

Construction of new residential complex for upperclassmen to begin this summer

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News Editor

The Town of Elon has approved construction of The Station at Mill Point, a new residential community at Elon University designated to house upperclassmen that will begin this summer.

The community will be located at Fire Station Fields, walking distance from campus, and will eventually house up to 320 students in 25 buildings. While earlier plans were to designate the community as the "senior village" for seniors only, Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life, said it is likely juniors will be able to live there, at least initially.

Modeled after The Village at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C., The Station at Mill Point will feature apartment-style living in a neighborhood setting. The buildings will be different pastel colors and styles, Jackson said. A building will either have two four-person apartments or four four-bedroom apartments.

Pricing for The Station at Mill Point is expected to be about the same as that of the Oaks, Jackson said. Construction will be completed in two phases and phase one will begin this summer, expected to be ready for fall 2012.

Though the housing selection process for the neighborhood has not yet been determined, Jackson said he did not think students would be assigned to apartments randomly.

"I would think that students that are going to live there would be able to select the type of floor plan they'd like," he said.

All apartments will come furnished and will include four bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining area, a living space, a washer and dryer and a porch facing the rest of the community. Students will have access to a central commons building with amenities.

"We are real excited about this," Jackson said. "We've seen it work very well on other campuses and we think it would be a great addition, a great way to spend your senior year with your classmates. I don't know if it'll start off immediately being all seniors, but that's what we're moving toward."

The goal of creating additional housing for upperclassmen is twofold, according to Connie Book, associate provost for Academic Affairs.

"One is for the students themselves to be part of the campus so they have all the assets of the campus on their fingertips," she said. "Students who live close to campus are



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY RELATIONS
The Station at Mill Point will offer student amenities that include study rooms, a community kitchen, a fitness room, a large lounge with a fireplace and a swimming pool. Construction will take place in two phases, and the first is set to begin this summer.

more intellectually engaged; they have higher GPAs."

The second reason is that on campuses with four-year residential requirements, upperclassmen naturally serve as mentors to freshmen and sophomores, Book said. In general, students are around more when they're not in class and live closer to campus.

Senior Sarah McKenna said she thought the proposed plans for the neighborhood looked nice, but she would not choose to live there if given the opportunity.

"When you live on campus, you don't learn how to live out of college," she said.

McKenna said her

experience in an off-campus apartment has been an educational one as she has needed to become more independent.

"I lived in The Oaks sophomore year and I didn't have to think about anything," she said. "The rent and utilities were taken care of."

Sophomore Adrienne Brooks, who was denied on-campus housing for next year, said she liked the idea of the new complex because it offers more flexibility.

"I think it's a good thing because it will allow more juniors and seniors to live on campus if they want to," she

said. "The location's not that bad."

Each year, about 300 rising juniors and seniors are denied on-campus housing because of space constraints in order to have enough room for freshmen and sophomores, who are required to live on campus.

Jackson and Book said there are no plans to implement a four-year requirement.

"We'll be going into it wanting a lot of student input," Jackson said. "It won't be a huge complex. I think the location's pretty neat because it's very convenient, but it's not right in the middle of campus."

Lack of funding creates uncertainty about completion of Multi-Faith Center

Sam Parker
Senior Reporter

The beginning date of construction on Elon University's Multi-Faith Center remains unclear because of lack of funding.

Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life, said the center's construction is contingent upon raising funds before any groundbreaking can occur. Unlike the new residence halls, which are funded by bonds, and the Elon Town Center, which will be funded by business leases, the Multi-Faith Center depends on donations for its construction.

"It doesn't affect student tuition or fees as its construction is being fundraised," Jackson said. "But we have to have the money committed before we can start construction since this facility won't be revenue producing."

Jackson said University Advancement is currently raising funds for the center through a \$100 million campaign that began in fall 2008. He said fundraising, which is more than 80 percent complete, will be directed primarily to the institution's endowment, but will also contribute to building new athletic facilities, completing the Academic Village and constructing the Multi-Faith Center.

Jackson said the Center holds as much priority as other campus construction projects because it directly addresses The Elon Commitment's goal of preparing students to be global citizens.

Senior Zach Jordan, co-founder of Better Together, an interfaith, action-oriented student organization, said though the idea of the center focuses on core Elon Commitment principles, he believes students are going to need to make conscious efforts to involve themselves in multi-faith conversations once the Center is complete.

"The administration throws around a lot of large words about engaged citizenship and inspired leaders and global citizens and all these things, but it's really up to the students to make that

a reality," Jordan said. "It's not going to happen organically - it may, which would be great, but we're going to have to take measures to ensure that it does, otherwise it's just a waste of time. Why build a multi-faith center if you don't have students who have an interest in interfaith activities?"

Lynn Huber, associate professor of religious studies, said she believes some conversations amongst students will happen naturally, but she also thinks some intentionality must come from the individuals directing the center so that opportunities for such conversations can be created.

"I mean, you do have to kind of speak openly, honestly and be forthright, but I think it's also helpful for people to have some guidance, especially for those people who have never been involved in multi-faith conversations before, to have set ground rules," Huber said.

Beyond the conversational component the center will offer, Huber said she believes the Multi-Faith Center will serve as a physical, visual component for Elon's already increasing religious diversity.

"It says that people of different faith backgrounds are welcome here, and I think having that space will say a lot and hopefully make Elon a more vibrant place in terms of religious diversity," Huber said.

Sophomore Abbey Keifer, president of Lutherans, Episcopalians and Friends (LEAF), a Christian fellowship student organization, said she believes expansion is necessary so that all campus religious organizations, new or old, can enjoy more space and opportunities.

"The little Truitt Center is really small now," Keifer said. "There's one, or I guess two, meeting rooms, but we kind of fight over it all the time. So, it's nice to have this big building that's in the plans, and it's about time. If we're focusing so heavily on diversity and increasing our opportunities for people of other faiths and cultures, it's about time that we have this great big center so that we can attract people of lesser known faiths or less popular faiths."

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