

## Walker connects with Elon on personal level

Mary Kate Brogan  
Reporter

When Sue Walker arrived at Elon University, many of the buildings on campus didn't exist. Back then, the library was in McEwen Communications building, the student center, nurse's station and bookstore were all located in Long and there were only six buildings in Danieley Center. The Environmental Services employee has seen Elon's student population double, from about 2,500 to more than 5,000.

Walker, known to most of Virginia and West's residents as "Sue" or "Miss Sue," has been working at Elon for 26 years and in West Area for the past decade. Her job includes cleaning the bathrooms of West and the halls of Virginia, but, in addition to her duties, she also gets to know her residents.

"One of my favorite things about working at Elon is meeting and interacting with students," Walker said. "I like to think I (look out for the students). I like to think if one of them came to me and asked me for advice, I think I would try to talk to them just like they were one of my grandchildren."

During her time here, Walker's family has quadrupled in size, from her four children to nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

According to sophomore Rachel Flint, a resident of Virginia, Walker's family values show through in her other interactions at Elon.

"She is a motherly figure," Flint said. "She's got a very warm heart and she's open to everybody whether she knows you or not. She's one of those people that you remember how they made you feel more than what they said."

Flint met Walker on move-in day this year and they participated in Elon's Take a Student to Lunch program earlier this month.

There, the two talked about family, the holidays and Flint's plans to transfer back to Guilford College,

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employee, described Walker as "caring, friendly and easy to get along with."

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where she attended school last year, at the end of the semester.

"There's a handful of people that are the best people I've ever met in my life here," Flint said. "She's probably one of those people. I told her I was going to shrink her and take her to Guilford in my pocket."

Several of Walker's coworkers can attest to Walker's kind nature. Denise Haith, fellow Environmental Services

employee, described Walker as "caring, friendly and easy to get along with."

"Sue is a kind-hearted woman who cares a lot for her students and

is sometimes misunderstood for the care she has," said Scott Hendershot, assistant director of West Area.

Flint agrees that sometimes students can be a bit too quick to roll their eyes at Walker but feels for the most part that students appreciate her.

"I think (some students) take her for granted and they think she's going to be there no matter what," Flint said. "I'm a very firm believer in (the idea that) people are all very special and they all have a different something to offer the world. (Walker's) something is a something that everybody can learn from and grow from."

Walker said she is glad that Elon has not had to cut back on employees because of the current economy and is thankful to have her job at Elon.

"I've had good experiences and some bad experiences," Walker said. "I've met a lot of professor's friends when I worked in Fine Arts. Elon's just a good place to work. They've been good to me."



Sue Walker has been an employee with Environmental Services at Elon for 26 years. The best part of her job, she said, is interacting with students and fellow staff members.

## Writing selected as focus of QEP, plan being developed

Caitlin O'Donnell  
News Editor

The process of developing students' writing abilities will be restructured in coming years as part of the Quality Enhancement Plan, an initiative required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

A committee is being assembled under the leadership of Peter Felten, assistant provost and director of the center for the advancement of teaching and learning, to develop a plan addressing specific improvements within the area of writing. The proposal will be submitted to SACS in November of next year, which will then provide suggestions to ensure the plan is focused and doable. While the proposal has not yet been discussed, Provost Steven House said it could potentially restructure the writing course for first-year students.

"Writing is such a crucial part of being an informed citizen and making informed decisions that every institution needs to get better at it," he said, noting that he hopes Elon will eventually be recognized nationally for its writing instruction. "To put it simply, we're good but we want to be much better writers."

The QEP focus was narrowed down from suggestions submitted beginning last semester. From there, specific proposals were written by professors for the top six ideas and feedback was gathered from students, faculty and staff.

According to House, the top three QEP proposals, which were submitted to Senior Staff Oct. 18, included writing, information literacy and intellectual engagement. After discussions with faculty from the English Department, School of Business and School of Communications and the Academic Council, House said the staff decided writing was a far-reaching area in which Elon hopes to improve.

Paula Patch, lecturer in English, was involved in writing the proposal for writing and said focusing on writing at Elon doesn't mean fixing a broken process, but rather strengthening existing facilities, programs, resources, instruction and development for faculty and staff.

"The overall goal is for students to have an integrated writing experience, in which they can see and make connections between the writing they do across each level of coursework, within their co- and extracurricular activities, and throughout all four years of their Elon experience," she said.

## New public health studies major offers broad view of health, national career path

Edith Veremu  
Copy Editor

This year, a new major in public health studies has been added to the course offerings. The program began in 2008 as a minor and the proposal for establishing it as a major was approved last semester.

"Public health has been traditionally offered at the graduate level and offering it at an undergrad level creates more opportunities," said Kristen Sullivan, coordinator of the public health studies advisory committee and associate professor of human service studies. "More and more schools are offering these types of programs because the demand is there. There's a lot of support to promote undergrad education like this."

Students' interest and the demand for the expertise in today's society pushed the process of turning the minor into a major, said Eric Hall, committee member and associate professor of exercise science. The interdisciplinary major requires 28 core hours, 16 hours within a focal area, sociocultural or biological,

and four elective hours. Some courses come from with the General Studies, economics, biology, philosophy and exercise science departments.

"I think public health studies sort of coincides pretty nicely with a lot of other majors like exercise science, possibly psychology and human services," Hall said. "All three of them work very well with public health studies and students can pick a track in what they want to do. Students can play to their strengths in what they feel most comfortable."

Some courses in the major, such as Introduction to Epidemiology, also count toward the minor. Sullivan has taught this course and Global Health since they've been offered and she said the major comes at a great time because it relates directly to the issues society is currently facing regarding health disparities and policy decisions.

"We have a big focus on health disparities, looking at how oppressed and marginalized groups tend to suffer more from health-impairing conditions and figuring out ways how to eradicate those disparities," she

said. "It's domestic and global and there's a huge intersection between public health and development."

Although she's not a public health major, senior Rachel Banner, an exercise science major, said she would have liked to pursue a degree in the new major and was on track to minor in public health but opted not to because of time constraints.

Banner said she would like a career in public health after graduation and sees herself going into the education or policy development areas of public health.

"I'm a human services minor and I originally wanted to do occupational therapy but I saw myself more working with people," Banner said. "My goal is to get communities more active and healthy. That requires knowledge of exercise science principles and the human services aspect for working with communities."

Because public health is broad, the major prepares students like Banner for graduate school, according to Hall.

"It allows students to influence the health of society and gives them jobs in local,

federal and state agencies looking into health," he said. "There's a lot of issues with our society right now when it comes to health. The job market should be pretty high for this major."

Banner is optimistic about the major and agreed with both Hall and Sullivan on the importance of

its creation at Elon.

"I'm really glad they've added public health studies," she said. "It's something that's very important currently in the U.S. just because our ways of communication and behavior have changed so rapidly in the past decades that it's having an effect in the health."

In its first year, the public health studies major has 30 students, demonstrating how much

students are interested, Sullivan said. There will be students graduating with the major this spring and those with minors will not have to add many extra classes to successfully complete the major.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW MAJOR

- 28 core hours
- 16 hours in focal area
- 4 elective hours

Courses come from various departments including General Studies, economics, biology, philosophy and exercise science.