

Elon makes plans for Vibrant Alumni Network

Emily Hines
Reporter

Students rarely consider what their relationship with Elon will be like after graduation. From freshmen to seniors, the thought is often pushed to the back of the mind.

"Think to a friendship in life where something happened that caused you to put less time and energy into the relationship, and so it drifted apart," said Sallie Hutton, director of alumni engagement and an Elon University graduate. "We do not want your relationship with Elon to be like that."

This is why the Alumni Association at Elon is building a new Vibrant Alumni Network, with the goal of increasing the number of volunteer Elon Alumni from 250 to 750 by 2014. This plan was approved by the Board of Alumni in early May 2011.

Amy Carraux Price graduated from Elon in 2007 and sees the new network

as "a spring board for continual alumni engagement."

As the plan for the Vibrant Alumni Network states, there are three components to being an engaged alumni: being an informed and involved partner, being an advocate of Elon and investing in the institution through annual gifts.

Alumni will receive a Menu of Alumni Volunteer Opportunities, which provides reference to various ways they can get involved. Some of the opportunities on the Menu include providing internships to current students, being a guest speaker on campus and assisting with affinity group fundraising.

"I think alumni will be excited to see the expanded opportunities that they will have to be involved with the Alumni Volunteer Network," said 2007 graduate John Gardner.

Gardner currently serves as the alumni adviser for Lambda Chi Alpha.

The network will allow alumni to connect with other Elon graduates through local chapters and affinity groups. The chapters hold events that inform them on the changes and happenings at Elon.

The Vibrant Alumni Network also seeks to increase the number of awards given to alumni from seven to 30 by 2014. They hope these awards will be given by the various schools on campus.

The Alumni Association and current alumni both agree that Elon students gain from the Vibrant Alumni Network with more internship, career and mentoring opportunities that are specifically geared toward students in the Elon Career Network, which provides a database of Elon alumni and where they are currently working.

"One thing we can provide is a glimpse of what you might experience when you leave the Elon bubble," said Michael Bumbry, president of the Young Alumni Council.

Highlights of the Vibrant Alumni Network

- Expansion of the Elon alumni volunteer network
- Preparing students for life as an Elon alum
- Celebration of the accomplishments of Elon alumni
- Bringing alumni back to campus
- Expansion of regional alumni outreach

Information courtesy of the Elon University Alumni Association

Students fail to take advantage of SGA loan program for textbooks, other expenses

Nick Zanetti
Senior Reporter

Elon's Student Government Association offers loans of up to \$300 and any current Elon student may apply for the loan. However, no students have applied this year.

"The loan is meant to be for textbooks or other student expenses. SGA decided to do this program to help students who might be in a financial bind," said senior Nick Livengood, executive treasurer of SGA. It gives students another resource to help them pay for college expenses."

There is no interest on the loan, but if students do not pay back the

loan by the due date there is a 10 percent late charge, according to Livengood.

"Three hundred dollars would definitely pay for my textbooks," said senior Kristin Genszler. "I had no idea SGA had this program."

The money for the loan comes out of the SGA account, which is made up of the \$215 activity fee that every

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SGA EXECUTIVE TREASURER

Elon student pays in his or her tuition. SGA receives 51 percent of this money and allocates it among various student organizations. The other 49 percent of the money is split between student life and the media board, according to Livengood.

SGA has budget meetings with student organizations every year

where they decide how to allocate money.

"All the activity fee money goes back to students," Livengood said.

Although she said the loan would be enough to pay for textbooks, Genszler said she would rather have the money go toward the organization she is involved with, Cinelon.

"Cinelon is low on money right now, so I think I would rather have the money go towards that," Genszler said.

To apply for a loan, students must fill out a promissory note, an application form and a pre-loan checklist. All the forms are available in the SGA office.



JULIA MURPHY | Staff Photographer

The new Multi-faith Center will be located in the Academic Pavilion. The university plans to break ground this fall.

