

Multi-faith, Substance Free Learning Communities added in Colonnades

Grace Elkus
Senior Reporter

A multi-faith learning community and substance-free housing will be established this fall, joining the 17 already established learning communities on campus. Learning communities are meant to unite students around common interests and are given additional funding for floor programming and activities that relate to the community's theme.

The multi-faith community, called Better Together, will house 11 male and female students on the first floor of Colonnades D. Both freshmen students and upperclassmen will live together and participate in the community's programming and events, which will include learning about different religious and philosophical identities.

"The multi-faith learning community is coming specifically out of the strategic plan, so that's a way we can help the unprecedented commitment," said Evan Heiser, assistant director of Residence Life.

The mission of Better Together is to bring together students from various faiths, an idea that goes hand in hand with The Elon Commitment. The strategic plan has eight themes, the first being a commitment to diversity and global engagement.

Promoting interfaith dialogue is one of the objectives in the strategic plan, where Elon University outlines its commitment to prepare students for life in a diverse world. There are

already plans to expand the Better Together community in the coming years, according to Heiser.

"If the demand is there, we will expand," he said. "We want to make learning communities as big as they can sustainably be, so every year the learning community sizes will change."

The new Alcohol and Substance-free Housing for Elon Students (ASHES) is already at full capacity. Elon had made plans to start the learning community last year, according to Heiser, but at the time the number of applicants was not large enough to sustain the community.

"We think part of it is that last year, people didn't know that it was coming," he said. "Now that we had a full year to advertise for it, they knew what it was."

This fall, 14 upperclassmen living in Colonnades E will be committed to living in an environment free of alcohol, tobacco and drug substances. Students in this community are not allowed to be in the possession of these substances regardless of their age or where the substances are used.

The rules of the learning community also indicate students are not allowed to return to their rooms intoxicated or disturb their neighbors because of intoxication. Breaches of this commitment may result in administrative action to remove the individual from the community.

Residents in the ASHES community will interact with faculty outside the classroom and participate in service

projects, study sessions and field trips.

Each learning community has a faculty adviser who oversees programming and works directly with the resident assistant. Residents in the community also often contribute to the programming schedule.

Erica Green, an Elon sophomore who will be returning to the eco-friendly Sustainable Living community for a second year, said she was appreciative that she was able to help plan activities.

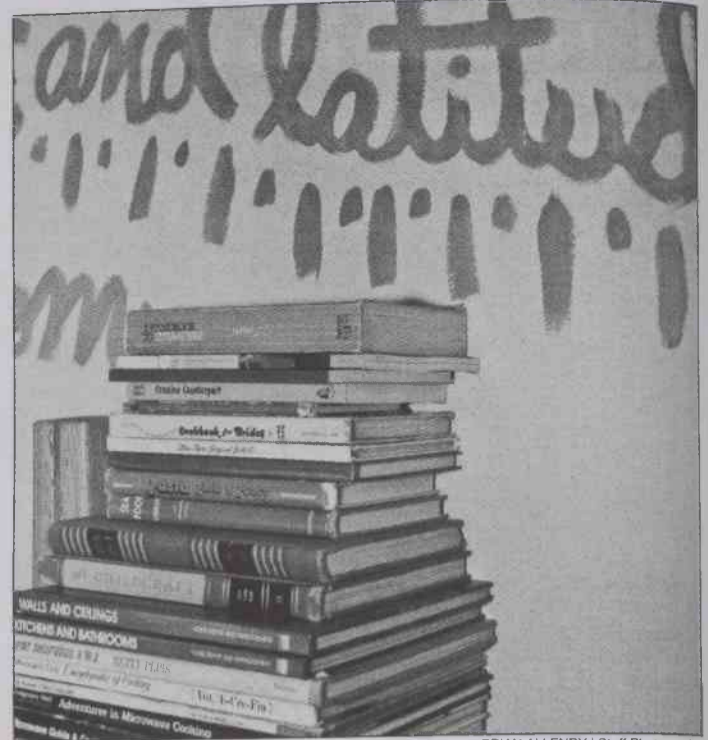
"We had four separate committees each consisting of a different group of people," Green said. "We took on different areas and planned certain events we would want to participate in."

Some learning communities, including the ASHES community, require participation in at least two activities per semester.

"All students in the learning communities go through an application process and write essays, and really show an interest in it," Heiser said.

Green recognizes the impact that living in a learning community had on her first year at Elon and said the addition of the new communities will play a key role in Elon's development.

"I was able to meet people right away and feel a sense of community," she said. "My experience at Elon was affected in a positive way. I think it is great to add new communities and offer new experiences for every type of person at Elon. It is a great way to promote diversity across the campus."



BRIAN ALLENBY | Staff Photographer
Creative students in the Arts and Letters Learning Community are able to express themselves through wall art in Trollinger House. This renovated church is considered on-campus housing and can house up to 15 upperclassmen.

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Better Together: A Multi-faith Community- Colonnades D	Communications- Sloan Hall 1st Floor
Deutsches Haus- Colonnades A	Elon College Fellows- Danieley Center N
La Casa Italiana- Colonnades A	Fine Arts- Virginia Hall 1st Floor
La Maison Francaise- Colonnades A	Health and Wellness- Colonnades D
Japanese House- Colonnades A	Honors Floor- Colonnades C
Sustainable Living- Colonnades C	Honors Pavilion- Academic Village
Love School of Business- Colonnades A	International Pavilion- Academic Village
Arts and Letters- Trollinger House, Staley Hall 1st Floor	Math, Science and Engineering- Colonnades D
La Casa de Espanol- Colonnades A	ASHES- (Alcohol and Substance-free Housing for Elon Students)- Colonnades E
Service Learning Community- Staley Hall 1st Floor	

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Attend our interest meeting at 6 p.m. Sept. 7 in The Pendulum office. There will be pizza and refreshments for everyone.

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Feb. 2011

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Find us by using the side door of the Elon Town Center and coming up to the third floor.
We look forward to seeing you!



Aug. 2011