houlahan found out about the app through his roommates when they came home wearing Fizz merch. He said he enjoys that there are only Elon students on the app.

"It feels like just an Elon thing," Houlahan said. "If you want to know what's happening on campus, you can actually find out because it's all from students."

Solomon first discovered Elon while he was in high school following college basketball of "mid-major teams." He remembered the school's strong sense of community but lack of action happening around campus and in the surrounding area.

"I know that Fizz very much does mold the social culture of the school," Solomon said. "I'm really hoping and excited to see it be a really positive influence on the Elon community."



Former owner of All That JAS Michaelle Graybeal (left) and new owner Kaitlyn Brooks (right) put together an online order for a customer in Florida. Graybeal has no set date for her retirement and is staying on staff until Brooks is fully trained and ready to take full ownership of the gift and apparel store.



# FALL SPORTS

## Football preseason sees tight quarterback battle

With a hole to fill at quarterback, the campus community anticipates the Phoenix’s upcoming season

**Mason Willett**  
Sports Director | @MasonWillett20

Elon’s football team is going into the 2022-23 season looking to improve on its 6-5 record

from last season. After the team’s Aug. 20 scrimmages before the beginning of the season on Sept. 3, head football coach Tony Trisciani said that the practice was high intensity and physical.

“Guys flew around, played hard,” Trisciani said. “Typically the first scrimmage, the defense seems to be a little ahead of the offense, and we saw that today.”

Following the departure of former quarterback Davis Cheek, the team will need

to fill the offensive gap this year. Trisciani said the search for a new quarterback is a two-man race between redshirt junior Joey Baughman and redshirt senior Matthew McKay.

“We rotated Joey and Matt through the ones and the twos so they got about equal reps with each group. And we’ll go back and evaluate that film,” Trisciani said. “We’re looking at the full body of work here through camp, and we’ll continue to do that through next week.”

McKay, a Raleigh native, transferred to Elon

this past year. He began his career in 2017 at North Carolina State, where he played for two seasons before transferring to Montana State to play the 2021 fall season. Trisciani said McKay makes smart decisions at quarterback.

“He’s a quick decision maker, he’s calm out there, he makes fast decisions and he has the ability to run the ball,” Trisciani said.

Joey Baughman, from Wadsworth, Ohio, came to the Phoenix in 2018 and has waited his turn for minutes. Trisciani praised his ability to throw and run the ball.

“He’s a dual-threat quarterback,” Trisciani said. “He’s a great runner. He can also throw the ball — he threw for over 3,000 yards in high school. So Joey, he’s not just a wildcat quarterback, even though that’s what we’ve used him for some in the past.”

The team will look to choose between the two and tweak any problems before it faces the first matchup of the season against Southeastern Conference opponent Vanderbilt University on Sep. 3. The Phoenix last played Vanderbilt back in 2011 and lost 14-45.

Sixth-year senior and defensive line Torrence Williams said he will prepare the same way he has throughout his career.

“I just take it day by day. I’m doing what I’m supposed to, taking care of my body and making sure I’m healthy so that when the game comes, I’m ready to play and give it 100%,” Williams said.

This season, the Phoenix has its sights set on major accomplishments such as a trip to the CAA championship and a return to the Football Championship Subdivision playoffs. But Trisciani agreed with Williams’ philosophy and is coaching his team to treat each day like a new challenge.

“We want to compete for a national championship, but we’re going to go out there and try to win one game a week,” Trisciani said. “That’s the plan.”



JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Elon University football team will begin its season on Sept. 3 with a game against Vanderbilt University.

## Elon men’s soccer debuts promising roster

The Phoenix is looking to rebuild team with freshmen and graduate students

**Sammy Johnson**  
Elon News Network | @SammyJohnsonENN

After making the conference finals for the first time last year, the Elon men’s soccer team returned to Rhodes Stadium for an Aug. 19 exhibition game against East Tennessee State University.

Freshman students packed the bleachers for their introduction to university athletics and the men’s soccer program — ranked No. 3 in this year’s Colonial Athletic Association preseason rankings behind defending conference champion Hofstra and University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

Though the Phoenix fell 3-0 in the exhibition match, coach Marc Reeves is looking forward to the season and is confident in the team’s strong incoming class.

