

New programming communities join The Loy Center

LIVE, Service Learning-Corps now occupy Pi Kappa Phi and Sigma Pi houses

Leena Dahal
Senior Reporter

After the Epsilon Theta chapter of Sigma Pi and the Epsilon Alpha Chapter of Pi Kappa Phi were suspended for hazing last year, the empty houses in the Loy Center served as reminders of the string of suspensions and citations associated with fraternities at Elon University last year.

In an effort to improve the image of fraternity and sorority life at Elon out of a situation that shed negative light on it, the administration decided to fill the spaces with initiatives to strengthen the community within and around the Loy Center.

Leaders Impacting Value-based Experiences (LIVE) and The Service Learning-Corps, two newly created communities, now occupy the previous Pi Kappa Phi and Sigma Pi houses, respectively.

Comprised of members of several sororities, LIVE is centered on promoting and fostering a sense of community within the Loy Center. The Service Learning-Corps is made up past members of the Service Living Learning Community.

Shaping Greek Perceptions

"It started with trying to fill the houses," said Ginna Royalty, a sophomore and member of LIVE. "And then we tried to figure out the ways we could build more of a community within the Loy Center because it often gets labeled as a separated part of campus."

Royalty said their introduction to the area is an important way to shape perception around fraternity and sorority culture at Elon.

"I think [the new communities] are

good for the future of fraternity and sorority life at Elon," she said. "Especially with what happened last year, I think these group activities will help connect this part of campus with the rest and hopefully make it portrayed in a more positive light."

SLC-Corps promotes service

The Service Learning Community (SLC), the oldest LLC on campus currently housed in Virginia Hall, is specifically open to freshmen. When they begin the next year as sophomores and a new freshman class moves into the SLC, the upperclassmen join the SLC Corps (the community's version of alumni). The SLC-Corps run a mentor/mentee program for the freshman SLC members.

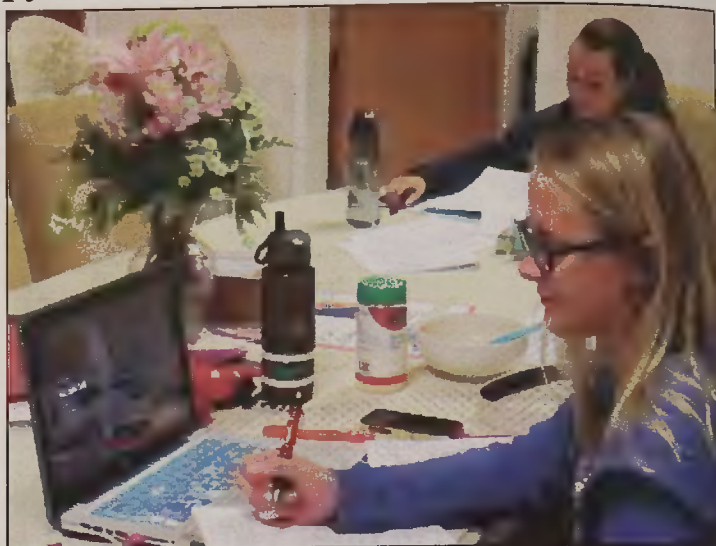
Over the summer, SLC-Corps members were invited to move into the Loy Center as a physical space for these activities.

They also serve as a way to promote service in the Loy Neighborhood by making everyone aware of different service opportunities that Elon Volunteers! has to offer.

"There are a lot of service opportunities on campus that we do not think people are always aware of," said Danielle Satterfield, a junior and member of the SLC-Corps house. "We would like to advertise these events and make them known in this community."

Satterfield said the group is planning to host a variety of events in the neighborhood to promote philanthropy, including a Trick-or-Canning project to collect canned foods for Allied Churches during Halloween.

As for next year, Satterfield said the decision on whether they will remain in



Members of LIVE, sophomore Ginna Royalty and junior Madeleine Ker, study together in their Loy Center house. The new LLC has brought together a variety of Greek-affiliated women.

the house is not theirs but that they hope they can remain where they are.

"We think it would be a cool opportunity to build a lasting relationship between fraternity and sorority life and the SLC," she said. "Also, since the house is so close to the hall that the SLC lives on it makes the SLC alum in the house more accessible to the current SLCers."

Generating new ideas

Walk into the former Alpha Kappa Alpha house and you find a desk cluttered with sticky notes of ideas for future programming events. Plastered on the walls are long white sheets of paper — places for members to elaborate on these ideas.

The nine girls behind these ideas are

each responsible for a designated section of "programming" — targeting specific areas or offices on campus.

Though each of them are affiliated with a different sorority on campus, they hope to leverage their experiences in sorority life to generate new ideas for building a sense of community within the Loy Center.

