

# Blackout Elon campaign adds events to teach students about drinking misconceptions

Laura Smith  
News Editor

For the second year, Elon University's Office of Substance Education will promote its Blackout Elon campaign, with some new events in addition to posters, magnets and other publicity.

Blackout Elon strives to educate students on drinking habits and eliminate misconceptions about these habits on Elon's campus.

This year, the campaign will feature the first "What Does Blackout Mean to You?" competition.

At 2 p.m. Friday, May 1, in front of Moseley, students will perform three-minute pieces addressing Elon's drinking habits and how they are helping to change their peers' drinking misconceptions. The performances will include dances, songs, art, music pieces and videos.

During these performances, students and faculty will receive Blackout Elon prizes and information from SPARKS Peer Educators.

All performances will be recorded by Elon Student Television and the top five pieces, voted on by fans and SPARKS educators, will be uploaded to the Office of Substance Education's Web site ([www.elon.edu/substanceducation](http://www.elon.edu/substanceducation)).

Students will have until May 6 to vote for their favorite performance.

The top three performances

will be shown at Blackout Elon's other new event for this year's campaign, the first annual "Blacklight" party, taking place at Lighthouse Tavern.

First place will win a \$200 prize, second place will win a \$100 prize and third place will win a \$50 prize.

Lauren Martin, coordinator of Substance Education, said she thought students of the Live Oak Communications agency working on the campaign wanted to be more creative this year.

"We're just trying to keep things fresh and new and get students' attention in different ways," said Chelsea Peabody, Live Oak team leader for Blackout Elon.

Live Oak held focus groups and conducted research to get a better understanding of what students want to see in the campaign.

The focus groups were held with underclassmen and SPARKS peer educators. One more will be held with upperclassmen.

Blackout Elon originated in fall 2007 from a corporate campaigns class and started in spring 2008.

Now spearheaded by Live Oak, statistics on Blackout Elon campaign materials came from the 2008 core survey from the National College Health Assessment that surveys students on drug use, nutrition and mental and physical health.

Ideas for the new campaign events all came from students, Martin said.

"They give students a chance to ask what (blackout) means to them," Martin said. "The whole point is to lose that gap between perception and reality. Students tend to overestimate alcohol use."

Peabody said she agrees.

"We want people to think about it," she said. "More of a conversation. We want to make it personal."

Martin said she is hoping the campaign will have an impact on the campus community.

"The closer you get for students to realize the statistics, the more likely it will be to get the students to change their behaviors," she said.

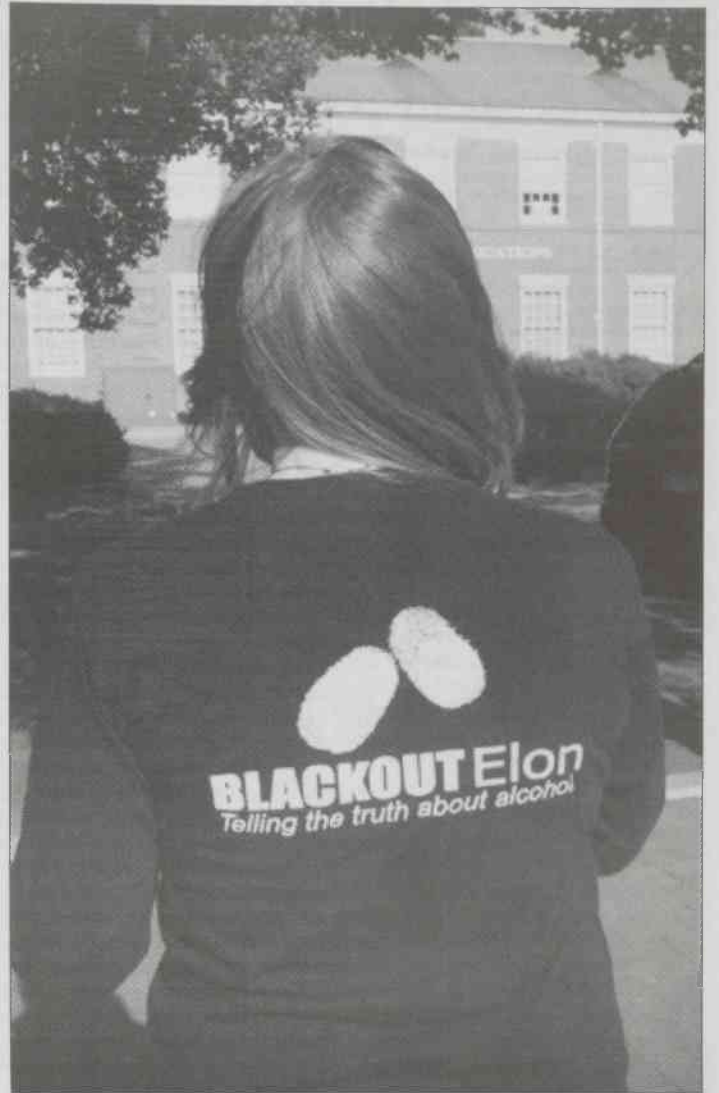
The "What Does Blackout Mean to You" competition is open to all students, and entry forms are available in the Substance Education office in KOBC 154 and the Moseley Center front desk. They are due at 5 p.m. Thursday.

#### 2008 Blackout Elon Statistics

88% of Elon students who drink use a designated driver.

66% of Elon students who drink keep track of how many drinks they have consumed.

85% of Elon students who drink eat before and/or during drinking.



BRYCE LITTLE | Staff photographer  
The Blackout Elon campaign is in its second year now, and will host a new event Friday. The program aims to educate students on drinking habits.

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