

ELON TO OPEN CHILD CARE DEVELOPMENT CENTER SPRING 2025



ERIN MARTIN | VISUAL MEDIA EDITOR

Plans for a child care center for faculty, staff and students' children ages 0-2 are underway

Madison Powers
News Editor

Elon University will open a child care development center for children ages newborn to 2-years-old of Elon faculty, staff and students, according to Vice President for Finance and Administration Janet Williams.

In an interview with Elon News Network, university President Connie Book said the center is being created because of a child care crisis in Alamance County due to COVID-19. Williams said phase one of the center is planned for an opening in spring 2025.

Williams said Elon hired Bright Horizons, an educational support systems company, to conduct a demand study in late 2022 on the need for child care in Alamance County. Williams said while the study is not published publicly, it illuminated a need for child care on campus.

"There is an issue in our area and others in the United States of the supply of quality child care centers," Williams said. "We've identified that the biggest issue is around infants, toddlers and twos, and that's why we're focusing on that area right now."

Tom Kerr, a lecturer in political science and policy studies, is a father of a 3-year-old boy and a 1-year-old girl. Kerr said while both are currently in child care, it was difficult to find.

"Alamance County doesn't have a whole lot of good options,"

Kerr said. "For young children — like one and under — it's pretty slim pickings."

Kerr, who lives in Alamance County, said some of his friends with children have gotten on waitlists before their children are even born and oftentimes, parents find child care through private homes instead of public businesses.

"There are a lot of private people who do it as well — people just operating out of their houses," Kerr said. "Our youngest goes there, but that was just happenstance that we were able to find her and she did have an availability."



HAVING SOMETHING ON CAMPUS THAT KNOWS OUR STRANGE SCHEDULES AND WILL PROBABLY HAVE SOME FLEXIBILITY IN DROP-OFF TIMES — THAT'S GOING TO BE A HUGE HELP.

TOM KERR
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Kerr said it's important for child care providers to offer flexible hours — especially to professors whose schedules vary.

"It's not like working a 9-to-5 every day," Kerr said. "Having something on campus that knows our strange schedules and will probably have some flexibility in drop-off times — that's going to be a huge help."

Kerr said many formal child care centers require parents to sign up for eight hours of care, five days a week. He said oftentimes, parents do not need this many hours of care but end up paying for it just to insure their child's place.

"We'd be paying more than we're accessing it," Kerr said. "But a lot of people do that anyways — even if their kid's not there — they're paying for it, just so they can have the slot when they do need it."

Kerr said some of his friends in Alamance County have traveled as far as Durham for quality child care. According to Kerr, one of the most important aspects of a child care provider is updated CPR certification and introductory instruction.

"Really, we look for someone that doesn't just plop them in front of a TV, if they have some sort of cognitive stimulation setup," Kerr said.

Williams said the university will hire a child care service provider accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

"We want to make sure that they are accredited because we want to have a very high quality, five-star center," Williams said.

Kerr said another important factor in child care now is the opportunity for children to socialize.

"Especially with our firstborn — he was a pandemic baby — he had no experience with other kids," Kerr said. "We were looking for a kind of nurturing environment where he can be exposed to other kids."

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ABSS offers free lunch after second school delay

The school year was delayed until Sept. 11 after mold was found in 26 schools

Sophie Rosenthal
Elon News Network

Amid a two week delay of the school year, the Alamance Burlington School System has opened sites for students to pick up free lunch.

ABSS public information officer Les Atkins said the school system worked closely with the department of agriculture to set up sites at five schools on Sept. 5. Other sites will open across the county throughout the rest of this week.

"Some of our families had reached out saying that they were certainly anticipating us being in school at this time and they were counting on those meals and those children being fed during that time," Atkins said. "So we actually contacted USDA and we actually moved forward with a plan to offer these grab-and-go meals."

ABSS has delayed the first day of school twice after finding mold in more than half of the system's 38 schools, according to a press release Sept. 2. Schools are now scheduled to open on Monday, Sept. 11.

"We do anticipate school starting Monday, Sept. 11," Atkins said. "We've been in crisis mode. ... We're all working tirelessly with contractors and, you know, with our county commissioners to try to get our students back into classrooms and that's our goal right now."

The first day of the school year was originally planned for Aug. 28, but after mold was found in Andrews Elementary in July, ABSS began testing all 38 of its schools. Now, all schools have been tested and 26 are currently being cleaned.

Nine of those schools

have tested positive for a type of toxigenic mold called Chaetomium. In a press release, ABSS wrote that inspectors said this typically results from invasive water damage over time. According to the Centers for Disease Control, toxigenic mold releases toxins. The CDC said for people sensitive to mold, reactions can include stuffy nose, itchy eyes and itchy skin. Students and parents can see which schools are under remediation and which have been opened on ABSS's mold remediation dashboard.

At a meeting on Sept. 1, the Alamance County commissioners reappropriated funds amounting to nearly \$17 million to pay for mold remediation, cleaning air ducts and cleaning HVAC systems.

Vice Chair of the Alamance County Commissioners Steve Carter said at the meeting that he wants to find the true cost of the mold removal.

"Let's find out what it's going to cost and stop this mess, this is berserk," Carter said.

Atkins said since ABSS does not have a taxing authority, the school system has been relying on help from the county commissioners to repurpose funds for the emergency cleanup.

At the ABSS school board monthly meeting Aug. 28, the school board voted to forgive the first week of instructional days to avoid having to change the academic calendar for this year. But after ABSS announced it would be delaying the year by another week, the system is looking at days to turn into instructional days to meet the state's requirement of 1,025 instructional hours per year.

"It may involve, obviously, taking some days that are currently earmarked for vacation and/or off-school days and making those student days, so we're gonna have to look at that," Atkins said.



JOSEPH NAVIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Steve Carter, the vice chair of the Alamance County Commissioners, speaks during a joint meeting between the Alamance-Burlington School District Board of Education and Alamance County Commissioners to address mold issues throughout ABSS facilities in the county.



Mebane City Council considers Buc-ee's

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Senior inspired to research Black history at Elon

PAGE 5 LIFESTYLE



High school quarterback hopes to play in college

PAGE 7 SPORTS

THE PENDULUM

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EDITORIAL POLICY:

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

CORRECTIONS POLICY:

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

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Corrections

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



BUC-EE'S MAKES A MOVE FOR MEBANE

14 MILES

Mebane City Council considers Buc-ee's proposal to rezone land

Isabella DeJong
Elon News Network

Buc-ee's, a chain of gas stations and convenience stores in the southeast U.S., is planning to build a new addition on I-85 in Mebane.

Buc-ee's is a Texas-based gas station and retail location that features a large selection of convenience items and souvenirs and is well known for its large-scale design and cartoon beaver mascot.

Representatives from Buc-ee's submitted an initial site plan to Mebane City Council in June to construct a 75,400 square foot store featuring 120 gas stations on 32.49 acres of land along I-85/40. The city of Mebane is reviewing the chain's application to rezone these properties along I-85.

A traffic impact review and recommendation by the North Carolina Department of Transportation before any voting can take place, according to Mebane Development Developer Ashley Owenby.

This is not the first attempt to build a Buc-ee's in North Carolina. In 2021, Buc-ee's representatives proposed a station in Orange County but withdrew their plan after receiving community pushback and concerns regarding traffic congestion and the potential effects this development would have on

the environment, according to The News of Orange County.

Elon University psychology professor Mat Gendle wrote an opinion piece that originally appeared in the Charlotte Observer outlining his concerns about the company's overconsumption. Gendle said Buc-ee's is not the sole responsible company for overconsumption but is one of the many contributors.

"If you think about this stuff combined with all the other At Homes and then all the other Targets and all the other Walmarts and all the other Michaels and everything — it's just overwhelming," Gendle said.

then all the fuel that was used from trucks to carry all that stuff here, and then all the fuel that's gonna be used by the trucks to carry it to the landfill," Gendle said.

Gendle said he has received criticism for the Buc-ee's opinion piece.

"One of the criticisms that I've gotten from folks is 'What are we supposed to do? Just not grow the economy?' And unfortunately we're in a situation because the US economy is so debt-leveraged, the only way we can make it work is to grow continuously," Gendle said, "There's a point at which you have to understand that the way we are doing it is not sustainable."

According to Friends of the Earth, a grassroots environmental campaigning community, overconsumption creates negative environmental effects such as increased air pollution as well as exhausts plants' life support systems which leaves the world short of materials critical for high quality of life.

Junior Carter Craig, a Charlotte native, said he is concerned about the environmental impact a Buc-ee's in North Carolina could have as it would increase personal fuel usage.

"This is just going to further encourage people to drive instead of taking the train," Craig said, "Which is going to incentivize more money to go towards highways instead of the perfectly good train system we have that could use some TLC."



THERE'S A POINT AT WHICH YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE WAY WE ARE DOING IT IS NOT SUSTAINABLE

MAT GENDLE
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

Gendle said all of the waste from overconsumption also includes a large amount of fuel used to transport these goods to their retail locations.

"Think about all the bunker oil that was burned to power all the ships that carried all this stuff over in containers from China, and

Potential Buc-ee's site

According to the city of Mebane, the potential location for the store would be near I-85, I-40.



VISUALIZATION BY ERIN MARTIN | DATAWRAPPER

Representatives from Buc-ee's submitted an initial site plan to Mebane City Council in June to construct a 75,400 square foot store featuring 120 gas stations on 32.49 acres of land on I-85/40. If constructed the location will be 14.1 miles away from Elon's campus, which is just over a 20 minute drive.

DESIGN BY ERIN MARTIN



Elon sustainability volunteers work to harvest eggplants and red peppers in the Loy Farm garden during their first volunteer workday Sept. 3.

KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Senior Julia Lapporte helps pull weeds.

KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Freshman Leah Brooker picks ripe orange tomatoes and places them in her shirt.

KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Sophomore Kira Campagna wraps up a hose after using it to water rows of vegetables in the Loy Farm garden.

KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



A batch of freshly picked tomatoes sit in a harvesting bin ready to be weighed.

KATHERINE MARTIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Professor sees lacks of child care in Alamance County

CHILD CARE | from cover

While Kerr's two children will have aged out of the university child care center by the time it opens in spring 2025, Kerr said it's still important to offer on-campus options for the Elon community.

"Even just having it on or near campus is going to be vital for a lot of people," Kerr said. "If you have someone right where you work, you can drop off and then just go to your office."

Kerr said when looking for child care, he also prioritizes safety.

"A good, secure, outside place so they can get outside," Kerr said. "Really just safety — 'How accessible it is to the public? Is it somewhere near a main street?' — just different safety elements that would help put parents at ease."

Williams said the university does not yet have a cost estimate for building the center — or a specific location — but the university is looking at either constructing a new building or renovating an empty building located on South Campus.

"We want to make sure we have the space for the outdoor play area and group activities and circulation space — properly outfitted child rooms," Williams said.

Kerr said child care is a large financial undertaking.

"Sometimes people have to do the calculations — I've had friends who've found it was actually more financially sound for one of them not to work than to pay for child care."

Kerr said the child care center committee needs to keep in mind the various levels of financial stability within university employees.

"They have to consider the fact that it is going to open university-wide and they need to consider all the different levels of income."

Williams said child care through the center will not be free, but the cost will not be "prohibitively expensive."

She said opening a center on campus will support Elon's 2023-2024 institutional priority number 11, which is to "foster a dynamic working environment for faculty and staff across career stages and professional ranks with new leadership and learning

pathways, and greater access to feedback, coaching and mentoring."

"It really is around advancing the development of an infant, toddler, and two's child care center," Williams said. "There's a real need for that for our faculty and staff. But it also allows us to attract and retain talent and just maintain Elon's strong workplace and culture."

Phase one of the center will offer child care only to Elon faculty, staff and students, but Williams said subsequent phases could expand the center to include a larger age range of children and potentially open the center to the public.

Phase one is being planned by a committee headed by Williams consisting of five members of Elon faculty and staff: Jenny Gonzalez, interior designer at planning, design and construction management; Jason Husser, professor of political science and policy studies and director of the Elon Poll; Robert Johnson, director of event and space management; Heidi Hollingsworth, associate professor of education; and Jack Rodenfels, director of professional and continuing studies.



SOMETIMES PEOPLE HAVE TO DO THE CALCULATIONS — I'VE HAD FRIENDS WHO'VE FOUND IT WAS ACTUALLY MORE FINANCIALLY SOUND FOR ONE OF THEM NOT TO WORK THAN TO PAY FOR CHILD CARE.

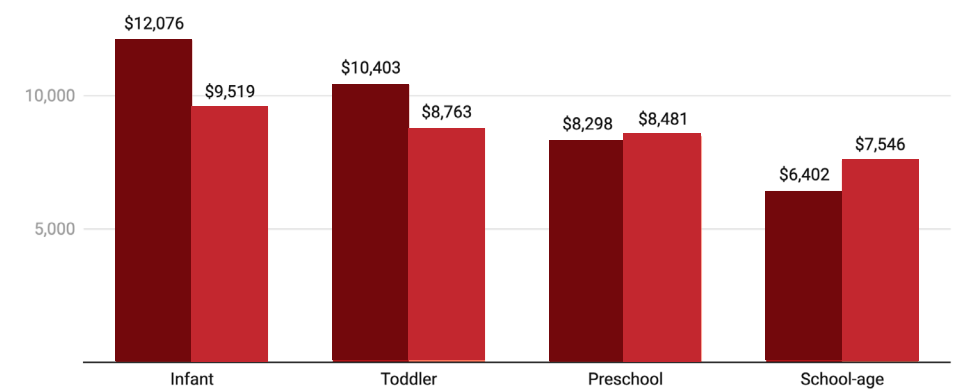
TOM KERR
PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

Husser said the creation of the center is also being spurred by economic and population growth in Alamance County in addition to effects of COVID-19 like businesses closing.

"We've had a lot of people move in simultaneously due to the pandemic as well as broader factors in the economy," Husser said. "A number of child care centers have

Median yearly child care cost estimate in North Carolina by age, 2023

■ Center-Based Care ■ Home-Based Care



VISUALIZATION BY ABBY SHAMBLIN | DATAWRAPPER

National Database of Childcare Prices data demonstrates high cost of early child care in licensed NC child care centers.

closed locally so we're in a situation within the county in which there's growing demand and greatly diminishing supply at the same time, meaning there's a shortage of high quality child care centers available for our faculty, staff and students."

Husser has served for the past three years both on the Ready and Resilient Committee and as chair of the academic council.

He said he is sharing with the committee faculty perspectives on what features are most important for a child care center — including the great demand for quality child care.

"I've heard a lot of stories of people waiting well over a year on waiting lists and still not having a child in child care," Husser said. "This puts us as an institution vulnerable to what a lot of Americans face, which is people needing to miss work and not being able to have the professional career they intended because of the lack of child care services."

A 2018 Center for American Progress study found that "There are more than five infants and toddlers for every licensed child care slot. This is more than three times the ratio for 3- through- 5-year-olds."

According to the North Carolina Early Education Coalition, North Carolina is considered a "child care desert" for infants and toddlers — meaning there are five

families with babies competing for every licensed child care slot.

The NCEEC also found only 38% of infants and toddlers are enrolled in 5-star child care facilities in suburban areas — of which Alamance County is one. In addition, "only 18.7% of the infant-toddler population can be served in the existing supply of licensed infant-toddler programs."

Husser said Elon recognized this when deciding to open a child care center solely for a younger age group.

"Nationally — as well as our best indicators locally — there is a greater shortage of child care in that age range than there is for three-year-olds to four-year-olds," Husser said.

As a father of a 14-month-old, he said it took him over a year to find quality child care.

"We made do until then," Husser said, "but it certainly is difficult having a busy career and a young child if that child doesn't have a place to be while parents need to be at work."

He said his son will likely have aged out of the center when it first opens, but would send him if possible.

"Maybe he'll be in the first class," Husser said. "I'd be honored to send him if it works out that way."

Professors express mixed opinions on Supreme Court declining to review NC ban on Confederate flag license plates

North Carolina DMV's decision to stop issuing specialty license plates with Confederate flag stands

Cassie Weymouth
Elon News Network

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to review or comment on a 2021 North Carolina Department of Transportation ban on issuing or renewing specialty license plates with any Confederate flag insignia in June.

According to the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles, North Carolina offers three standard plates and over 200 specialty license plates, representing more than 100 civic clubs and interest groups.

However, in 2021, the NC DOT sent the Sons of Confederate Veterans a letter stating it would "no longer issue or renew specialty license plates bearing the Confederate battle flag or any variation of that flag" since the plates "have the potential to offend those who view them," according to PBS.