“We have exceptional freshmen,” Reeves said. “They’ve all done a good job on the physical side to be as ready as possible.”

In addition to five freshmen joining the team, Elon added four graduate students, each with two years of eligibility, to its roster.

“We’re really excited about it,” Reeves said. “They bring experience, they bring maturity, and they’ll hopefully bring strength and leadership. We expect them to be a big part of our program over the next two

years.”

One incoming graduate student, Ryan Bilichuk from the University of South Carolina, is in competition to be the team’s starting goalkeeper.

With the graduation of former goalkeeper Peter Wentzel, the position is open for anyone.

“Ryan has a lot of games under his belt from his time in South Carolina,” Coach Reeves said. “He has a lot of experience under his belt.”

Junior Cam Pelle had five starts at goalkeeper last season, but he is currently in recovery following a shoulder injury. The two other goalies on the roster are freshmen, Jackson Leavitt and Patrick Shealy, and are working hard to get playing time.

“Jackson and Patrick are training well,” Reeves said. “It’s competitive every training session, but right now Ryan has a few more looks than the other two.”

While leading scorer Jack Edwards graduated last year, the Phoenix still has nine of its top ten goal scorers from last year.

“Our midfield is the most talented it’s been since I’ve been here,” Reeves said. “We expect our center backs to score more this year.”

Senior defenders Kasper Lehm and Jannick Videbaek were both listed on the second team all-CAA preseason team.

“They’re both exceptional leaders,” Reeves said. “We expect them to not just be preseason all-CAA, we expect them to be on

the list at the end of the year.”

Last year was the first year for both assistant coach Brian White and associate head coach Ali Simmons. Making a conference championship last year, the coaches look to build on what they’ve accomplished.

“They’re incredible people, I’m fortunate to be surrounded by so many great staff members,”

Reeves said. “Brian has a great nose for players in the recruiting process and works hard to ensure team logistics are taken care of. Ali’s incredible at his job, great recruiter, great coach. It’s all about surrounding yourself with as many people as possible that want your program to be great.”

Despite having high hopes for this season, Reeves doesn’t want

to put unnecessary pressure on his players.

“Every game is so tight,” Reeves said. “There’s no overtimes this year, so points will be even more premium. There are two added teams, Stony Brook and Monmouth, they can be a wildcard. Six teams make it, so we’re just focused on doing what we can to make the tournament.”



JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Redshirt junior Marco Vesterholm passes the ball in Elon’s season opener against the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee on Aug. 26. Elon won 3-0.



# Summer ball in Charlotte

Three Elon players competed in Charlotte Independence's inaugural season

Jacob Kisamore  
Elon News Network | @jacob\_kisamore

Despite growing up together, sisters Carson and Kennedy Jones rarely had the chance to play on the same team until last year, when Kennedy joined the Elon University women's soccer team for what was her freshman season and Carson's senior season. It was the first time in the history of Elon's program that sisters have played on the same team.

While the two thought Elon's 2021 season would be their last chance to play together competitively, another opportunity emerged this summer, as the sisters both played for Charlotte Independence — a summer development team.

"That's probably mostly why I did it, to keep playing with her for the summer," Carson said.

This summer was the inaugural season for the Independence women's team, a member of the new United Women's Soccer League, which was founded last June and began play this summer. League rosters consist of college players who want to continue playing over the summer and developing skills prior to returning to their schools.

The team is associated with the Independence men's team, a professional franchise in the United Soccer League. The women's team plays its home games at American Legion Memorial Stadium in Charlotte, the same venue where the men's team plays.

For Carson, who scored 25

goals in her Elon career and a team-high of six goals in her final season in 2021, this summer was likely the end of her soccer career, as she is currently studying to become a certified public accountant. While she is not ruling out playing for another summer league team next year, she said she enjoyed sharing a final summer playing the game with her younger sister.

"You never know," Carson said. "I just kind of do it for fun, so that could be something that I keep doing. Things pop up, so we'll see what happens."

Kennedy, a midfielder, is back at Elon for her sophomore season this year. She played center forward for the Independence this summer and said learning that position against strong competition could help her be a more versatile player this fall.