Tentative date set for Multi-faith Center groundbreaking, funding almost complete

Caitlin O'Donnell
News Editor

The design and budget for Elon University's Multi-faith Center, which will be located in the Academic Pavilion, have been finalized, according to Smith Jackson, vice president and dean of Student Life. The university is currently planning to break ground sometime this fall.

While a formal timetable for construction is still in the works, Jackson said he predicts a blessing of the future location will take place around Homecoming, the week of Oct. 23, 2011 with completion planned for January 2013.

Earlier this summer, two trees were cut down at the site to make room for construction. Eventually, the wood from the trees will be incorporated into the Center, either in an alter, wood paneling or another part of the building, Jackson said.

Funding for the Multi-faith Center has been a key facet of the Ever Elon campaign for a few years, according to Jim Piatt, vice president for University Advancement.

A total of about \$3 million has been raised through the campaign, all from

individual gifts, ranging from \$1,000 to \$1 million.

The original plan was to raise a total of \$3.5 million through the campaign, leaving about \$400,000 left to raise, at this point. The remainder of the cost, which Piatt estimates at about \$1 million, will be funded by the university.

According to Piatt, the vast majority of donors to the project have given anonymously, more than he has ever seen in his years fundraising.

"It represents the fact that people want to support the project but don't believe the Multi-faith Center should have names attached to it," he said.

Typically, when large donations are made, the project is named in honor of the donor. In this case, the name has been decided and the Center will be called Numen Lumen Pavilion.

"(People realize) this is for the university, not to be named after someone," Piatt said.

Construction of the Multi-faith Center is a key component of the university's strategic plan.

Last year, a committee of students, faculty and staff were charged with developing plans for the facility which will include areas for learning, practicing and celebrating religion.

New Middle Eastern Studies program provides chance for class, study abroad

Janae Frazier
Reporter

It is the first semester that an international studies major regional concentration and minor on the Middle East are being offered at Elon University after being approved last spring by Elon University's curriculum committee.

"The Middle East is an important place to study because of its long and rich history," said Brian Digre, professor of history and coordinator of the international studies program. "Religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam come from the Middle East. The Middle East is critically important for understanding the world today in regards to politics, economics, history and religion."

Digre and a group of colleagues worked on creating the Middle East studies program for five years. It is an interdisciplinary program designed to promote a deeper understanding of regional issues and perspectives. Students can take classes in politics, religion, history, philosophy and art history dealing with the Middle East. Arabic classes can also be taken for the minor and international studies major regional concentration.

According to Digre, program development is ongoing; the program is looking to add courses in Hebrew. A course titled Media in the Middle East, which is usually offered during Winter Term, will also be added to the curriculum, said Digre.

Digre said he encourages all students who are Middle East minors or international studies majors with this concentration to visit the region they are studying.

"You gain new perspectives and insights by meeting people there, studying and taking courses with professors in the

region, and it's a great opportunity to improve language skills," he said.

Through the university, students are able to study abroad at Koç University in Turkey, American University in Cairo, University of Haifa in Israel, the Council on International Educational Exchange school in Amman, Jordan and many other places in the Middle East.

"I believe the Middle East is a very good destination for our students," said Woody Pelton, dean of international programs and director of the Isabella Cannon Centre. "It represents a very different culture and allows students to demystify a part of the world that is often misunderstood and poorly represented in the media. I think among the things that would surprise students is how similar the people of the Middle East are to Americans in the way they think and in their values."

Pelton said there are plans to bring more study abroad options in the Middle East to Elon students.

Ronda Ataalla, a junior majoring in international studies with a concentration in the Middle East, said she is really enjoying the major because even though she is Middle Eastern, she is learning so much about her own culture. She is

the founder and president of the Muslim Student Association at Elon.

Ataalla said the Middle Eastern Studies classes she has had so far have been tough and she is excited about taking challenging courses in Cairo

next semester.

Digre said a lot of students are interested in the Middle East and expects the number of students in the program to rise.

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DEAN OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS