

# Re-envisioning single-sex dorms:

*Why Elon's innovative spirit has outgrown the role of single-sex housing on campus*

The single-sex residence halls on campus — Smith, Carolina and West — have long been a part of the history of the university. Thousands of students have lived in these halls and have formed lifelong friendships. With that being said, the main purpose single-sex dormitories serve is now in direct conflict with the Elon Commitment to creating a dynamic on-campus living experience.

125 years removed from 1889, Elon University is a more popular college choice than ever. This meteoric rise to success has forced our university to mature quickly in order to adapt to the changing times. Luckily, one of Elon's many strengths is its exceptional ability to change with the times while maintaining its core values.

The Elon Commitment is the administration's plan to continue to push our university to new levels of national recognition. At the core of the Elon Commitment is a simple vision for the student body that states that it is the goal of the university to challenge the minds of the student body while inspiring them to become global citizens.

One of the main themes of the Commitment is to create a re-envisioned residential experience on campus that serves as a platform for personal growth and inclusivity. Residential neighborhoods such as the Station at Mill Point, the Oaks, Colonnades and the soon-to-be-completed Global Neighborhood all encourage students to break out of their comfort zones and explore a more diverse world around them. With the administration striving to create a more accepting and inclusive residential experience on campus, it is clear that single-sex residence halls no longer have a role on our campus.

A residence hall is often a student's first home away from home. When placed in single-sex residence halls, students find

themselves surrounded by other students who often look and think like they do. Instead of reaching out and exploring the diverse world that a college education provides, students are stuck in a homogenous niche.

This does not prepare our student body for life after Elon. To deprive students of the chance to form friendships with people who are different from them is a lost opportunity. When living in a co-ed residence hall, students live side-by-side with different ethnicities, ideologies and genders. In addition to fostering a feeling of inclusivity and acceptance, mixed housing also teaches students to respect one another regardless of gender, sexual identity or ethnicity.

Not only do male and female students live next to one another in the Station at Mill Point, but they can reside in the same apartments if they so choose. Gender-neutral housing is nothing new in the world of higher education, but it shows that Elon is not afraid of being progressive in order to provide its students with the best experience possible.

In addition to creating a more diverse and inclusive residential experience, the administration is also trying to challenge and stimulate the minds of its students. Living Learning Communities are great environments for students to immerse themselves in a certain academic focus. Learning Communities provide students with the opportunity to challenge themselves intellectually while being surrounded by other students who are passionate about their education.

Instead of forming friendships rooted in gender or ethnic similarities, students who reside in these communities form friendships based on similar academic interests. These communities can be found in many of our residential neighborhoods on

campus with the exception of the single-sex dormitories. The lack of opportunity for students to pursue their academic passions to the fullest in these single-sex dorms is yet another glaring example of why these dorms are outdated.

The artificial arrangement found in same-sex dorms does not benefit students in any way nor does it reflect the world outside the university. Elon's commitment to create global citizens, fully prepared for life after college, is not enhanced by

single-sex dormitories. It is time for Elon's housing to completely mirror its values and the world around us by desegregating single-sex dorms.

Our university has surpassed many other schools as we continue our swift rise to national prominence because we are not afraid of growing into the future. Eliminating single-sex housing embraces the innovative spirit Elon administrators have long embodied.

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