The North Carolina chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans in turn sued, claiming the state's decision violated its free speech right under the Constitution's First Amendment and state law governing specialty license plates. However, a lower court dismissed the case, and a federal appeals court agreed with that decision in 2022. This past June, the Supreme Court declined to review or comment on the decision, though in 2015 it heard Walker

v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Inc — a similar case in Texas.

Elon Law professor and dean emeritus Luke Bierman said though the North Carolina chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans said there was a free speech violation, a due process violation and an equal protection violation, but the Western District of North Carolina found there was no violation of any of the constitutional provisions the group claimed.

In addition, Bierman explained in Walker v. Texas Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Inc., the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the DMV in question.

"They're in a different federal court, but the case went to the Supreme Court, which decided that Texas motor vehicle department was within its rights because by maintaining control over the license plates, this was considered government speech, not a private person's speech," Bierman said. "There was no violation because the government can make those kinds of assessments and individual or a group speech rights were not being affected."

Bierman's colleague Enrique Armijo, Elon Law professor who specializes in free speech, said he agreed.

"In a First Amendment case involving the ban on confederate flag license plates in Texas, the Supreme Court has said that license plates are government speech, not the speech of the driver or group that wants to sponsor a specialized plate," Armijo said. "So it does not violate the Constitution for a state to decide not to permit a specialty plate because of the images on that plate."

Bierman said he would be surprised if the Confederate flag is ever banned outside of government property.

"It would be pretty odd for the Supreme Court to say government officials could ban that kind of expression by a person," Bierman said. "They might be able to regulate it. They can't ban it. But someone just couldn't put a flag out in a way that might obstruct traffic over a street, for example."

Political science professor Tom Kerr said the political demographics of North Carolina are changing.

"I think we're turning more purple just via demographics, like the Mecklenburg area, the Raleigh-Durham area, even Greensboro, Burlington — all of that

is growing quite rapidly in population, which tends to be a little bit more on the blue side," Kerr said. "Based upon some of those structural things that are kind of tilted towards the Republicans, based on congressional mapping and things of that nature, but population wise, we're definitely seeing a trend towards purple."

In its lawsuit, the North Carolina chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans argued the Confederate flag is a symbol of their heritage rather than one of racism.

Kerr said he disagrees.

"You see those bumper stickers, 'Heritage not hate.' For me personally it is such a loaded symbol, and it is known to have such connotations that it is inherently racist," Kerr said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF NORTH CAROLINA DMV



MADISON POWERS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior Jasper Myers pulls L'Tanya Richmond's thesis from the Elon Archives on a shelf next to "Elon College: It's History and Traditions" by Durward T. Stokes, the first consolidated history of Elon College. Myers said Richmond's work was the first-ever work of consolidated Black history at Elon and pushed back against revisionist history — like that of Stokes — which didn't often include Black stories at all on Sept. 1.

Student revives forgotten Black history in re-examined thesis

Senior archive assistant completes research to raise awareness of Black history at Elon

Mollie Lund
Elon News Network

From the moment Elon University senior Jasper Myers first opened L'Tanya Richmond's master's thesis earlier this summer, she said she knew she had found something remarkable. The thesis, titled "Elon's Black History: A Story To Be Told," was published in 2005 while Richmond was pursuing her master's degree at Duke.

"It's the first consolidated Black history project on Elon's campus," Myers said. "After I read it and made an outline, I was like, 'I just feel like we should be doing something with this information.'"

It was through Myers' work at Elon's Archives and Special Collections that she was first introduced to Richmond's work. With the support of her advisers Shaunta Alvarez and Libby Coyner, Myers dove deeper into Black history at Elon over the

past summer.

Before Richmond wrote her master's thesis, she received her undergraduate degree from Elon University in 1987. She then worked in Elon's admissions office for a period of several years as an admissions counselor and placement officer, then associate director of admissions.

After working in the admissions office, Richmond became the director of minority affairs and the director of Elon's multicultural center, which would later become the Center for Race, Ethnicity & Diversity Education. According to Alvarez, Richmond's research and advocacy led to the creation of the Wall of Fame in Moseley, which celebrates the achievements of Elon's Black students.

"She did a lot of work revamping and revitalizing how they recruited students of color," Myers said. "She also made sure that these students felt supported and successful, had access to mentorship and resources, and were given the chance to flourish and not just survive."

Myers' research has since incorporated other significant documents and projects that examine public history as it relates to Elon's Black population, such as the 2020

History and Memory Report and the Black Lumen Project.

Myers said she was grateful for her advisers at Elon's archives for their support of her research.

"I'm very grateful that I get to research and learn and curate and create in an environment that is very community-driven," Myers said. "They've always done their utmost to make it clear that if a student has a passion or a student has a want to do something, if there's the resources and the materials for it, then why can't they do it?"

As Myers moves forward with her research, she said she hopes to consolidate her findings, raise awareness of Black history at Elon and lay the groundwork for future students who may want to continue her research.

"I think that a lot of the work that I'm doing right now is with the intention of creating a precedent and setting a tradition for future generations of student assistants in the archives," Myers said.

One of her main goals is reworking the guided historical tours the archives offer.

According to Myers, these tours focus on local history as it relates to Elon's campus and are often given to special guests, Elon 1010 classes, or Elon's faculty and staff members. Myers said plans to revise these tours to highlight Black history specifically.

"There's so much history everywhere on this campus, especially as it relates to the Black population," Myers said. "It's impossible to create a tour that's under an hour and covers all of it, so I am thinking about alternative routes based on the specific angle of Black history we want to highlight."

Another potential product of this research is a written medium called zines, which Myers said are small, often pocket-sized, publications that have long been used as political devices aimed at enacting social change.

Myers' idea to create zines was in part inspired by one of her advisers at the archives, Libby Coyner. Coyner works at Belk Library as an archivist and assistant librarian, and she said much of her work includes teaching students about the history and impact of zines.

"Zines are a super accessible form of

storytelling, and social activism is the tradition they come from. They've been a tool for feminist and punk and activist and other underground communities to reclaim the means of production and tell their own stories," Coyner said. "Zines are imperfect, zines are vulnerable, zines swear, zines are filled with images, and text, and cut, and paste. They kind of break a lot of the rules."

Myers said she hopes to create two zines with the research she has compiled, one of which will focus on Black history at Elon, the other on Richmond specifically.



I THINK THAT A LOT OF THE WORK THAT I'M DOING RIGHT NOW IS WITH THE INTENTION OF CREATING A PRECEDENT AND SETTING A TRADITION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF STUDENT ASSISTANTS IN THE ARCHIVES.

JASPER MYERS
ELON SENIOR

Myers said she would like the zines to be available across campus.

"It could live in like the CREDE and also the archives," she said. "People could take a little bit of history in their pocket with them wherever they go."

Myers said she hopes this work will help raise questions about Elon's history while also reiterating the importance of archival work and local history in general.

"I think that we can absolutely learn from studying local history," Myers said. "In fact, I think the only way to move forward within a small local, microcosm like Elon is to pay attention to the past and learn from the past and listen to the past."

A copy of Richmond's thesis is available for viewing at the university archives in Belk Library.

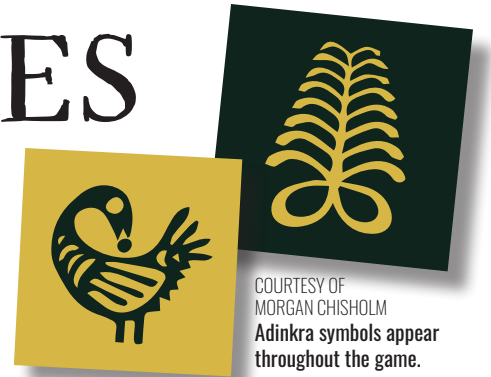


MADISON POWERS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Myers reads the 2020 Elon Committee on History and Memory's Report in the Elon Archives on Sept. 1.



FROM STICKY NOTES TO STEAM



Students work together to create, publish video game

Six students worked together to create, publish an original game in four months

Sarah T. Moore
Chief Copy Editor

For six Elon University students, what started as ideas written on sticky notes during their Winter Term class at the start of 2023 became a published video game just months later.

“Samira: Taken From Time” is a free, narrative-driven, puzzle-solving adventure game featuring an animal companion, a post-apocalyptic world, time travel, ancient gods, supernatural powers and futuristic technology.

Interactive media student Morgan Chisholm said the most rewarding part of creating the game was figuring out how to incorporate everyone’s ideas and seeing it all come together in the final product.

“How do we connect time travel to ancient technology to futuristic technology to all of these things that we wanted to see represented?” Chisholm said. “It ended up being a really cool culmination of what the game ended up being in the final product.”

“Samira: Taken From Time” is the result of Elon’s game design minor core capstone, which was a combined Winter and Spring Term course. The course had only six students who decided to work as a team rather than splitting into smaller groups. Although Chisholm said they had a smaller team and much shorter timeline compared to similar independently published games, which she said often take over a year to create and publish.

Chisholm worked on the game as the level design head and environmental design head, developing the layout and

graphics in each level.

Senior Henry Agyemang created most of the game’s narrative, which follows a woman named Samira as she finds herself in an ancient African society after traveling back in time to escape the apocalypse. Agyemang said the game was based on his own culture from Ghana.

“Growing up, I didn’t really see games representing my own heritage,” Agyemang said. “I thought it would be a cool idea to use this project as a gateway to bring in my own culture and have at least another game — if any — about my own culture out in the market.”

One way Agyemang said he incorporated his heritage into the game was with Adinkra symbols. In the game, these symbols are each associated with a god Samira meets.

“The god’s names, they all come from Twi — which is the language that we speak,” Agyemang said. “They all come from symbols called Adinkras.”

Though Agyemang was in charge of the game’s narrative, the whole team worked together to bring the story to life.

While they worked on the game during their Tuesday and Thursday class periods throughout spring semester, Chisholm and Agyemang said the group spent many late nights and weekends in Duke building.

“We did end up putting like 30 extra hours every week outside of class, sometimes 40,” Chisholm said.

Some members of the group had taken classes together before their Winter Term class over the course of the minor, but Agyemang said it was their first time all working together as a group.

“Everyone brought their own ideas,” Agyemang said. “And everyone’s ideas was able to be represented in the game.”

Their different interests, skill sets, backgrounds and majors are part of what

made the game come together so well, according to Chisholm.

“It’s very easy to box in game design into the software development, computer sciences area because that’s where it lives in the Duke building, but game design is for everybody,” Chisholm said. “All of these different skills, that without that the game would have been completely different because we couldn’t lean on that expertise.”

Chisholm herself was a communications design major and worked on the game’s graphics and environmental design. Another team member, John Spitznagel ’23, was a music production and recording arts major who served as the team’s audio engineer.

While the six of them worked together closely, Agyemang said each member of the team had their own roles and aspects of the game to focus on, such as user interface design, character rigging and design, sound design, level design and environmental design.

Agyemang said his favorite part about the game was seeing how each of the different elements and ideas were represented in the finished game.

“Having seen that all come together as a final product was beautiful for me because it showed that no one overpowered anyone else,” Agyemang said. “We truly worked as a strong team to make this game come to life.”

The game was published on Steam, a digital distribution platform for computer video games, on May 3 and is only compatible with Windows devices. Since publishing the game, the team released one small update, but have no plans to make any further changes or updates.

“It’s out there, it’s in the world. I don’t think I’m touching the game again,” Agyemang said.

Agyemang said he still regularly checks

the Steam statistics. As of Sept. 5 “Samira: Taken From Time” has been added to 15,876 user libraries with 213 unique players.

Steam users and curators are able to tag the game to add it to lists of games with similar elements. Some of the tags on “Samira: Taken From Time” include “action-adventure,” “atmospheric,” “funny,” “dystopian” and “sci-fi.”

Agyemang said he likes looking at how long users are spending on the game. According to Chisholm, it takes 45 minutes to an hour for a full playthrough, though the game can be completed in 30 minutes.

“Most of the time people have played it more than the given time it takes to play the game, which means they’ve played it multiple times,” Agyemang said. “We saw one person play the game for 10 hours and I was really confused on if he was stuck for 10 hours or he had played the game that many times.”

Steam data also tracks where the game has been downloaded. As of Aug. 25, the top spots for “Samira: Taken From Time” included the United States, with 60 downloads; Russia with 15 downloads; Germany with eight downloads; and France with seven downloads.

Chisholm said she reads each of the reviews left on Steam. As of Sept. 5, of the game’s seven reviews, only two of them do not recommend the game.

Steam user ScaptainSky left a review after playing the game for seven hours, and has since spent over four more hours on the game. Their review said they had replayed the game several times and rated it an eight out of 10, with low difficulty and appropriate for a wide age range.

The game’s multi-generational appeal was intentional, according to Chisholm.

“I was very adamant that it would be a game that 8, 9, 10-year-olds could play because I have two baby cousins who I love very much, and they were really what I wanted to show this off to,” Chisholm said. “We wanted everybody to be able to get something out of this, learn about a different culture, be able to play through a really fun story with relatively low on-boarding or tutorials — you don’t need to be a master computer gamer to play this game.”

Some of the comments point out different glitches in the game, but still recommend it.

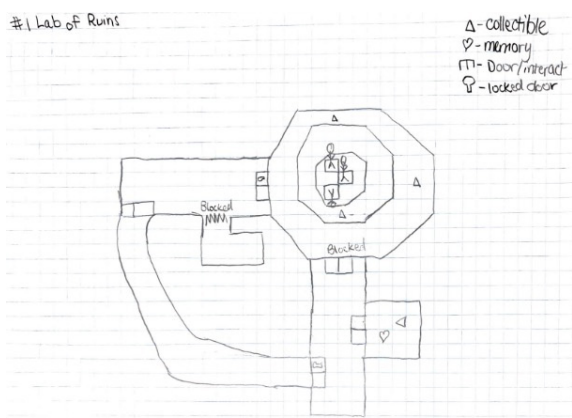
Chisholm said despite the glitches, she is still incredibly proud of what the game has become, especially considering the process it took to create it.

“It’s not 100% the perfect, polished game we wanted it to be, but it’s everything we needed it to be and I think that is for me the biggest win,” Chisholm said. “As a game it works, it tells the story we wanted to tell, it has all of the things we wanted in it. And for us to make that in four months is unheard of — especially with six people and never having made a game before.”



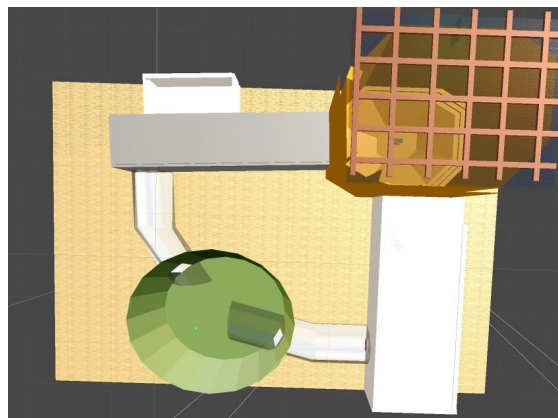
SAMIRA: TAKEN FROM TIME

The cover photo of “Samira: Taken From Time,” an original video game created by six Elon students. The game is free and can be downloaded on the platform Steam.



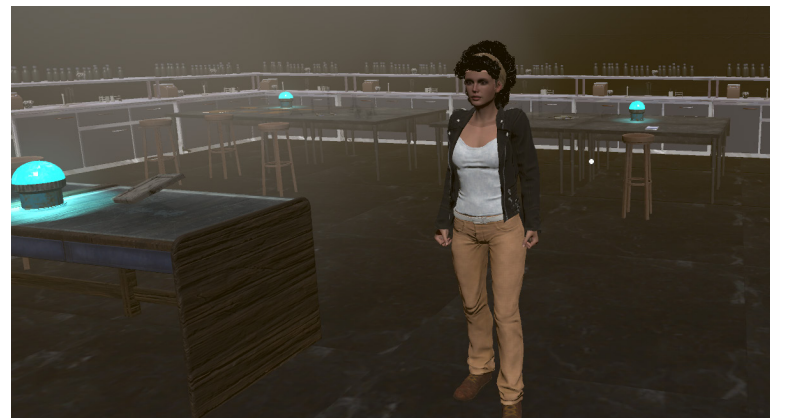
COURTESY OF MORGAN CHISHOLM

When designing the four levels of their game, Chisholm and the team started with sketches of the layout and component placements for each level. This sketch was part of the initial planning for level one.



COURTESY OF MORGAN CHISHOLM

After planning each level, the team turned their ideas on paper into 3D renderings. This is the blockmesh, or simple working prototype, of level one.



COURTESY OF SAMIRA: TAKEN FROM TIME

The finished game “Samira: Taken From Time” takes less than an hour to complete, according to Chisholm. The game starts with Samira learning about an on-going apocalypse by exploring an abandoned lab.

ATHLETE FINDS SOLACE IN CLUB RUGBY TEAM

After being sexually assaulted, junior recovers through rugby

Erin Martin
Visual Media Editor

When Elon University junior Coby Fecher was 18 years old, he was planning to meet up with someone he trusted. But the situation took a turn when he was sexually assaulted by a man. Fecher said the experience left him fearful of men.

"It's caused me a lot of pain, suffering, and it's actually been hard for me to be around men around my age, especially if they're bigger and taller than me, as he was bigger and taller than me," Fecher said.

Around the same time, Fecher joined Tobacco Road Rugby Club in Durham while attending Alamance Community College. Fecher said rugby had been in his life for a while but playing now helped him work through his feelings.

"I started playing rugby and that helped me feel a little bit better," Fecher said.

He said he found himself surrounded by peers of varying sizes and builds, allowing him to gradually overcome his anxieties about interacting with men. Fecher also said the camaraderie and lighthearted banter within the rugby community provided him with a sense of belonging that had been missing from his life.

"It's been the biggest outlet of my life because I can come out here and imagine the guy, then I can go crash and tackle him and it'll be all over with," Fecher said. "It's cathartic. ... It makes me feel better, at the end of the game I feel a lot more level headed ... and just happier all around."

In the few years Fecher has played rugby, he said he has seen improvement and so has his friend Frances Crabtree, who Fecher met at ACC and the only person he told about the incident at the time.

"Coby has grown mentally and physically in a very positive way, and rugby has helped him grow by just giving him a community around him that supports him and shows that he is important to the team," Crabtree said.

“

IT'S BEEN THE BIGGEST OUTLET OF MY LIFE BECAUSE I CAN COME OUT HERE AND IMAGINE THE GUY, THEN I CAN GO CRASH AND TACKLE HIM AND IT'LL BE ALL OVER WITH.

COBY FECHER
ELON JUNIOR

After feeling and seeing the improvement from his time at the Tobacco Road Rugby Club, it was an easy decision for Fecher to join the Elon club rugby team when he transferred from ACC last fall.

"I've been able to connect with guys my age, some of them bigger and taller, and find a sense of camaraderie and support I never expected," Fecher said.

While Fecher still has concerns about dating, he said he is no longer afraid due to his experiences with rugby.

"I've been able to experience a lot of jokes, a lot of camaraderie," Fecher said. "I've been able to really overcome my fears of men for the most part."



ERIN MARTIN | VISUAL MEDIA EDITOR

Elon junior and club rugby player Coby Fecher stands on the Elon South Campus practice fields, where he practices and plays rugby with the club team — an outlet for Fecher to process past trauma.

Born to Ball

High school quarterback looks to the possibility of playing at the next level

Max Wallace
Video Production Manager

Eastern Alamance High School senior quarterback and captain Jason Ball said he had known he wanted to play football from the very first time he picked up the pigskin.

"As a young kid, I was always

watching my brothers play and wanted to be around them," Ball said. "I never wanted to go to school but for football."

Ball dreamed of playing football at the next level ever since he was a child, and as he enters his final year of high school, he has a chance to turn those dreams into reality. Before he can make it to Saturday game days, Ball has one last ride under the Friday night lights with the Eastern Alamance Eagles.

While he might not be in college yet, Ball said he has set himself up for success throughout his time as quarterback in high school.

"I want to go play in college," Ball said. "But right now I am just

focused on my senior year, trying to win some games, have fun and everything will fall into place."

With college on the horizon for Ball, he said he has already received interest from a few schools, including Appalachian State, Eastern Carolina University, Liberty University, as well as other Division II schools.

Much like his dreams to play in college, Ball said it was a huge milestone to play at the varsity level at Eastern Alamance under the mentorship of 32-year head coach John Kirby.

"I've always wanted to play for coach Kirby and be his quarterback," Ball said. "Ever since

coming to the kids camp, I have always wanted to be around coach Kirby."

It's not only the strong connection the Alamance community has with Eastern Alamance football, Kirby said, but also the connection between the community and him that has made the Eagles his forever home.

“

BUT RIGHT NOW I AM JUST FOCUSED ON MY SENIOR YEAR, TRYING TO WIN SOME GAMES, HAVE FUN AND EVERYTHING WILL FALL INTO PLACE.

JASON BALL
EASTERN ALAMANCE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR

"We have a community here that supports Eastern Alamance football and being a consistent in the community has helped our program," Kirby said. "There aren't a whole lot of schools who can say their coach has been there 30 plus years."

As excited Ball was to be an Eagle, Kirby said the feeling was reciprocated by him and the rest of the coaches. Kirby, who has been at Eastern Alamance for 39 years, said he learns new things about the game of football every time the two

take the field together, and said Ball takes a huge weight off the coaching staff's shoulders.

"I think Jason serves as a coach on the field. He's a veteran guy, he knows the game," Kirby said. "Jason helps coach us too because he sees things and we talk a lot. We are glad he's on our football team."

Throughout his time coaching Ball, Kirby said Ball has always kept sight of his future aspirations.

"Jason is goal driven and he wants to play at the next level," Kirby said. "He's here early, he leaves late, and he studies the game."

Kirby said Ball's drive and mental determination follows a legacy of former Eastern Alamance players, like linebacker John Lamot, who played for Boston College from 2016 to 2020, as well as quarterback Austin Bryant, a 2020 graduate who totaled over 6,000 yards and 80 touchdowns in his 3 year career.

"He follows a legacy of good quarterbacks that we've had," Kirby said. "He's just fallen in line and I think he's trying to be better than they were."

Paired with his gritty attitude, Kirby said it's Ball's strong connection with the community and his family that will take him far in his football career.

"He knows where he is coming from and he knows where he is at," Kirby said. "He's grounded, and I think that's a good thing."

Drive by drive, Ball keeps striving for his collegiate football dreams, but he said no matter what, he will always keep the Eagles, and home nest of Eastern Alamance, close to his heart.



MAX WALLACE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Eastern Alamance High School senior quarterback Jason Ball talks to his teammates before a game on Sept. 1.

BUMPER SCORES ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP



MAX WALLACE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon football redshirt sophomore Julian Bumper prepares to play in the Aug. 31 game against Wake Forest, where Elon lost 17-37.

Walk-on athlete earns full scholarship after three years of play

Mason Willett
News Director

After being a walk-on for the Elon football team for the past three years, redshirt sophomore Julian Bumper was rewarded with a full athletic scholarship — a moment Bumper said he will never forget.

“For me, it just felt like a huge weight lifted off my shoulder,” Bumper said. “For me as a player, I always knew that I had the ability to play at this level. I just needed the opportunity. And by God’s grace, I was just given that opportunity.”

Head coach Tony Trisciani said he has seen the work Bumper put in over the years and believes this scholarship was well earned.

“He earned that and he’s earned it his whole career, his whole body of work,” Trisciani said. “Everything he does is right — on and off the field. If we need somebody for community service, Julian Bumper is the first guy raising his hand, and he’s out there going into the elementary schools and doing anything we need from him.”

Bumper said he is thankful his parents for inspiring him to give his all. His parents Maria Bumper ’95 and Monty Bumper ’97 are both graduates of Elon. Maria said seeing her son work so hard at the school that she called home brings a tear to her eye.

“It’s awesome seeing him

growing up, it was always like, ‘When you commit to something you give 100%. You don’t quit, you show up every day,’” Maria said. “He never wavered. He’d show up for practice and support his teammates, so to see that paying off for him is great.”

Maria said she is happy to see her son has finally found a community here at Elon on the field and off the field. She said she is proud of the man he has become and enjoys seeing the relationships he builds in school. Outside of the football team, Julian is also an active member of Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

“

FOR ME AS A PLAYER, I ALWAYS KNEW THAT I HAD THE ABILITY TO PLAY AT THIS LEVEL. I JUST NEEDED THE OPPORTUNITY.

JULIAN BUMPER
REDSHIRT SOPHOMORE

“In high school, he played football, he had his different groups that he hung out with. But Elon has so much more to offer. And to see him actually actively be involved in FCA. He’s a member of Alpha Phi Alpha,” Maria said. “That’s kind of cool for me, to just see him and brings the leadership opportunities on campus. It’s great as a parent to see that.”

Julian said he has built many relationships at Elon, but the one that has stuck by his side since stepping foot on campus is his teammate redshirt sophomore, Dylan Tucker.

“When I first came here, I think we already knew that we were going to have a close relationship because like in the group chat building up to being here,” Julian said. “He’s probably going to be in my wedding in the future.”

Tucker said he feels the same and he enjoys all the time they spend together being roommates and he is so proud of Julian for earning the scholarship.

“He’s probably my closest friend out here. So it brought a tear to my eye. I was really excited for him. He deserves it and he’s been working a long time towards this,” Tucker said.

Monty, a former Elon basketball player, was a strong influence on his son as a father and as his coach starting from a young age.

“It was great. I mean, I’ve been coaching him since he was 6-years-old, so to see him achieve his goal, it was awesome, especially at our alma mater,” Monty said. “It was awesome because he worked so hard. And he always put in the work, and he never doubted himself. And it was awesome to watch.”

Monty said he was ecstatic to hear Julian had such a strong interest in going to Elon and wanted to play at his father’s old school. While taking a tour, their oldest son didn’t like the school as much, but Julian felt differently.

“Julian looks at me while looking, he says, ‘No, I like it. It

feels like college.’ And literally, like three years later, we sat down to start discussing schools, and he named out his schools. And when he said Elon, I was shocked,” Monty said. “Then he literally applied to the school. He says, ‘I don’t care about getting the other one. Elon’s my number one.’”

Julian said he appreciates all the sacrifices his parents have made, and he has one message to share to his parents after receiving this opportunity.

“I just want to say, I thank y’all. I appreciate y’all for all the ideas from me, all the sacrifice, all the times bringing me to practice. Believing in me throughout my whole time here, understanding that eventually my time will come and believing that when I get the opportunity, I’ll

make the most of it. So I just want to say, thank you,” Julian said.

Julian played in his first game for the Elon football team on scholarship Aug. 31 against Wake Forest and he says he plans to build off the first game. Maria said seeing her son play for the team now on scholarship brings a different feeling compared to all the times she watched him when he didn’t have the scholarship.

“It’s different. I wouldn’t I mean, you know, we’ve been to as many games as we can, but, you know, I think he’s prepared differently mentally,” Maria said. “He’s always been a part of the team, but it’s a different feeling.”

Bumper and the rest of the team will travel to take on Gardner-Webb at 6 p.m. Sept. 9.



MAX WALLACE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon football redshirt sophomore Julian Bumper has been a walk-on player for the Elon football team the past two years and just earned a full athletic scholarship.