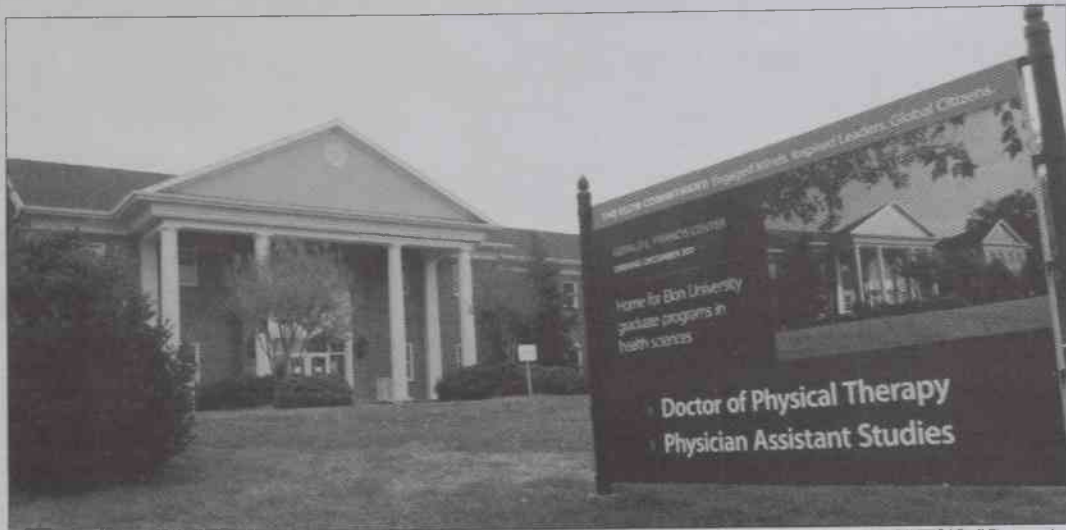


# Francis Center near completion, physician assistant program in works



The Gerald L. Francis Center, which will house Elon's doctorate of physical therapy and master of physician assistant studies programs, is currently undergoing renovations, set to be completed by the first of the year.

Natalie Allison  
Senior Reporter

On New Year's Eve, the complete renovation of the Gerald L. Francis Center is scheduled to be finished. The former Smithfield Ham building will house Elon University's doctorate of physical therapy and new master of physician assistant studies programs.

Demolition and construction of the building's interior began last October, which included replacing the original bathrooms and power, water, heating and cooling systems, said Neil Bromilow, director of planning, design and construction management.

"It seems like we started construction ages ago," Bromilow said. "The only

thing that was kept as part of the old building was the shell — the floors, walls and roof."

Approximately half of the 150,000 square foot building was renovated, he said, including the two-story part facing Haggard Avenue and a one-story portion in the back of the building. Behind the building, a playing field with lights has been completed for undergraduate students since the beginning of the academic year.

Bromilow said a second field would be ready next year.

Mark Archambault, director of the new physician assistant program, said the university has recruited and hired six of eight full-time faculty members for the new program and two part-time medical directors.

Until August 2012, only four employees will be a part of the program's full-time development team.

The university must still approve the physician assistant program's curriculum, though Archambault said the School of Health Sciences Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council and the University Curriculum Committee have all recommended the curriculum for approval.

The Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant will visit in May and review the program in September 2012.

Archambault said the accreditation is a major priority for the school before moving forward.

"The program will not enroll students until ARC-

PA provisional accreditation is obtained," he said. "This ensures that all students who enter and successfully complete the program are eligible to take the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination."

The few faculty members already present in the graduate program have already begun working with undergraduate students in the School of Health Sciences — something Archambault said would continue as the program develops.

Diane Duffy, director of clinical education for the program, serves as a co-mentor to an undergraduate exercise science major's research project on pediatric obesity, and Patti Reagan, physician assistant associate professor, works with the advisory council for the public health major to collaborate on her epidemiology research.

"As the program develops and the full complement of faculty are brought on campus, we'll support and help deliver services to undergraduate students interested in the health professions," Archambault said.

The inaugural class, which will include 38 students, will begin the program in January 2013. Archambault said applications were made available Oct. 28, and the program received more than 60 applications in the first two weeks. The school will begin conducting student interviews in January 2012 until all spaces are filled.

## Leaping lizards: Science grant for Elon Academy

Emily Hines  
Reporter



TERRY TOMASEK

Researchers from Elon University, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke were given \$2.7 million from the National Science Foundation to fund a statewide project

called Herpetology Education in Rural Places and Spaces (HERPS).

Elon is using the grant to fund a class in herpetology, or the study of amphibians and reptiles, taught at Elon Academy. Deborah Long, director of the academy, said the money from the grant is going toward a variety of field trips, materials, salary for instructors and other costs needed for the class.