"They tried to make it as professional as possible," Kennedy said. "The level was very high, so it challenged me, and now I can bring that level of competition back to Elon."

Junior Kerri Coffman also played for the Independence this summer. Coffman grew up playing on youth teams with Kennedy Jones, and she said having her on the team this summer helped make her transition to the Independence easier.

"I'm very comfortable playing with Kennedy, and I love playing with her," Coffman said. "When you have that comfort with somebody, it makes it really easy to move into a new team because you're not by yourself, and you have at least somebody that you know how they play and you know you work well with them."

Coffman, a native of Mooresville, North Carolina, also



Sophomore midfielder Kennedy Jones chases the ball in Elon's season opener against American University Aug. 18. Elon won 3-0.

played for the Independence's youth club as a kid and played with several of her former youth teammates this summer. She said hopes to maintain the strong relationship she built with her teammates.

"It's crazy how close you become with some of these girls,"

Coffman said. "I really like these girls. I made some really good friends. I want to continue those friendships, and I'm really happy about that."

While Coffman knew several of the players on the team from her time with the Independence's youth club, that was not the

case for Kennedy Jones. Schools represented on the team included Syracuse University, Virginia Tech, the University of Arkansas, the University of Miami (OH) and several others.

The teams in the USWL did not come together until May, which Jones said was a challenge early on in the season.

"It is kind of hard to adjust to everyone, but you just adjust in the first few practices," Kennedy said. "Everyone's on the same playing field, and by the end of the season, it's like the season's almost over by the time you're getting to know everyone's mannerisms or tendencies on the field. But that's also part of the fun of it."

Coffman played primarily center back in her first two seasons at Elon but spent time playing as a midfielder this summer. She said she became more comfortable with the position as the summer progressed and is excited to continue developing in the position this fall at Elon.

"It was really fun to be able to grow in a position that I wasn't super comfortable in coming into the summer league," Coffman said. "I am definitely going to need some work when I go back to school, but it was really helpful for me to play that position."

The Independence finished with a 4-5-3 record and missed the playoffs. However, being a part of the program's inaugural season is something Coffman is grateful for, and she is open to returning in future summers.

"The culture that we built as a team was one of the best that I've seen in any summer league team," Coffman said. "I'm looking forward to continuing that culture in the future, especially with maybe some future Elon teammates or previous teammates from this league."



Junior midfielder Kerri Coffman attempts a pass in Elon's season opener against American University on Aug. 18. Elon won 3-0.

JACOB KISAMORE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



# Elon women’s cross country seniors chase a 4-peat this fall

CAA individual champion Maria Ahm and coach Kevin Jermyn lead the team into another year of competition

**Arianna Tristani**  
Elon News Network

Entering the 2022 cross country season, the Elon women’s team has one goal in mind: defend its Colonial Athletic Association title for the fourth time.

After building up their program for the past three years, the upperclassmen hope the environment they’ve created is enough to achieve success on an individual and team level.

2021 CAA individual champion and athlete of the year Maria Ahm said repeated success comes with an elevated amount of pressure.

“To have to defend something instead of chase it is something that we are working on,” Ahm said. We can only control ourselves and not our competitors, and that is always in the back of my mind.”

The senior leadership within the group has proven to be a stepping stone towards team accolades, as the women’s team has won three consecutive CAA titles, beginning in 2019.

Head coach Kevin Jermyn said he has had unwavering trust in his senior athletes since the start of their careers. Rather than reviewing a game plan moments before a race, Jermyn takes a step back.

“I have a theory that if there’s something I could say before a race that would change the outcome, then we didn’t do a good job prepping,” Jermyn said. “I let their subconscious take over. Our results represent the process we



PHOTO COURTESY OF TROY SAYLES

Seniors Maria Ahm and Maggie Springer placed first and third at last fall’s CAA championship match.

took to get there, and we train diligently.”

Ahm reiterated this mindset, praising the growth of her teammates over the past seasons and the group’s progression as a whole.

“It is truly fascinating to see how far each and every one of us has come,” Ahm said. “As a team, our work ethic is unmatched and is still improving every year. That

shows on competition days.”

However, both Jermyn and Ahm said the journey to three consecutive CAA titles was not without adversity. Many athletes have had to overcome injury in the past seasons in order to compete.

“Running takes a toll on the body, and it’s common for that to happen. Coming back from that is where we need to support each other the most,” Ahm said. “We do

all of the right things to get back on track again. As hard as it is, it is our biggest motivator.”

To put athletes in the best shape to succeed, Jermyn said the team is working on nutrition, sleep and stress management. With a lot of newcomers on the roster this season, he said the team’s leadership is excited to share their culture with new teammates.

“They are in the best shape of

their lives,” Jermyn said. “They will run as fast as they can and the outcome will show up.”

Ahm’s goals are simple and align with the team’s overall success. She said her teammates must trust each other and can’t be afraid to fail.

“We’re going to defend what we worked for with everything we have,” Ahm said. We’re ready for that challenge.”

# Volleyball prepares for season against new opponents

Seniors lead the No. 2 ranked CAA volleyball team into the 2022 season

**Joanna Dwyer**  
Elon News Network

Elon women’s volleyball returns to Schar Center following a historic season that ended in a trip to the 2021 Colonial Athletic Association championship. The Phoenix lost to Towson University but will return this year facing new opponents in the CAA, including Hampton University, North Carolina A&T University and Stony Brook University.

The team ranked No. 2 in the CAA preseason rankings. Senior captain Haylie Clark and CAA Preseason Player of the Year Leah Daniel are leading the charge this year, stepping up to help new players adjust from high school to college athletics.

“Everybody on our team is really close, and anyone can go up to anyone and ask for advice or just have a normal conversation,” Clarke said.

Daniel shared excitement after last season’s high finish and this year’s high preseason ranking.

“I feel like we’re just all realizing that we really do have potential, like we really could win today, we really could be all that and even more,” Daniel said.

While both Clark and Daniel are grateful for recognition within

“YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE THAT AND ALLOW IT TO PUSH OURSELVES EVEN MORE AND SHOW WHY WE, OR OTHERS WITH THESE AWARDS, WERE CHOSEN.”

**LEAH DANIEL**  
SENIOR

the conference, as both were named to the 2022 Preseason All-CAA Team, they know this makes them players to watch out for. The fact that coaches are training their teams to challenge Elon’s strengths adds to Daniel’s drive.

“You just have to take that and allow it to push ourselves even more and show why we, or others with these awards, were chosen,” Daniel said.

But Daniel also recognized she would not be where she is today without the help of the other women on the team.

“I would not have gotten it without being surrounded by the competition level that I am — surrounded by all the girls on the team, from freshmen, up to the seniors, until Haylie,” Daniel said. “I feel like they push me to be the



CLARE GRANT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Elon University volleyball team returns 12 players from last season’s team, which reached the CAA championship match.

best I can be, just like I’m sure I do to them.”

This season will be Clark’s third as a team captain. She said the years of experience have taught her how to support her teammates in a leadership position.

“It really just means trying to push the girls in the best way that I can, giving them constructive criticism and being someone that they can rely on to uplift them,” Clark said. “Especially in a game setting

where you’re going to have mental challenges as well as skill challenges, where you need somebody who you can rely on to pick you up.”

Both Clark and Daniel urged the Elon community to come cheer on the team in Schar Center throughout this upcoming season — one they hope will culminate in a CAA conference championship. The team plans to do this, according to Daniel, by placing heavy emphasis on the execution of skills refined in

practices.

“We want to play the best we can and take every advantage of every opportunity that we’re given,” Daniel said. “A big thing we’re talking about this year is execution, whether that is going to every single practice and walking out of it saying, ‘I gave my 100% effort, I did everything I could to get better today,’ or pushing each other doing whatever we can to always take that next step to be better.”



# THE LAST DANCE

Elon dance team seniors prepare for final season with the program

**Jacob Kisamore**  
Elon News Network | jacob\_kisamore

The reality of her senior season did not sink in for Elon dance team member Devyn Battaglia until she arrived at the National Dance Alliance preseason camp in Myrtle Beach mid August. As one of five seniors on this year's team, Battaglia realized this trip was the first of many lasts the team's seniors will face this season.

"That was the last time we're going to be there," Battaglia said. "It's sad to think that your undergraduate dance career is coming to an end."

Battaglia and the other four senior members of Elon's dance team — Lucy Allen, Ava De Bruin, Sarina Jackowski and Lindsey Rothenstein — have helped transform the program into one of the best in the country. Last April, Elon earned its first NDA national title by winning the Division I hip-hop competition. The team has also earned gold bids for NDA Nationals each of the last two seasons, something the program had never previously done.

While the team has enjoyed new heights the last two seasons, Rothenstein said the rise did not come out of nowhere. For her, the team's recent results are not surprising, as the team has been building since her freshman season.

"The one thing that hasn't changed is our drive and the passion," Rothenstein said. "Although we have more success now than we've ever had before, those values were always there."

Jackowski and de Bruin both joined the team in 2018, a year before the other three seniors. Jackowski said she did not know what to expect when she joined the team as a freshman.

“

IT'S EASY TO BE LIKE, 'OH, THIS IS MY LAST YEAR, AND IT MAKES YOU SAD.' THE SENIORS HAVE DEFINITELY DEMONSTRATED THAT TO A TEE. THEY FIND WAYS TO BECOME UNCOMFORTABLE SO THEY CAN GROW, AND I THINK THAT EVERYBODY THEREAFTER HAS REALLY SEEN THAT AND VALUED THAT AND ADMIRERD THAT.

**ERICKA LINK**  
JUNIOR

"I didn't quite honestly even really know what a college dance team was," Jackowski said. "I just was definitely not going to stop dancing, so I just did the next thing that everybody does."

Jackowski's first season was the senior season for team captain Elly Dirks, who is now the program's head coach. The season



LUKE JOHNSON | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Elon University dance team returns to campus on April 9 after its NDA Division I hip-hop national championship in Daytona Beach, Florida. Elon will return to NDA Nationals next April to defend its title.

was difficult for both, as the team faced challenges with morale.

"Girls were quitting, it was hard to get people to stay on the team," Jackowski said. "You could tell that it was kind of broken or there was something missing because people weren't staying and the environment wasn't the best."

Dirks became the head coach the next season and selected Allen, Battaglia and Rothenstein to join the team for the 2019-20 season. After learning about the morale struggles Dirks had dealt with in her time as a member of the team, Allen said the newcomers were determined to rebuild the program.

"Hearing where they started lit a fire in us to really push the program further and fight for a success story for the team," Allen said.

COVID-19 cut Elon's 2019-20 season short a month before NDA Nationals and severely impacted the 2020-21 season, as the team was able to perform only sparingly. However, the team continued building positive momentum and developing a strong chemistry despite the difficult circumstances.

For Allen, the team's success is in large part due to how close everyone became to each other, which has helped them push each other on and off the dance floor.

"What we do requires a lot of trust," Allen said. "That's built over time and through having a really strong connection with your teammates."

Dirks believes this year's senior class has helped establish a professional culture for the program and has led by example to inspire the team's younger members to work hard and trust each other.

"One of the quotes I tell the team all the time is, 'There's no comfort in growth, and there's no growth in comfort,'" Dirks said. "The seniors have definitely demonstrated that to a tee. They find ways to become uncomfortable so they can grow, and I think that everybody thereafter has really seen that and valued that and admired that."

Elon will return to NDA Nationals in Daytona Beach next April to defend its national championship title in what will be the final competition for this year's senior class. The team will also perform at home



COURTESY OF ELON DANCE TEAM

The senior class for Elon's dance team has helped transform the team into a national championship winning program.

football and basketball games throughout the season.

Dirks said she is encouraging her seniors to channel the emotions that come with being a senior in a positive way that can benefit the team this season.

"It's easy to be like, 'Oh, this is my last year, and it makes you sad,'" Dirks said. "Yes, that's valid, but let's try to reframe that mindset and get every little bit that you can out of it and grow as much as you can this last year. And with that, you grow the program so that when you leave, you feel fulfilled and it's not as much of a sad thing."

While the team's accomplishments and success are important to the seniors, more so is the culture they have established. For

Jackowski, who experienced the program before its ascension, the team's legacy extends beyond championships.

"The best part of the legacy that this team leaves and what I'm excited for is to continue that family mindset because that's what makes this team different," Jackowski said.