Madeleine Ker, Elon junior and a member of LIVE, said while it may take time for the group to get adjusted, she already feels a sense of community — especially within the house.

"Even though it's confusing when I describing to people where I live," she said, "Being here is just a cool opportunity to be part of uniting the Loy Center to a greater part of campus."

Elon shows well in U.S. News rankings, but falls short in diversity

Max Garland
Assistant News Editor

Diversity has once again been identified as a weak point for Elon University, this time from a national point of view.

U.S. News and World Report released the 2015 edition of its annual college rankings Sept. 9, and Elon placed first in three categories among master's-level universities in the South: best overall school, undergraduate teaching and innovation. The university also earned high marks in percentage of students studying abroad.

"This year's rankings by U.S. News, which are partially based on the results of a national survey of higher education leaders, demonstrate the reputation Elon has for excellence in teaching and innovation," said Dan Anderson, Vice President of University Communications.

Elon fell short, though, in rankings of diversity.

Its campus diversity index, which can range from zero to one depending on the percentage of ethnic minorities on campus, was a 0.27, below the average among similar colleges. The highest score on this year's index was a 0.68 tie between Marymount University and University of North Carolina-Pembroke, while the lowest was Hampton University's 0.10.

Additionally, Elon placed last in its category in economic diversity. U.S. News' criterion for the category was the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants during the 2013-14 school year, and only 9 percent of Elon students received Pell Grants that year. The grants are dispensed by the federal government — not the university — but can indicate the number of low-income students at a school.

ELON UNIVERSITY PLACED...

First in undergraduate teaching

First in innovation

Last in economic diversity

Last in percentage of international students

...among Southern regional universities in U.S. News & World Report's 2015 college rankings.

KATE BRAUNSTEIN | Design Intern

Elon also tied with 25 other universities for last in percentage of international students with 2 percent. St. Thomas University in Miami placed first with 18 percent of its student body made up of international students.

Dean of Multicultural Affairs Randy Williams, Jr. said in an email it was not a surprise Elon topped the list in undergraduate teaching and other areas, but he added that the rankings are "no indication of perfection."

"Our student ethnic and economic diversity are areas for improvement," Williams said. "Though many of the schools ahead of Elon in the rankings are public institutions, which tend to be more di-

verse than private ones, we are ambitious in creating a more diverse community for the richness it brings to the enterprise of education and not simply for rankings."

According to Williams, Elon's Class of 2019 is more than 1 percent higher in terms of ethnic diversity than the previous class, and international enrollment has also increased.

As for economic diversity, Anderson said Elon is attempting to increase support for Pell-eligible students through the 10-year Elon Commitment strategic plan, and will focus on building its endowment in its next fundraising campaign to promote those efforts.

"The size of Elon's endowment, relative to peer private universities, limits Elon's financial aid resources," Anderson said. "This makes recruiting Pell Grant-eligible students and international students more difficult."

Anderson said "good progress" has been made in Elon's goal of tripling international student enrollment through the Elon Commitment plan.

The U.S. News and World Report has been ranking colleges in terms of academics since 1983. Diversity rankings have been a recent addition. The rankings are geared toward prospective students rather than a way for universities to size up their competition.

"Taking into account how well a school supports its students from freshman year through graduation is important," said U.S. News' chief content officer Brian Kelly in a press release. "To find the best fit, students should consider a range of factors, from financial aid offerings and location to campus size and majors. The process can be overwhelming, but our rankings and

advice content are a great place to start."

Freshman Graham Kulig said people he knew brought up Elon's rankings to him once he made his college decision, but it wasn't a factor to him before that.

"It's nice to hear people say, 'I heard Elon was ranked the most beautiful campus' or that they saw it was ranked the best college in the South, but I didn't really look into it," he said.

Sophomore Ben Driscoll said he prioritized the reputation of the School of Communications above the overall ranking of the university, since he's a communications major. He added that U.S. News' measures of diversity don't account for individual experiences.

"Diversity isn't only based on socioeconomic background or something similar," Driscoll said. "All of us come from different places and have different perspectives on things. I think that can also be considered diversity."

The rankings have not been immune to criticism from the media, either. In a 2013 article for The Atlantic titled "Your Annual Reminder to Ignore the U.S. News & World Report College Rankings," John Tierney wrote that much of an institution's ranking comes from a reputational measure through peer assessments from college presidents and provosts instead of hard data.

"Critics say this component turns the rankings into a popularity or beauty contest, and that asking college officials to rate the relative merits of other schools about which they know nothing becomes a particularly empty exercise because a school's reputation is driven in large part by — you guessed it — the U.S. News rankings," Tierney wrote.