

DIVINE INTERVENTION

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THE PENDULUM

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Astley's absence creates space for reflection, dialogue

Elon community shares memory of friend, accepted member of the Class of 2015

Katherine Blunt
Assistant News Editor

He still leaves the light on in her bedroom at night, even though she won't be coming home.

Nearly nine months after the death of his daughter, Malcolm Astley is still learning to cope with his grief, and he is not alone. Both those who knew Lauren Astley personally and those who were moved by her story attended a gathering of friends in her memory Monday afternoon, led by Lauren's parents and Chaplain Jan Fuller.

Lauren Astley was to be a member of the Class of 2015, but was found dead of apparent homicide July 4 in her hometown of Wayland, Mass. She was a suspected victim of relationship violence, and her former boyfriend Nathaniel Fujita has been charged with her murder.

"Although romantic relationships happen between two people, (relationships) affect every person involved in their lives," said Elizabeth Nelson, coordinator for violence prevention at Elon.

Nelson helped plan three other events in memory of

Lauren's life that will be held throughout the week.

Those in attendance sat in a circle and took turns sharing how Lauren's life forever changed their own. Some offered anecdotes that inspired both laughter and tears, and others voiced reflections punctuated by moments of deep silence.

Freshman Annie Schaffer, who was to be Lauren's roommate, welcomed the chance to express her sorrow.

"I didn't really tell anyone last semester about (how I was feeling)," Schaffer said. "It was nice to remember her in a group. It's not often everyone comes together like this."

Lauren's story resonates outside of the Elon community as well. Sophomore Lindsay Glosson, who attended summer camp in New Hampshire with Lauren for several consecutive years, marveled at how many people "liked" a Facebook page dedicated to the memory of Lauren's life. The number topped 20,000.

"If we had told Lauren that her life had touched this many people, she would have laughed at us," Glosson said. "She really left a footprint on this place."



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Elon University designed Memory & Witness events to commemorate Lauren Astley and educate students about signs of unhealthy relationships.

Memory & Witness

Religion & Relationships:
Messages & Misunderstandings

7 p.m. Wednesday KOCB 208

A panel discussion featuring faculty and staff members sharing how their religious tradition addresses romantic relationships.

Healthy or Unhealthy? A
Conversation about Choices

7 p.m. Thursday Moseley 206

Go online for coverage of Tuesday evening's conversation with Malcolm Astley about Lauren.

Sponsored by the Office of Health Promotion, Interpersonal Relations and Community Well-Being, the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life and the Office of Violence Prevention and Response.



MERISSA BLITZ | Staff Photographer

(Left to right) Jan Fuller, University Chaplain, Malcolm Astley and Mary Dunne, Lauren Astley's parents and sophomore Lindsay Glosson listened as friends and Elon students talked about her life at a ceremony in her memory Monday afternoon.

Junior-senior cap on campus housing influences learning communities

Mary Kate Brogan
Senior Reporter

For years, Elon University's learning communities have depended on juniors and seniors to act as unofficial mentors to freshmen and sophomores on their halls. The cross-campus junior-senior cap on housing has affected those who wish to live in learning communities just as much as it has those who wish to live in on-campus housing.

Rising juniors and seniors have felt the push to move off campus to give more spots to rising freshmen and sophomores because of the cap, according to Michael Carignan, associate professor of history and associate director of honors who

coordinates the Honors Living and Learning Communities.

"I felt like the junior-senior cap that they imposed this year, and whatever message they delivered to kind of let juniors and seniors know that it was time to go, meant that we got no applications from rising juniors and seniors to live in the (Honors) LLC," Carignan said. "I think that that's detrimental to the community we're trying to build on the floor there. We want different grades represented. I don't know what we can do next year, but it's certainly on my agenda to make sure rising juniors at least know that we'd like a few on the (Honors) floor."

Laura Anderson, special projects coordinator for Residence Life learning

communities, sees the lower amount of juniors and seniors returning a different way.

"Before the application even was available to students, the (faculty) advisers were made aware of how many first years had to be in a community and how many spaces had to be reserved for first years," Anderson said. "Fewer rising juniors and seniors applied than sophomores simply because a lot of them have been in the community for two years and they're ready to do something else or they want to transition off-campus."

Even so, the Honors floor represents just one of many learning communities that have felt a shift because of the junior-senior cap. Anderson said Residence Life has not had to turn many upperclassmen away, but Carignan said he has heard from juniors and seniors currently in the learning communities that more of them would have applied if they had thought that there would be spots available to them.

"I'm worried that we missed a chance to keep some more elders around because of the campus-wide formula they had that wasn't really respectful of the needs or precedents of the Honors floor," Carignan said. "But if they need beds for first-years and the only ones left over are in the LLCs, well then the LLCs should be expected to adjust to that and sometimes that can work out well."

Carignan also expressed concern that the Honors learning communities may not have enough freshman applicants to fill the extra spots that rising juniors and seniors did not fill. The Honors hall in Colonnades C typically holds spots for 16 freshmen and the William R. Kenan

Jr. Honors Pavilion holds spots for 10 freshmen. This year, there will be four extra spots available on each hall because of the smaller amount of returning rising juniors and seniors. Typically more than enough first-years apply to fill the spots in any given learning community, Anderson said.

"If there was a situation where a community didn't fill, I'm not sure how it would be handled," Anderson said. "It might be an instance of getting the students that are accepted in the community to recommend those that they know might be interested because I think that there are students on campus who haven't applied for whatever reason, but, when given that kind of nudge from a friend in the community, will say, 'Oh yeah, well I do want to do it. I want to try.'"

Despite the change in the number of juniors and seniors in learning communities, the numbers for sophomores have remained consistent, according to Anderson. Senior Katie O'Brien, student learning community assistant and media arts and entertainment major, said there are several reasons that freshmen usually stay in learning communities as sophomores.

"Mainly people who are in learning communities as freshman are going to want to come back," O'Brien said. "I was in a learning community my freshman year and I think everybody reapplied for their sophomore year, just because you're used to it. That way, you don't have to go through housing selection. It's just so much easier, and hopefully you liked it enough to go back."



GLORIA SO | Staff Photographer

Honors Fellows residents hang out in the Honors Learning Community located in the Kenan Honors Pavilion. The wall murals were painted as part of a Learning Community competition.

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