

## ELON FALLS 49 SPOTS IN U.S. NEWS' 'NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES' RANKING



JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon University falls in the U.S. News and World Report national ratings list after it changed the weight of the criteria for the ratings.

Report shows drop in ratings in multiple categories due to new criteria

**Cece Ehora**  
Elon News Network

Elon University has fallen in multiple categories across multiple college ranking lists, most notably the 49 spot drop in the U.S. News and World Report's "national universities" ranking.

Elon also dropped 12 spots in "best value schools," three spots in best study abroad programs and two spots in "most innovative," all from U.S. News and World Report.

According to an Elon University admissions website, Elon University was ranked No. 84 in national universities in 2019 and has since dropped to No. 133, but there may be a reason for the changes.

This year, U.S. News and World Report changed its criteria for ranking national universities. The new criteria adds more weight to need-based Pell grants, retention, first generation graduates and how much graduates make compared to those who did not attend higher education.

This means weight was taken off overall graduation rates, financial resources per student and small class sizes — something Elon prides itself on. According to an article by the New York Times, this new formula has especially affected the ratings of smaller, private universities.

The U.S. News and World Report has summarized the school rankings to now be "comprised of varying outcome measures related to schools' success at enrolling, retaining and graduating students from different backgrounds with manageable debt and post-

graduate success." They are also now primarily based on data rather than university submissions.

Since 2020, Elon has been placed in the top 10 for the total number of students studying abroad and the total number of doctoral students studying abroad.

Though Elon freshman Becca White said she didn't care about school rankings when she first started applying to colleges, she said the drop in study abroad rankings made her have second thoughts.

"Part of the reason why I chose Elon was because it was No. 1 in study abroad," Becca said. "I really want to study abroad during my four years here, but after hearing that it's not a No. 1 ranked program anymore, I'm not sure if I'm going to trust Elon yet."

Vice President for Enrollment Greg Zaiser wrote in an email to Elon News Network there are no metrics for study abroad ranking.



OUR RANKING IS STILL STRONG AND IT'S PART OF THE FABRIC OF ELON.

**GREG ZAISER**  
VICE PRESIDENT OF ENROLLMENT

"The survey is a result of higher education leader surveys which is why there's typically some fluctuation in this area," Zaiser wrote.

According to Zaiser, Elon University's long-standing No. 1 ranking in study abroad has been a result of Open Doors, an informational resource on international students studying abroad at U.S. institutions published

by the Institute of International Education.

"As I understand it, that's a function of the percentage of students who study abroad from different institutions. Given the reduction in the number of students who study abroad during the COVID-impacted school years, our ranking dropped there as well," Zaiser wrote. "However, with the number of students participating in Elon University's Study Abroad program now, Elon University hopes to reclaim their No. 1 spot."

Nick Gozik, dean of global admissions at Elon, said the university is proud of its top 20 ranking for all eight experiential learning opportunities because it reflects Elon University's dedication to a well-rounded education.

"We are proud of the fact that Elon is No. 4 in the U.S. for study abroad," Gozik said. "This puts us in the same league with other universities that have made a name for themselves in terms of global, including New York University, Georgetown, and Middlebury."

Rankings in other categories have been released as well. Elon was ranked No. 1 in "first-year experiences," "best undergraduate teaching" and "learning communities." The university was ranked No. 3 in "service learning," eight in "co-ops and internships," nine in "senior capstone," 11 in "undergraduate research and creative projects," 12 in "writing in the disciplines" and 13 in the most innovative categories.

Zaiser wrote that Elon University doesn't expect these rankings to affect the upcoming 2023-24 admissions cycle.

"Our ranking is still strong and it's part of the fabric of Elon," Zaiser wrote.

*Abigail Hobbs contributed to the reporting of this story.*

## Haw River continually contaminated by Burlington companies

1,4-dioxane leaked into the Haw River, affecting Pittsboro's drinking water

**Abigail Hobbs**  
Managing Editor of The Pendulum

The town of Pittsboro is performing tests on its water, which it sources from the Haw River, because of a 1,4-dioxane leak in Burlington — the second time in two months.

On Sept. 22, the city of Burlington received a test it had conducted by its wastewater treatment plant from Sept. 14 showing 459 parts per billion of 1,4-dioxane were leaving Burlington's wastewater treatment plant at that time. The Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory for 1,4-dioxane, which it classifies as a "probable carcinogen," is .35 parts per billion in rivers and 35 parts per billion in drinking water — meaning this contamination is 1,300 times the EPA's health advisory levels for rivers.

1,4-dioxane is used as a solvent in chemical manufacturing and can affect liver, eye and renal functions, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

In July, Burlington found 160 parts per billion of 1,4-dioxane in the Haw River. This slug — or bulked substance — of contamination took a week to travel the 30 miles downstream from Burlington to Pittsboro, according to Pittsboro Public Information Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator Colby Sawyer.

This is not a new issue for Burlington or Pittsboro.

In the first few months of moving her family to Pittsboro in 2019, Elon professor of biology Jessica Merricks said she noticed a note in her water bill: the town was aware of the emerging presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS, and 1,4-dioxane in the drinking water.

Alarmed by the letter and its lack of context, Merricks said she made some calls and did some research. What she found was concerning: these chemicals could be dangerous and had been around for some time. Pittsboro resident and microbiologist Katie Bryant had been advocating for change long before Merricks arrived in town.

Merricks and Bryant co-founded Clean Haw River, a Pittsboro organization fighting for clean water, in June 2020. Merricks said the organization has been helping the community by identifying short-term solutions to the issue, including helping the town partner with a local co-op called Chatham Marketplace to provide free reverse osmosis treatment — which purifies water by separating water molecules from sediment and chlorine — for those affected by the contamination.

The contamination of Pittsboro's water comes from the companies in the city of Burlington incorrectly disposing of chemicals, according to Merricks.

In 2019, the city found an alarming level of PFAS — over 33,000 parts per trillion. The most recent recommendation from the EPA is less than one part per trillion.

PFAS are a group of chemicals used to resist heat, oil, stains and water and can be found in food packaging, adhesives and much more, according to the CDC. These chemicals are a concern as they do not break down naturally and can affect human growth and development, as well as thyroid, immune system and liver functions, according to the CDC.

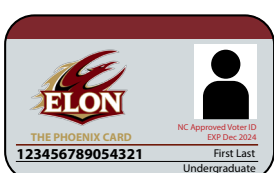
The city of Burlington and the Haw River Assembly — a nonprofit to protect the river — settled a lawsuit in early August, where Burlington agreed to take "significant measures" to limit PFAS pollution.

See CHEMICALS | pg. 5



JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Haw River flows by Red Slide Park on Sept. 24. Days prior, 1,4 dioxide leaked from the East Burlington Water Treatment Plant upstream and later flowed into the Haw River.