"The target population for the grant is the rural, typically marginalized people in the area of science," said Terry Tomasek, who teaches herpetology at the Academy.

The grant targets demographics such as citizens with lower socioeconomic standing and ethnic minorities.

"These are the people that we don't typically find in science type activities," Tomasek said. "That is exactly the target population for Elon Academy. That is why it makes such good sense."

The grant supports community-wide events, one of which Tomasek is holding in Alamance County in 2012 called "Celebration." The event will look at the idea of celebrating the reptiles and amphibians that members of the community may not have previously known were in their backyards.

The grant not only goes to educate the general community about these animals, but also high school students.

"Because the nature of this class, my students spend a lot of time outdoors," Tomasek said. "It helps them to understand what's in their own back yard."

The first week of class, the students learned to identify frogs by their call. Tomasek said many of the students sent her emails or posted on the class Facebook page that they heard the frogs at their own home, which they had never heard before.

"It helps them to see a world that they have been missing and notice things that they have never noticed before in the natural environment," she said.

While Tomasek knows the value of lectures, readings and tests, she said she enjoys working with the students in the field the most.

"During our field trip to camp out on the beach I was granted the opportunity to hold a baby sea turtle," said Zydac Joyner, a student taking herpetology this semester. "It was just about the size of a quarter, and it was so adorable. I wanted to keep it and take it home with me right away."

Tomasek said she has seen a similarly positive response from many of her students. Several of those who signed up for the summer said they were terrified of the animals.

"I think that says a lot about them — they are not afraid of challenges or trying something that is outside of their comfort zone," Tomasek said. "That speaks highly of the Elon Academy students."

## Alumnus returns to middle school as principal

Grace Elkus  
Senior Reporter

More than 20 years after graduating from then-Elon College, Greg Holland continues to be surrounded by students on a daily basis. But it isn't college students he's interacting with, it's the students at Western Middle School, where Holland was recently appointed principal.

Holland has lived in Elon his whole life. He attended Elon Elementary and Western Middle. He graduated from Western Alamance High School, received a degree in physical education from Elon and has since then worked in a variety of positions at local schools.

"My hometown is Elon; I grew up right down beside the fire department," he said. "It's special to have the opportunity of being principal of a middle school where you attended school yourself."

After Holland graduated from high school, he served

in the U.S. Marine Corps for four years before enrolling at Elon. He credits Elon for his success in the education field and said he especially appreciates the faculty that helped prepare him for life after college.

"My professors in the education department, and specifically in the physical education department, prepared me by making sure that we understood what it meant to be a professional and how many lives you would impact if you got into this profession," Holland said.

Barry Beedle, professor of exercise science, taught Holland in exercise sociology 20 years ago. He remembers Holland as a quiet,



GREG HOLLAND

conscientious student who showed a lot of potential.

"He was an intelligent young man," Beedle said. "He did well on tests and on assignments. I know he has gone through the ranks in the school systems and has been very successful, so I wasn't surprised to see his name in the paper. That's a very prestigious position to be principal of Western Middle. I'm sure they were looking for a very good person."

After graduating from Elon, Holland worked as a physical education teacher and a football and baseball coach for 10 years before he got into administration. Holland said he transitioned to administration so he could have a positive impact on as many kids as possible, because as a coach he felt limited to the relationships with the players on his team.

Holland has maintained a relationship with Elon University by working with as many student teachers and education majors as possible.

## National group pushes fight for student aid

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any further decisions, Murphy said. Financial Planning cannot determine what the exact outcomes may be.

"We do not yet have any indication of how much any possible cuts would be, or how many students would no longer be eligible if the eligibility parameters are tightened," he said.

Dan Anderson, director of University Relations, was

forwarded an email from NAICU about the online petition and made sure an article was placed on E-net about the drive.

So many students receive financial aid through federal programs, whether they are loans or grants, and they need to let their state representatives know that student aid is important to them, he said.

One student, freshman Dan Sheehan, is an Elon Commitment Scholar and also receives the Pell Grant. He is

already taking out student loans and said if the Pell Grant were reduced or done away with altogether it would nearly double the amount he would have to pay back after his time at Elon.

But he is still optimistic. "Well, I am definitely going to make it work because that's how I've always been, but it will definitely make it hard," Sheehan said. "I am here on scholarship. I am not wealthy by any means of the word, so

it will definitely take some creativity."

NAICU's initial expectations were exceeded more than a week ago in its online petition drive and are now closing in on 100,000 signatures.

But Pals said NAICU need to pass that mark as soon as possible and with as many names as possible.

"The super committee is set to deliver its recommendations by Nov. 23," he said. "Students need to act now."