Although the five senior members will partake in their last dance at Elon at season's end, they know the program will always hold a special place in their hearts.

"We all came to this team obviously because we love dance, but mainly we wanted to be part of something bigger than ourselves," Rothenstein said. "I feel very secure that when we graduate, we will still be a part of this family."





Junior Ericka Link sets a ball for the Elon University volleyball team against the University of North Carolina at Wilmington Seahawks at Schar Center on Oct. 17, 2021. Elon won the match in straight sets.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ELON ATHLETICS

# Elon volleyball player strikes name, image, likeness deal

Ericka Link was one of 15 athletes inducted into the 2022 WWE NIL class

Caleigh Lawlor  
Elon News Network | @caleighlawlor

Volleyball player, student and TikToker. These are all hats worn by junior setter Ericka Link at Elon University. But this summer, Link added a new quality, further setting her apart from her teammates — she is a member of this year’s World Wrestling Entertainment NIL class.

Standing for both “name, image, likeness” and “next in line,” WWE NIL is a collaborative partnership with 15 college athletes nationwide that allows them to monetize their image, use WWE resources to build their personal brand and, upon completion, potentially receive a WWE contract offer.

“

KNOW YOUR WORTH.  
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DO  
HAVE A FOLLOWING AND  
A COMPANY COULD VERY  
WELL BENEFIT FROM YOU, IT  
IS GOOD TO ASK FOR THAT  
FINANCIAL COMPENSATION.

ERICKA LINK  
JUNIOR

“It was something I really, really wanted to do,” Link said. “As soon as they reached out to me, I was super involved in taking extra steps to make it known that I’m really interested, and I think I’ve always been interested in it, and always have tried to show my interest in attending events and getting on partnered phone calls and Zoom meetings as much as I could.” In her time partnered with WWE so far, she has participated in conferences, calls and different travel experiences to grow and learn more about finances,

managing herself and athletics. Having already developed a substantial social media following across platforms like TikTok and Instagram, Link said she has been the primary driver behind the partnership, which has proved a valuable learning experience.

“I think just my process with NIL, without an agent and without a financial support advisor, taught me my worth and knowing my time does matter,” Link said. “Me, a 20-year girl, has just as much power as a Fortune 500 company or WWE, one of the No. 1 sports in the entire world.”

However, her success was not instantaneous. Link said that first, she reached out to brands regarding her name, image, likeness deals, asking for a more mutualistic relationship.

“In the early stages of NIL when I didn’t have a following and I basically was just a nobody on a Division 1 team, I found it was most beneficial to me to reach out to smaller brands and basically not ask for any financial compensation,” Link said. “Saying, ‘If you give me free things, I would post it and tag you,’ kind of like a mutual benefit relationship.”

With time, Link said she developed a better understanding of the business aspect of social media influencing, as well as her own personal worth — lessons she encourages other young stars to learn early in the competitive industry.

“Know your worth. Especially when you do have a following and a company could very well benefit from you, it is good to ask for that financial compensation,” Link said. “But once you get that, it is very important to read over contracts because they really try to take advantage of you, knowing you’re just a young female and this is very new to you.”

Link said she’ll agree to future name, image, likeness deals if they are mutually beneficial for both parties and she feels she is compensated appropriately. Link said asking brands to partner helped her not only build confidence, but the opportunities that she has had regarding NIL, and that athletes looking to maximize their NIL deals should do the same.

“It doesn’t hurt to ask. The answer will always be no if you don’t ask. Early on in my NIL days, I would just assume a company wouldn’t reach out to me, or I wouldn’t get a brand deal just because they were too big and I only had a couple thousand followers and I was a nobody to them,” Link said. “But, as soon as I started saying, ‘I’m doing it and I’m going to get out of my comfort zone, and reach out to who I want to reach out to,’ it started helping me build confidence and get opportunities I never thought I could get.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

35.9K

people follow Ericka Link on Instagram, one of the social media platforms where posts content for her NIL partnerships.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERICKA LINK

Junior Ericka Link has NIL deals with WWE and PSD Underwear. She has almost 36,000 followers on Instagram and over 400,000 likes on TikTok.