

# Progress being made on Task Force's recommendations

Implementation team addresses social climate and out-of-class engagement

**Meg Malone**  
Assistant News Editor  
@megretjeane

Last year, 29 members of Elon University's student body, faculty and staff published a list of 42 recommendations to increase student involvement in academic, social and intellectual activities. More than a semester later, there might not be many tangible results yet, but change is in progress.

The Presidential Task Force on Social Climate and Out-of-Class Engagement — as the group of 29 was collectively known — released this list almost a year ago in May 2016, which included everything from the expansion of late-night food options to exploring lateral entry for fellows programs.

Their recommendations fell into five categories: managing expectations, messaging and the transition of freshmen, increasing access to high-quality mentoring experiences, enhancing traditions and campus social experiences, enhancing the physical campus environment and reviewing and revising institutional policies and practices.

The responsibility for overseeing these recommendations' progression has since fallen to Randy Williams, associate vice president for campus engagement and assistant professor and Tony Crider, associate professor of physics — co-chairs of the task force implementation team.

Crider said he and Williams are not in the business of addressing each recommendation themselves, but instead they find or create other groups better-suited for the task at hand.

"[We've been] trying to figure out who are all the different people that are organizing these things, and also making sure that we don't have two groups trying to accomplish the same thing and not know about each other," Crider said. "It's one of the things that we've been very

deliberate about this very first semester is saying, 'Alright, instead of creating 42 committees, who's already doing this?'"

Williams said their role then involves coordinating these groups.

"We're just then mapping all these efforts together for this whole construct of social-climbing," he said.

This fall, Crider said they have been preparing for the long road ahead. "The implementation team has spent this past semester as sort of an umbrella organization," he said. "As we approach the spring, we've identified those groups, and we'll be asking them to list what their five-year plans are."

Crider and Williams said they are trying to make sure these tasks are implemented well rather than quickly.

They said they see the implementation of every item on the list as a project that will span the next five years.

"Our job for the implementation team is not the sprint of last year's large group, but it's sort of managing a marathon for other people," Williams said. "We're overall marathon coordinators."

A lot of their work, Williams said, involves or will involve discussions and trial-and-error.

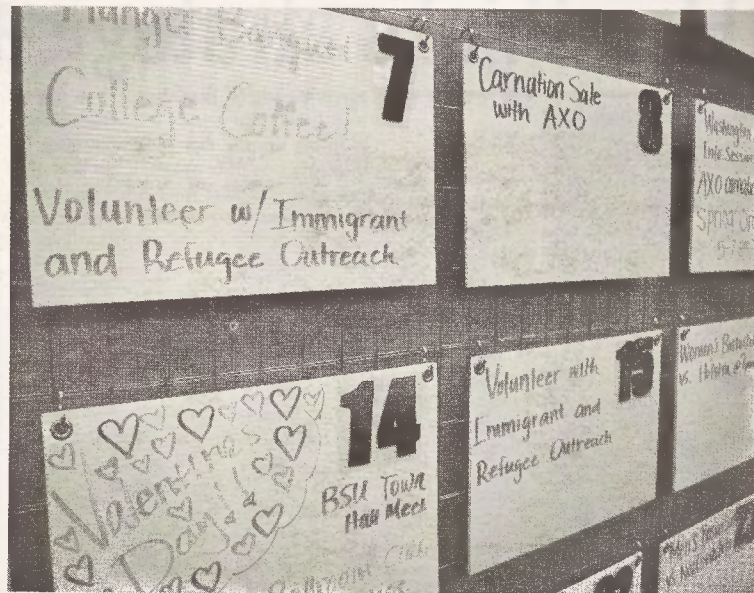
This would explain why results have not been immediate in the case of many of the task force's recommendations, though some have already been completed or are in the process of becoming nearly so.

Some changes began before the list was officially released, especially in the Moseley Center where the PhoenixCONNECT Office is located.

This office embodies the goals of numerous recommendations from the task force's list, but their message especially echoes the ideas of the third category — enhancing traditions and campus social experiences.