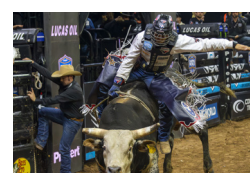
Phoenix Voting Cards to make voting accessible

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Taylor Swift fan gets ready to release EP

PAGE 6 LIFESTYLE



Professional bull riding loses first home match

PAGE 8 SPORTS

THE PENDULUM

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

ABIGAIL HOBBS

Managing Editor of The Pendulum  
[ahobbs6@elon.edu](mailto:ahobbs6@elon.edu)

RYAN KUPPERMAN

Managing Editor of [elonnewsnetwork.com](http://elonnewsnetwork.com)  
[rkupperman@elon.edu](mailto:rkupperman@elon.edu)

MASON WILLETT

News Director of Elon Local News  
[mwillett3@elon.edu](mailto:mwillett3@elon.edu)

SARAH T. MOORE

Chief Copy Editor  
[smoore47@elon.edu](mailto:smoore47@elon.edu)

ERIN MARTIN

Visual Media Editor  
[emartin35@elon.edu](mailto:emartin35@elon.edu)

MADISON POWERS

News Editor  
[mpowers15@elon.edu](mailto:mpowers15@elon.edu)

ERIN SOCKOLOF

Lifestyle Editor  
[esokolof@elon.edu](mailto:esokolof@elon.edu)

ABBY SHAMBLIN

Analytics Manager  
[ashamblin@elon.edu](mailto:ashamblin@elon.edu)

JENNA MANDERIOLI

Social Media Manager  
[jmanderioli@elon.edu](mailto:jmanderioli@elon.edu)

MAX WALLACE

Video Production Manager  
[mwallace17@elon.edu](mailto:mwallace17@elon.edu)

Sophie Rosenthal, Lilly Molina and Charlotte Pfabe contributed to the copy editing of this edition. Audrey Geib and Jared Foutz contributed to the design of this edition.

EDITORIAL POLICY:

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

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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

Contact  
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# ALAMANCE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## Gibsonville Girls Night

Sept. 28 | 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. | Downtown Gibsonville  
The town of Gibsonville is hosting Gibsonville Girls Night in collaboration with over 20 downtown businesses, including shops, bars and restaurants.

## Graham's Thursdays at Seven Concert Series: The Mason Lovette Band

Sept. 28 | 7 p.m. 9 p.m. | Downtown Graham  
The Mason Lovette Band will be performing on West Elm Street as part of the Thursdays at Seven concert series, presented by Graham Recreation & Parks Department. Participants can bring lawn chairs and shop at local businesses and on-site vendors.

## Elon University Speaker Series: Daymond John

Sept. 29 | 3:30 p.m. | Schar Center  
For Fall Convocation, Elon University is hosting star of ABC's "Shark Tank" Daymond John. Tickets are \$15 or free with an Elon ID and can be purchased at [elonuniversitytickets.com](http://elonuniversitytickets.com).

## Phoenix 5th Friday

Sept. 29 | 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. | Historic Depot  
Co-hosted by B-Town Events, Elon University and Burlington Downtown Corp., this event features community groups, food, fun and live music.

## Elon University v. William & Mary football game

Sept. 30 | 2 p.m. | Rhodes Stadium  
Elon University will play against William & Mary for the family weekend football game. Tickets are free for Elon students, start at \$11 for faculty and staff and start at \$30 for the general public. Get tickets at [elonuniversitytickets.com](http://elonuniversitytickets.com).

## Alamance Adventure Race

Sept. 30 | 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. | Bill Cooke Park  
This scavenger hunt spans across the county, starting at Bill Cooke Park in Graham and racing to all corners of Alamance County to find challenges and collect points at parks, businesses, open areas and more. Register at [alamance.recdesk.com](http://alamance.recdesk.com).

## Esperanza Hispanic Heritage Festival

Sept. 30 | 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. | Alamance Arts  
The third annual Esperanza Festival is a family friendly community event celebrating the Hispanic and Latinx community. The festival includes live music, cultural dances, food, crafts and community resources.

## Oktoberfest Celebration

Sept. 30 | 2:30 p.m. | Bright Penny Brewing  
Bright Penny Brewing is hosting an Oktoberfest party with beer, food specials, live music and local vendors, as well as events like a stein hoisting competition, relay race, lederhosen contest and pretzel eating contest.

## 2023 Fall Festival

Sept. 30 | 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. | Snow Camp Outdoor Theater  
The fall festival will include hay rides, pumpkin painting, food, music and games. Entry is free with varied costs for activities.

## Grove Wine & Song Concert Series: Brad Heller & the Fustics

Sept. 30 | 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. | Grove Vineyards & Winery  
Participants can bring lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy Brad Heller & the Fustics and Smokin B's BBQ & Turkey Food Truck. Tickets are \$8 in advance on [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) or \$15 at the door.

## Movies in the Park - Coco

Sept. 30 | 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. | Bill Cooke Park  
The Graham Recreation and Parks Department hosts outdoor showing of "Coco." Participants are encouraged to bring lawn chairs and blankets. A concession stand with drinks, popcorn, candy and glow-in-the-dark necklaces will be available for purchase. Mike's Icy's and the Park & Play Mobile Recreation Program will also be on-site.

## Shovels and Ropes

Oct. 3 | 8 p.m. | Haw River Ballroom  
Shovels and Ropes is an American folk duo from Charleston, South Carolina. Tickets are \$35 in advance at [www.catscradle.com/events](http://www.catscradle.com/events) or \$38 at the door.

## Elon University v. NC Central football game

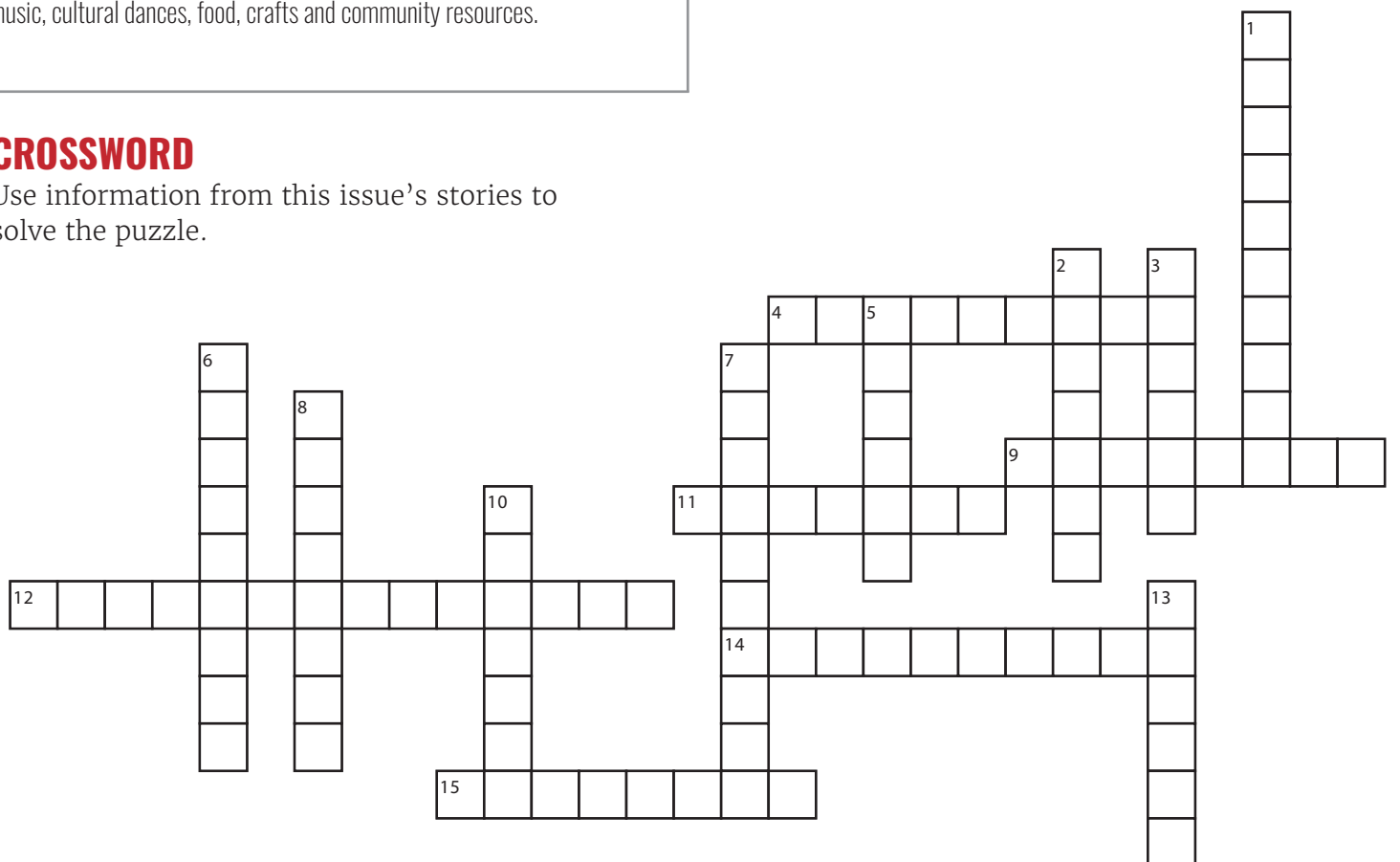
Oct. 7 | 2 p.m. | Rhodes Stadium  
Tickets are free for Elon students, start at \$11 for faculty and staff and start at \$30 for the general public. Get tickets at [elonuniversitytickets.com](http://elonuniversitytickets.com).

## Alamance Pride

Oct. 7 | Noon to 6 p.m. | Historic Depot  
Alamance Pride is an annual, free to attend event that will include live music, DJ, vendor fair, food trucks and a drag show.

## CROSSWORD

Use information from this issue's stories to solve the puzzle.



ACROSS

- 4. Town that is affected from dangerous chemical leakage in Haw River (see page 1)
- 9. Time at which the HB259 bill was passed (see page 4)
- 11. Carolina \_\_\_\_\_ are North Carolina's Bull riding team (see page 8)
- 12. Southern Maryland town of 1,724 people (see page 6)
- 14. One of the roads the town of Elon is looking to address safety issues (see page 4)
- 15. River with contaminated water in Burlington (see page 1)

DOWN

- 1. One of freshman Kaelise Lane's hobbies (see page 6)
- 2. The things people do to cope with stress and maintain good mental health (see page 6)
- 3. New form of ID for students to participate in local elections (see page 4)
- 5. Swift, The artist that Tabby Spell looks up to (see page 7)
- 6. One of the areas the town of Elon is looking to update in future construction projects (see page 4)
- 7. Most \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the categories Elon dropped two spots in (see page 5)
- 8. Elon University dropped in several college \_\_\_\_\_ (see page 5)
- 10. Riders, The team that the North Carolina bull riding team beat Sept. 22 (see page 8)
- 13. Name of the player who had to medically retire from the volleyball team (see page 7)

DOWN: 1. Crocheting, 2. Hobbes, 3. Voting, 5. Taylor, 6. Sidewalks, 7. Innovative, 8. Rankings, 10. Arizona, 13. Presly  
 ACROSS: 4. Pittsboro, 9. Midgett, 11. Cowboys, 12. Mechanicsville, 14. Trolling, 15. Haw River

Corrections

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



MAKAILA LOVE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Burlington's CityGate Dream Center's dance academy, Huepal, dances at Hispanic Heritage Festival on Sept. 23. The culture and art institute opened in 2015 to promote Colombian performing arts and cultural identity through the CityGate Dream Center in Burlington.



JACK PRAHINSKI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior outside hitter Sydney Love follows through on an attack during the Elon University volleyball team's 0-3 loss to the University of North Carolina, Wilmington on Sept. 23 at the Schar Center. The team lost 2-3 to UNCW on Sept. 24. Volleyball's next game is against Northeastern University on Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at the Schar Center.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kansas City Outlaws rider Cassio Dias rides bull named Out Of Control, earning 88.25 points on Sept. 22 during the Professional Bull Riding Cowboy Days at the Greensboro Coliseum. Read more about the tournament on page 8.



MOLLIE LUND | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mother and daughter in front of Burlington's "Lock's Of Love" installment outside of The Mini Ding at the social district. The city of Burlington's social district — which encompasses seven blocks downtown — premiered Sept. 22. Burlington's public information specialist John Vernon said the city decided to implement the district after seeing success in cities like Greensboro, Raleigh and Durham. "The city hopes it will bring more people downtown more often and be an economic driver for the area," Vernon said. "It has already piqued the interest of several new businesses interested in spaces within the district."



RUTH CRUZ | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Camarada Tango Quartet performed with the Passionate Tango dancers Carolina Juarena and Andrés Bravo on Sept. 14 at McCrory Theatre. "We are bringing the evolution of tango music to the world," Beth Ross Buckley, founder and artistic director of the quartet, said. "There's something so strong about our tie in our mission."

# Phoenix Voting Cards to make voting accessible to students

Students can get verified voting cards for North Carolina elections at Phoenix Card Services

**Monika Jurevicius & Alex Sterne**  
Elon News Network

As local elections approach, voter ID alternatives are being introduced to help students vote in off-campus local municipal elections through the new Elon Phoenix Voting Card.

North Carolina requires voters to present an ID, whether drivers' license or university card starting in 2023. The new Elon Phoenix Voting Cards are a substitute for identification and look like the typical Phoenix ID, but are labeled with a valid "North Carolina voter" inscription, similar to a U.S. real ID.

Phoenix Card Services, located on the second floor of McCoy Commons, said it will print the cards in the office with no fee. The cards also can be used as typical Phoenix cards until their expiration in December 2024.

Director of Phoenix Card Services Janet Rauhe said Phoenix Voting Cards allow students to easily vote in state.

"If you're interested in what's going on in our community, our state and the nation, yes absolutely, that's what it's for," Rauhe said. "I think we're gonna see more and more of it."

Elon Student Government Association class of 2027 President Michael Swartz said he hopes students see the significance of student voting as elections progress throughout the school year.

Swartz said he believes the Phoenix Voting Cards are a great initiative that allow students to reach polling places easier.

"I don't think it's just putting more stuff

out there to tell people to vote," Swartz said. "If they know it's happening, they will care more. Caring leads to more caring, more people will encourage others to vote."

Sophomore Elon Votes! ambassador Emily Leach said the cards will increase voter turnout.

"I think it'll help students be more civically engaged," Leach said. "Having a card makes it much more convenient for students."

While SGA does not require any form of valid ID to vote, these on-campus elections are a good way to allow students the opportunity to vote in student elections before participating in official political polls.



I THINK IT'LL HELP STUDENTS BE MORE CIVICALLY ENGAGED. HAVING A CARD MAKES IT MUCH MORE CONVENIENT FOR STUDENTS.

**EMILY LEACH**  
ELON SOPHOMORE

During SGA freshman class elections, students were sent a QR code that allowed them to cast their votes for the class of 2027 elections.

According to SGA voting records, there was an uptick of votes for this year with the class of 2026 having 179 voters last year, as compared to class of 2027's 464 voters — a 159% increase.

This reflects a larger trend in voter turnout



DESIGN BY ERIN MARTIN

Illustration of what the Phoenix Voting Cards look like. The cards serve as a voter ID for North Carolina elections.

in the state. According to the North Carolina Board of Elections, in non-presidential general election years, North Carolina voter turnout has increased from 43.57% in 2010 to 51.14% in 2022.

SGA class of 2027 Sen. Oliver Keicher said freshmen in this year's election allowed student political associations to better understand what students look for in their student body representatives.

"Voter turnout for the freshman class was double what it was last year, however, we are still lower than our 100% — which is an ideal goal — but we wish to see more freshman vote every year," Keicher said.

International freshman Arlan Visser said she voted in the SGA election. As a dual citizen of Canada and Namibia with a US green card, Visser said voting in any election she can is an opportunity that allows her

voice to be heard.

She said sees SGA as a significant part of campus life.

"I think the more people vote, the more voice you get from the students," Visser said. "I guess the more you have a student opinion and impact on an opinion on what works and doesn't work. It's definitely something that shouldn't go away."

Freshman Addy Smith said there is not enough information presented for students to understand where their votes go.

"I think it's all about advertising and understanding how our vote will impact the school as a whole," Smith said. "If I don't know where my vote's going or what it's doing, I'm less likely to cast one."

Local municipal elections in Burlington and Alamance County will be held Oct. 10 and Nov. 7, respectively.

# Town eyes road work amid Haggard Avenue study

The town approved road work projects on Haggard and Trollinger

**Joseph Navin**  
Elon News Network

A number of road work projects could be coming to the roads around Elon University, including the extension of the sidewalk along Trollinger Avenue and pipe work on Haggard Avenue.

Elon News Network sat down with Elon Town Manager Rich Roedner to discuss these town-wide projects.

The town of Elon is working on a project that will extend the sidewalk along Trollinger Avenue between the intersections of North Holt Avenue and Church Street. Roedner said the town knows it has been an issue.

"We recognize that it is a safety issue because we have a lot of people walking down that street, there's no place for them to walk," Roedner said. "We're putting in the sidewalks so that there's a defined area for pedestrians."

The contract bid for the Trollinger Avenue work is expected to be issued by the town of Elon in an October town council meeting, Roedner said. The estimated start date for

construction work will be determined after the formal contract has been negotiated between the town and a contractor.

The town of Elon's initial Haggard Avenue Corridor Study was approved with a unanimous vote by the town council Sept. 12. The corridor plan outlines the entire length of Haggard Avenue that falls within Elon's town limits, stretching from Webb Avenue in Burlington to Burlington Avenue in Gibsonville.

The study is one of the main priorities outlined in the town's Envision Elon 2040 Plan, which includes numerous recommendations for the town's road networks. This included both east and west "gateways" between Burlington and Gibsonville. The study was also meant to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

This corridor study was developed and included input from a number of groups, including the Burlington-Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. While this study has been approved and completed, Roedner says that due to a lack of funding and resources some improvements are long-term goals.

According to Roedner, the town will be considering pedestrian accessibility in

future projects after complaints surrounding pedestrian access on and around Williamson Avenue as construction progresses on the downtown plaza.

"That was probably not our finest hour to be quite frank," Roedner said. "We knew we had to deal with pedestrians, we had to be sensitive and we just didn't follow the details closely enough."

Roedner said that the downtown plaza is still on track to be completed by Elon University's Thanksgiving break, barring weather issues.

The town of Elon has also highlighted improvements along Haggard Avenue in the corridor study between North Williamson Avenue and North Oak Street. These include adding a bike lane along the brick wall along the south side of Elon University's Historic neighborhood, filling in sidewalk gaps, adding pedestrian crossings and adding planted medians.

According to the corridor study, Elon is also aiming to realign the North Oak Street intersection with the potential for a roundabout. Additional intersection improvements can also be expected at North Williamson Avenue, North O'Kelly Avenue, North Antioch Avenue, Manning Avenue and Laurence Street.

The initial study consisted of three phases. The first phase included the span of Haggard between Antioch Avenue and York Road, the second between Antioch Avenue to Burlington Avenue at the University Drive overpass and the third between York Road and the intersection of University Drive and Webb Avenue.

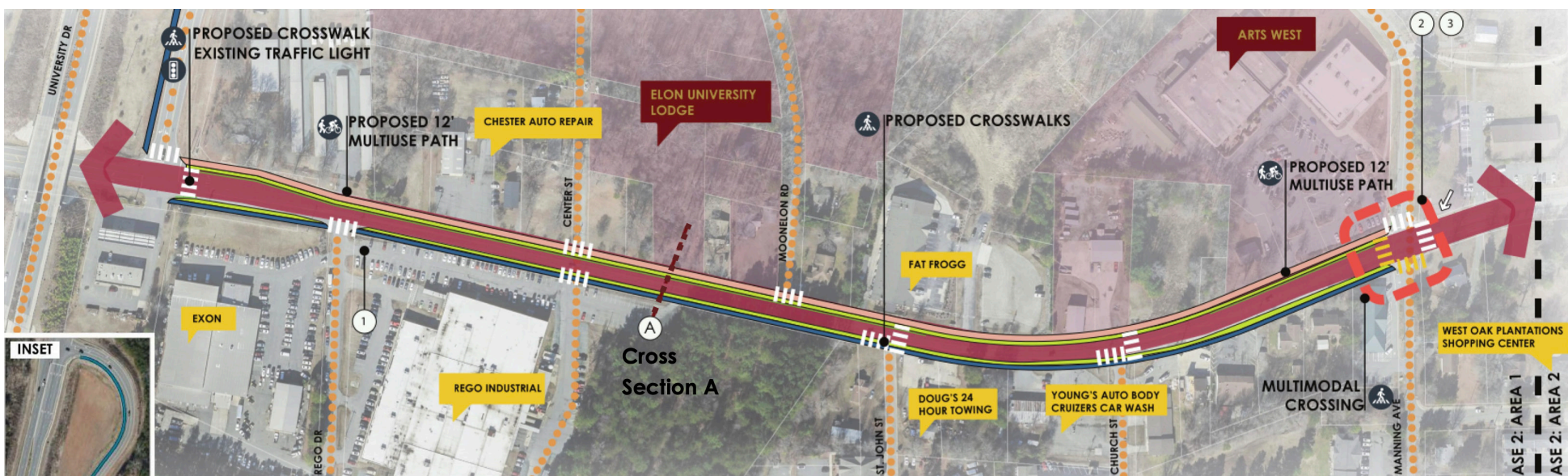
According to Roedner, the town of Elon also signed a contract with Pipeline Utilities, Inc. to replace an aging water line under Haggard Avenue between the intersection of North O'Kelly Avenue and York Road.

According to Roedner, the project is estimated to begin between October and November of this year and is expected to last nine months.

"It's an undersized line for what it needs to be for the future needs of the university," Roedner said.

A specific start date has not been chosen for the project, as the town navigates the permit process and Pipeline Utilities gathers materials.

"It'll probably start with about a two week closure from Williamson to North Atkinson, as they do a lot of work at that intersection of O'Kelly," Roedner said. "Once they're out of an area, it will open up to two lanes like it's always been and the next section will be coned off."



Rendering of proposed plan on West Haggard Avenue between University Drive and Manning Avenue.

COURTESY OF TOWN OF ELON

# Pittsboro fights for clean drinking water after multiple leaks

CHEMICALS | from cover

The settlement included the names of the top contributors to PFAS pollution in Burlington: Elevate Textiles, Shawmut Corporation, Unichem Specialty Chemicals, Alamance County Landfill and the Republic Services Landfill.

While the top contributors are now preventing PFAS discharge, Elevate Textiles — the largest contributor, as stated in the press release about the settlement — will implement a system to capture PFAS contaminated wastewater from its production and will phase out its use of PFAS for certain products by June 15, 2025.

In 2020, the city of Burlington and the Haw River Assembly formalized a Memorandum of Agreement stating Burlington's commitment to collect and test samples of wastewater discharged from the city's two water treatment plants. Specifically, these tests attempt to find PFAS and 1,4-dioxane compounds, which the typical treatment processes do not remove, according to Burlington's PFAS and 1,4-dioxane website.

The treated wastewater is sent downstream into the Haw River, meaning the contaminants do not affect the water of Burlington or Elon, but rather the drinking water of the town of Pittsboro.

According to Pittsboro Public Information Officer and Emergency Management Coordinator Colby Sawyer, one of the issues with the testing system is that it takes a week for the water to be tested — meaning the contaminated water could have already been used by citizens of the town.

"When a city like Burlington or Greensboro receives a routine test pop for one of these substances, we are having to react very quickly because we don't have days of lead time," Sawyer said. "In fact, by the time we're notified of it, it could already be to us, past us, depending on how fast the river's flowing."

Merricks also said the town of Pittsboro

installed a gas filter with granular activated carbon, which has lowered the amount of contaminants that get through the tap water, but it still isn't enough.

"Unfortunately, these sorts of problems often fall on the laps of the communities who are the victims, so I think Pittsboro is doing the best it can," Merricks said.

Sawyer said there are few options for how the town can stop the contamination without the help of the cities upstream.

"Really, the only thing the town can do is to continue to leverage our partnerships with the city of Greensboro and the city of Burlington to try to communicate to the industries and the commercial customers in their cities that what they put into the water impacts us downstream," Sawyer said.

“

I THINK THAT AT THE END OF THE DAY, TOWNS LIKE PITTSBORO WILL ALWAYS BE VICTIM BECAUSE THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEADERSHIP IS NOT DOING WHAT IT HAS WITHIN ITS POWER TO DO.

**JESSICA MERRICKS**  
CO-FOUNDER OF CLEAN HAW RIVER

Merricks said the long-term solutions sit in the hands of federal and state governments.

"I think that at the end of the day, towns like Pittsboro will always be victim because the state and federal leadership is not doing what it has within its power to do, which is to hold industries accountable and to make these sorts of problems go away," Merricks said. "They have the power to do that. Unfortunately,

my community will always be on the offensive until things change from the top."

## WHAT IS 1,4-DIOXANE?

1,4-dioxane is used as a solvent in chemical manufacturing and can affect liver, eye and renal functions, according to the CDC.

## WHAT ARE PFAS?

PFAS are a group of chemicals used to resist heat, oil, stains and water and can be found in food packaging, adhesives and much more, according to the CDC. These chemicals are a concern as they do not break down naturally and can affect human growth and development, as well as thyroid, immune system and liver functions, according to the CDC.

BY THE NUMBERS

459

parts per billion was the level of 1,4-dioxane found in the Haw River on Sept. 14.

.35

parts per billion is the Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory levels for river water.

This contamination is

1,300

times the EPA's health advisory levels.



ENN FILE PHOTO

Residents of Pittsboro are advised by the town to not drink water from the Haw River because of a 1,4-dioxane leak. 1,4-dioxane is used as a solvent in chemical manufacturing and are harmful according to the CDC.

# Town police selects new assistant police chief of operations

Former lieutenant Kedrick King promoted after six years of service with the department

**Lauren Winslow**  
Elon News Network

After six years of service with the Town of Elon Police Department, former Lt. Kedrick King was promoted to assistant police chief of operations. Within the new position, King is responsible for overseeing all patrol operations and patrol officers to ensure the safety of the town of Elon.

Though promoted Sept. 11, King started working in law enforcement 10 years ago as a detention officer for the Caswell County Sheriff's Office.

Since joining the Town of Elon Police Department, he has moved swiftly through the ranks — starting out as a police officer, then a master police officer, patrol sergeant and finally lieutenant.

King said it was his first job at Caswell County that gave him the foundation for a successful career at Elon.

"Starting out in Caswell County — because I started in a jail — taught me how to talk to people," King said.

According to the Town of Elon Police Department's chief, Kelly Blackwelder, it is King's communication and people skills that played a big part in the decision to promote him.

Blackwelder said King understands the importance of listening and interacting with all types of people, making him a positive influence in the community.

Despite not having seniority within the department, Blackwelder said King has proved himself to be a dependable leader.

"When it came time to make this decision, there was no one else that I wanted in this position," Blackwelder said. "It came down to preference, it came down to who understands the vision that I'm creating, who has shown that they are able to meet the challenge and accept it and believes in the same things I believe in."

In addition to his time with the Elon Police Department, King worked with the Elon University Campus Police Department for over two years, serving first as a police officer and then as a sergeant.

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WHEN IT CAME TIME TO MAKE THIS DECISION, THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE THAT I WANTED IN THIS POSITION.

**KELLY BLACKWELDER**  
TOWN OF ELON CHIEF OF POLICE

King said he originally worked at campus police because both his aunt and sister graduated from the university, and he wanted to continue their legacy. During his time with university police, King said he got to know individuals throughout the community and formed relationships.

Elon University Chief of Police Joe LeMire said while the town police department and campus police department are two separate entities, they work together in many instances to ensure the safety of both Elon's campus and the broader community.



LAUREN WINSLOW | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Kedrick King was promoted to assistant police chief of operations after six years on the force.

"What he really brings to the table is somebody in a position of leadership over there that's worked both on campus and off campus," LeMire said.

LeMire said he believes King's understanding of the two departments' jurisdictions will be helpful for someone in his role and have an overall positive impact on the community.

While serving in his new position, King said he wants to continue the legacy of the department by fostering the creation

of positive and motivated people who will bring success to the department and safety to the community.

King said the law enforcement industry provides an opportunity for people to be a positive influence on society.

"In my family, I have a lot of people on the opposite side," King said. "I decided to be a part of the solution and not the problem. Being able to honestly say I chose the right path means a lot to me and means a lot to my family."

# From Swiftie to songwriter

Elon junior and musician Tabby Spell drops second single for debut EP

**Betsy Schlehuber**  
Elon News Network

Elon junior Tabby Spell performed in musical theater most of her adolescent life. Growing up in Mechanicsville — a southern Maryland town of just over 1,700 people — theater was her outlet.

Until it wasn't.

"I had a really interesting theater director who had a lot of favoritism issues, and it really wreaked havoc on my self confidence and the things that I thought I could do," Spell said. "I really think that's kind of what eroded my love for musical theater. I might still be doing it if that hadn't happened."

Spell said she felt that she still needed to go to college for musical theater. She applied to six programs, including Elon, and got rejected from all of them.

Despite this setback, Spell labeled it a "blessing in disguise." Shortly after reapplying to Elon for the political science major and getting accepted, Spell said she fell in love with Taylor Swift.

Spell grew up with Swift's music because of her older sister's obsession with Swift's debut album. But Spell said when she watched the Reputation Stadium Tour film on Netflix for the first time, she realized she needed to be a singer-songwriter herself no matter how scared she had been in the past.

"I started analyzing rhyming schemes and the strategies that she used," Spell said. "I was sitting in English class and not doing English work, but sort of highlighting things in Google Docs and recognizing patterns. And Taylor did essentially teach me how to songwrite."

While Swift has inspired lots of

Spell's music, Spell said she doesn't want to be the superstar in every way.

"I don't want to be another Taylor Swift knockoff," Spell said. "But she is a very big part of me becoming the songwriter and the performer and the musician that I am today."

On Sept. 21, Spell released the second single for her upcoming debut EP. The song is called "Fallin'" and Spell said it tells the story of a boy she fell for in her freshman year at Elon, even though people around her were telling her it was a terrible idea.

"It's sort of that euphoria of, 'This could go so badly, but I don't really care right now because this feels so good,'" Spell said.

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I HOPE THAT WHEN PEOPLE LISTEN TO MY MUSIC, THEY CAN SORT OF TAKE COMFORT IN IT WITH SOMETHING THAT THEY CAN RELATE TO.

**TABBY SPELL**  
ELON JUNIOR

Spell describes the track as "poppier" and "peppier" than the rest of the EP, titled "Young." Spell said while there is not an exact release date for the project, she is aiming for the end of this year.

In June, she released the first single, which shares its name. Spell said the song "Young" is about thinking she was going to marry her first love from high school, but realizing she was too 'young' to know the declining situation better.

Spell said the song's meaning is reflective of the rest of the EP.

"It includes a lot of themes that I

think people can relate to at its core," Spell said. "It's about sort of growing up and losing your innocence and it not being what you thought it would be and the love and the loss and everything that comes with it."

Spell said the EP follows a chronology of her freshman year, which she describes as an "absolute trainwreck." While Spell didn't anticipate a chronology when writing the six songs, a friend of hers mapped out the songs from the beginning, falling deeply in love, to the end — being broken down and learning to proceed with life.

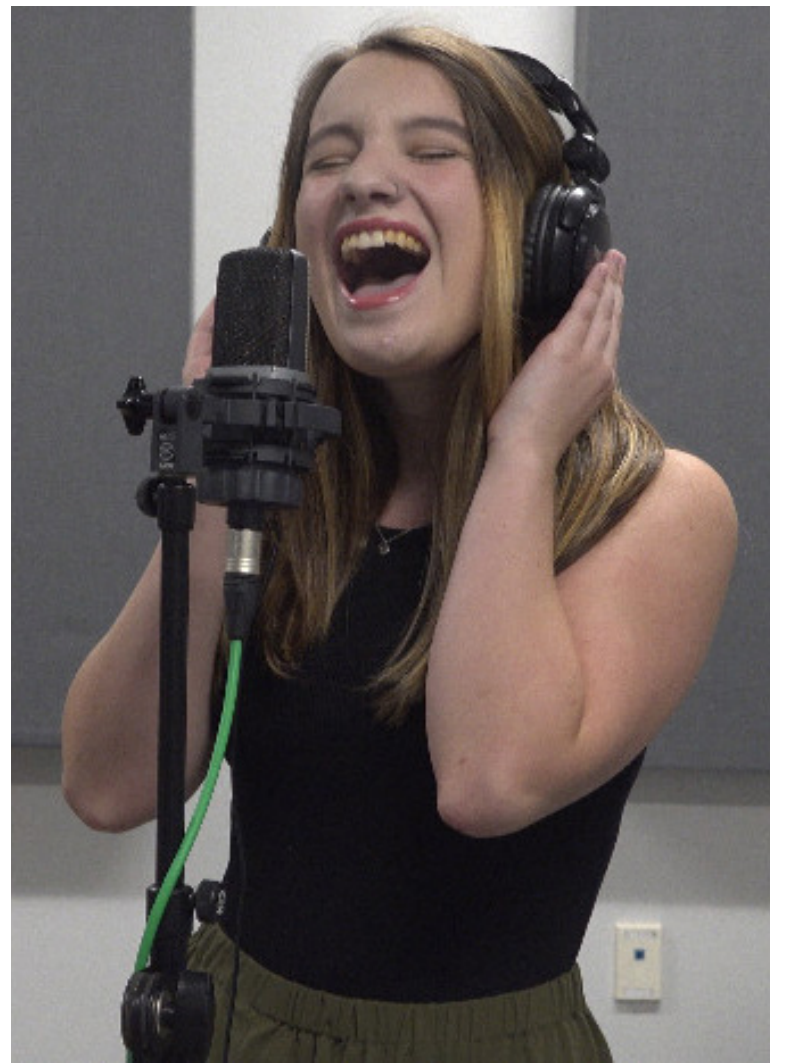
Spell said there is not a confirmed date for the EP's release due to production occurring in a southern Maryland studio and the financial burden of the project. She is aiming for a late 2023 to early 2024 release date after having worked on it for three years. Spell has two songs left to record.

In the meantime, Spell said she is heavily involved with the music scene at Elon. Instead of political science, she is now double majoring in music in the liberal arts and arts administration. She auditioned for the music production and recording arts major after arriving on campus in 2021 but said she was told there was not a spot for her.

Spell is the music director of the show choir, Elon Muses, and a member of the on-campus groups Techtronica and Electric Ensemble. Techtronica is a pop music ensemble while Elon Electric Ensemble is a multigenre group. This is her second semester in both groups, and she credits them with her growing confidence when performing live.

"I was so used to musical theater, where you have a whole ensemble behind you and other people picking you up, but when you're a solo musician, it's just you," Spell said. "And even, on top of that, it's stuff that you wrote. So, you're really just baring your soul for everybody."

During Spell's time at Elon,



BETSY SCHLEHUBER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon junior Tabby Spell sings her new single, "Fallin'" in Arts West Studio C. Even though Spell is recording her EP in Maryland, she has access to the studios on campus due to her classes and involvement with two music ensembles.

she has performed at Common Grounds in Greensboro, a Coffee House performance at Irazú Coffee and Elon Elite, a benefit concert in 2022 that supported Ukraine.

But over the summer, Spell said she returned to her roots and performed in La Plata, Maryland, at an artist showcase called "Play Music on the Porch Day." Spell said the performance "opened up a lot of doors," where people came up to her afterward and offered to book her at places she used to not qualify for.

Spell said she was able to introduce a new chapter of her life to the place she grew up in, and hopes people everywhere can rely

on her music when going through similar, tough times to hers.

"I used Taylor's music, but also, other people's music, to help me through those moments," Spell said. "And I hope that when people listen to my music, they can sort of take comfort in it with something that they can relate to. I want them to have that moment that I had where a lyric comes out and you go, 'Oh my gosh, that's exactly how I'm feeling.'"

"Fallin'" is out on all streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music. Listeners can follow her musical journey on her Instagram — @tabbyspellmusic — and TikTok — @tabbyisnotonfire2.

## Students, professors use hobbies to cope with stress

Two months into semester, some students, professors turn to other passions

**Lilly Molina**  
Elon News Network

While facing anxiety and her first year of college, freshman Kaelise Lane said her hobbies help keep her mental health in check.

"I was diagnosed with anxiety a couple of years ago, so mental health has definitely been a big part of my experience, but I definitely think prioritizing hobbies that you enjoy is my outlet," Lane said.

Lane said she tries to set aside 15 to 30 minutes each day to take time for herself to do the things she loves — crocheting and watching reality television.

"It's hard trying to take time out of your day to care for yourself, but I think just realizing that you can't really perform well in your other responsibilities if you don't take care of yourself first," Lane said.

A 2009 study published by the National Library of Medicine found that the more people did enjoyable leisure activities, the lower their stress, blood pressure and total cortisol.

Blair Apgar, an art history professor, said they like to participate in cycling and try to do as many

outdoor activities as possible to soak up the sun.

"I struggle with depression," Apgar said. "That is just something that is always gonna be there. Vitamin D actually makes a big deal."

Freshman Leah Brooker said she enjoys walking to classes to soak the scenery around her. Brooker said she also likes to take care of her plants in her dorm because it brings her a sense of peace. She's not the only one to feel this way about the calming effects of plants.

Kelsey Bitting, a professor of environmental studies, said she gardens at home. In her garden, Bitting grows a wide range of plants such as herbs all the way to hearty vegetables.

"I am a big believer in spending time outside, and I think any time we spend in nature is really healing, but in particular for me," Bitting said. "The experience of seeing things grow and helping them along the way is a restorative thing for me."

Director of Counseling Services Anita Hodnett, emphasized the importance of getting outdoors.

"Getting out of the room, getting out of offices, just taking time to be in nature and being in the sunlight and allowing the body to synthesize Vitamin D, which is associated with a more positive mood," Hodnett said.

Hodnett also said some other

baseline strategies to help when navigating with one's mental health include getting some rest, eating well and exercising.

Bitting said she tries to take around thirty minutes each day to meditate, though sometimes she finds it difficult to find time in her day to meditate.

Sophomore Clare Petznick is a member of Active Minds, a mental health group on campus. She said after joining the club she felt good to know that people also have the same passion for mental health awareness that she has and were going through the same struggles that she was facing. Petznick said talking to people is her way of taking care of her mental health.

"A big thing for me is having a group of people that I can talk to. Some people like having their time to themselves and being able to recharge, but I've never been that kind of person," Petznick said. "I love being around people. When I am around others and I feel like I can be myself, that is how I take care of myself."

Hodnett said social time and connecting with peers and loved ones, where you can have fun and laugh, can be a positive source of an outlet.

Apgar said students should reach out to others, even faculty members. They said in the past, some of their students have generally confided in

them, and they find it gives them context of what is going on in class.

"Try to talk to people you know and trust. Try to reach out to them and have these conversations about your mental health and if you're struggling," Apgar said. "The more we kind of talk about it the easier it gets to continually talk about it."

In addition, Hodnett said she also talks about the outlet that counseling services provide an outlet to students and the faculty and staff wellness office has resources for professors and the faculty and staff

"For others, a part of their selfcare journey is perhaps using counseling services," Hodnett said. "For many, having mental health treatment, therapy or medication can be a part of their self care in ways that they support their mental health."

Junior Emerson Garon said that sees a therapist once a week and also sees his psychiatrist as needed.

"It is just nice to have somebody be able to talk to about problems who is a professional," Garon said. "It has definitely improved my mental health a lot."



DESIGN BY ERIN MARTIN

# Volleyball player turns to coaching after medical issues

Volleyball senior makes the difficult decision to quit after three years on the team

Mason Willett & Abigail Hobbs  
Elon News Network

Just weeks before her senior year, Presly Austin had a difficult decision to make. During volleyball conditioning, Austin suffered two herniated discs in her back, causing her to go to the hospital. It happened again only a little while later.

Austin said she had to decide whether to suffer through the pain to play her last year of volleyball or quit the sport she loves.

“Is it worth putting myself through that much pain to try and continue to play volleyball for one more year?” Austin said. “Or should I prioritize my health, physical and mental health, to just take a step back and take care of myself, get my physical health under control and be able to support my teams from a different aspect?”

Austin has been playing volleyball for 12 years and started her college recruitment process as a freshman in high school. She said she adored Elon and said escaping the cold weather of Alberta, Canada, was a plus.

“I just fell in love with it right away,” Austin said. “I love the campus and the weather was a lot better than Canada, for sure.”

However, injuries began to quickly pile up for Austin and she medically retired after three years with the team.

“It was like the perfect storm of the wrong movement with the wrong timing,” Austin said. “I’ve grown up being the most unlucky person in the entire world. Like you can ask any of us, any of my friends, anybody at school at home, like it’s just been like something that’s followed me around.”

Austin said the hardest part of these injuries was going from being on the court to having to sit on the bench and find other ways to support the team.

“Putting my own thoughts and feelings aside and thinking like, ‘OK, it’s we over me.’ It’s not about me like, sure I have an injury, which sucks. My teammates all care about me, but I need to give my energy, my time towards the team,” Austin said. “So it was definitely hard but I’m glad that I had gone through something like that.”

Head coach Mary Tendler said she knew exactly what to do when Austin came to her about medically retiring.

“It’s hard for any player to end their career with a medical issue and so very sad that she couldn’t continue to play on the court,” Tendler said. “But as soon as that happened, I knew she wanted to be a coach. She’s been coaching in the past. So I thought, putting her in a role of a student assistant coach would be really good for her.”

Tendler said she has seen aspects of herself within Austin and said she thinks coaching has helped Austin cope with being off the court.

“Volleyball has been such a big part of my life and I know Presly has the same passion I have for the sport. So it’s very sad to think that she can’t continue playing,” Tendler said. “It’s hard for anybody, and whatever you love to do when you have to stop doing it. But she’s able to stay involved with volleyball and I think that’s very good for her, especially mentally.”

Austin said she has been coaching the Piedmont Volleyball Club — a youth sports club based in Greensboro — for over two years and has enjoyed the experience. Now, with the added experience of student assistant coach of the volleyball team, she said she is considering taking the role post-grad.

“Collegiate coaching is something that I’m definitely considering as part of my step after college post-grad,” Austin said. “Just the bond that I’ve built with this team alone throughout my injury, the support that they’ve given me and now watching them as athletes playing like they supported me so much that I still want to be able to give back to them. I still want to be able to support the team in everything that they’re doing, even though I might not be on the floor with them.”

The volleyball team will play Northeastern University at 7 p.m. Sept. 30 in Schar Center.



Senior Presly Austin coaches from the sidelines of a volleyball game against the University of North Carolina, Wilmington on Sept. 23. Elon lost both games against UNCW 2-3 and 0-3. JACK PRAHINSKI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

# Carolina Cowboys make homestead debut in Greensboro

The team of professional bull riders won one match in three day tournament

**Sarah T. Moore**  
Chief Copy Editor

The Carolina Cowboys, North Carolina's professional bull riding team, made its homestead debut at the Greensboro Coliseum during the Professional Bull Riding Cowboy Days, a three day event that was the eighth of 11 stops in the PBR team series championship.

Throughout the three days, Greensboro Coliseum was filled with North Carolinians, as well as PBR fans who had traveled from across the country. Attendees often came with friends and family and the audience was encouraged by the event commentators to "play along" through sports betting.

At the start of the weekend, the Cowboys were fifth in league standings. The team moved up one position after opening night, winning against the Arizona Ridge Riders with a 4.5 point lead

Sept. 22.

Cooper Davis, the rider that secured the Cowboys' first and only win of the weekend, thanked the audience after his ride on the bull Black As Coal.

"Just to let you guys know, we go everywhere all over the world and this is the first time we've had a home team advantage," Davis said.

The Cowboys lost its matches against Oklahoma Freedom and Nashville Stampede on Sept. 23 and Sept. 24, respectively. The losses pushed the Cowboys back to fifth position in the league.

The PBR Cowboy Days consisted of four games each night, with each of the eight teams in the league competing all three nights. The teams each have five riders on their starting lineup, each rider competing is paired with a different bull each day.

In order to qualify for a score, the riders must stay on the bull for eight seconds without touching the bull or the equipment with their free hand.

Throughout the PBR Cowboy Days, the Cowboys only secured five qualifying rides out of 15 total attempts.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Carolina Cowboys rider Cooper Davis is announced during opening night of the PBR Cowboy Days. Davis scored a total of 174.5 points, with two qualifying rides across the three matches.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Boudreaux Campbell, rider for the Carolina Cowboys, fights to stay atop a bull named Midnight Train during the first round of the Cowboys' match against the Arizona Ridge Riders on Sept. 22. Campbell was on Midnight Train for 7.10 seconds before being bucked off.



JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Lucas Teodoro leads bull Doze You Down off the field after a 6.88 second ride from Austin Gamblers' Dalton Kasel on Sept. 22. Teodoro is a member of the PBR safety group, a designated group of three professional bull riders who work together to get the bulls off the field after a ride.

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WE GO EVERYWHERE ALL OVER THE WORLD AND THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE HAD A HOME TEAM ADVANTAGE.

**COOPER DAVIS**  
CAROLINA COWBOYS  
PROFESSIONAL BULL RIDER



JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan watches the opening night of the PBR Cowboy Days event.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Cowboys rider Sage Kimzey is cheered on by the audience after scoring 91 out of 100 possible points riding a bull named Mike's Motive on Sept. 22. Kimzey was the Cowboys' first qualifying ride of the three day event and his ride tied for highest score of the weekend.



KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Six-year-old Zack Tomlinson watches as the PBR Team Series bull riders are announced during the opening ceremony on Sept. 22 at the Greensboro Coliseum.