Senior Cam Ciesielski is a member of the connections team. He said the goal of the office is to be the center of student involvement on campus.

"Obviously, you have the office of Student Involvement, but this is front-and-center down in Moseley on the first floor, very accessible for students to walk in and



The Connections Office calendar shows upcoming events in February 2017.

find organizations or causes or events they're passionate about and that they can attend and get involved in," Ciesielski said.

Senior Alaina Schukraft is another member of the PhoenixCONNECT team that staffs the office. "It's students helping students get connected ... if a student comes in here, looking for a way to get connected on campus, we help them use PhoenixCONNECT to get involved."

PhoenixCONNECT is the online half of this equation. At elon.collegiatelink.net, students can investigate ongoing and upcoming events around campus and get in touch with student organizations from the comfort of their dorm rooms if they would rather not journey to Moseley.

A journey to Moseley, however, does have its benefits. "Obviously, we have our big calendar which is kind of the hallmark of the office right now — just showing all sorts of different things that we have kind of highlighted as going on around campus," Ciesielski said.

Like the implementation team of Crider and Williams, Ciesielski, Schukraft and the

rest of the connections team have a challenge ahead of them, but they are looking onwards and upwards.

Ciesielski said right now they are working on "really just getting the word out and establishing a reputation — obviously as a new office, it takes some time to get a foothold." He said they hope to incorporate their office more into the new student orientation process.

The entire new student orientation and first year transition is the focus of a large portion of the task force's recommendations.

For example, with regard to Elon 101, which is mentioned in a number of action items, a consultant was called in to recommend areas for improvement in the entirety of the freshman transition and first year experience, as mentioned in the first category of the task force's recommendations.

As for those changes, "We're in this pilot stage right now, so we'll assess what has happened in the pilot stage and then consider Elon 101 in the grand scheme of the first-year experience," Williams said.

# Sorority recruitment brings enthusiasm, increased numbers

**Anton L. Delgado**  
Contributor  
@A1DelgadoNews

Two weeks after sorority rush, hundreds of women around Elon's campus are now getting used to their new organizations and their new Greek lives.

According to Abigail Ojemann, the President of Elon's chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha, her sorority alone took 58 new members, bringing Zeta Tau Alpha's overall chapter size to 215 members.

**Abigail Ojemann, president of Elon's chapter of Zeta Tau Alpha, said 1,315 members were initiated in Elon's nine sororities.**

These women are now a part of Zeta Tau Alpha's national organization, which has an estimated 235,000 initiated members around

the United States.

The Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life was unable to comment, but Ojemann said 1,315 members were initiated to Elon's nine sororities and the average chapter size at Elon has grown to



Senior Ceci Mulry parties with a large stuffed animal during Alpha Omicron Pi's Bid Day celebrations.

209 members. In 2015, only 638 received bids.

Freshman Veronica Phillips — a new member of Delta Delta — was one of the hundreds of freshmen women that partici-

pated in recruitment this year.

"The rush process was super tiring but incredibly rewarding," said Phillips "I am glad that I made the decision to rush this year. I really think that being a

part of a sorority will change my life at Elon."

Freshman Laura Rossi was not as sure as Phillips about joining an organization.

"Rushing was so overwhelm-

ing," Rossi said. "You just met so many people in such a short amount of time, and you always had to have the biggest smile and be in the chatty mood."

Despite coming to Elon without the intention to rush, Rossi's uncertainty about Fraternity and Sorority Life is what drove her to ultimately drop out of recruitment.

"I didn't want to regret not trying it out," Rossi said. "But I was so unsure during the first three days of rush week that on the morning of bid day, I decided to drop out."

Two weeks later, Rossi still stands by her decision.

"I needed to try it out to be really sure that Greek life wasn't for me, but now I am sure and I have absolutely no regrets," Rossi said.

Rossi may have made the decision about not joining Fraternity and Sorority Life on her own, but there were many girls that did not have that luxury.

"All of the girls that didn't get into the sororities they were hoping for were devastated," Rossi said. "But there are more opportunities to rush, and not getting into one sorority just means you are meant to do greater things in another one."