

STAFF EDITORIAL

Research can fulfill more than just a requirement

HOW TO EARN YOUR RESEARCH ELR

TAKE AT LEAST

2 RESEARCH
COURSES
NUMBERED499
OR
498

OR

ENGAGE IN ELON'S SUMMER
UNDERGRADUATE
RESEARCH EXPERIENCE (SURE)WHY DO ONLY 25 PERCENT OF ELON
STUDENTS UTILIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY?

HOW WE SEE IT

Elon students should see undergraduate research as an opportunity to expand on their learning and community.

Elon University is known for the vast amount of opportunities for learning and growth that it offers to its students. Such opportunities range from exotic study abroad courses to career development to service learning, but one of the most valuable — though often overlooked, is research.

With the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR) occurring this past weekend and SURF Day approaching in the coming weeks, it is an appropriate time to recognize the research students have done and think about other ways to get involved.

The university defines research as “activities undertaken by an undergraduate student with significant faculty mentoring that lead to new scholarly insights and/or creation of new works, add to the discipline and involve critical analysis of the process and/or outcome of the activities.” Currently, approximately 25 percent of students participate in mentored undergraduate programs.

For many, the term “undergraduate research” immediately brings about thoughts of conventional or stereotypical research with beakers and chemical reactions. But students of any discipline can engage in undergraduate research — including the kind outside of the laboratory.

One of the biggest problems with research at Elon is the fact that many students do it simply to fulfill a requirement or gain credit for an Experiential Learning Requirement (ELR). Elon College Fellows and Honors Fellows are required to complete research as a part of their program, and many students conduct research to simply be able to graduate as Fellows.

But it is important to remember that the university establishes such requirements for a reason. Students must recognize the numerous ways that research can help them and the greater community.

Through the ELR, Elon hopes to encourage experiential learning for students through giving them oppor-

tunities to incorporate experiences into their education across a number of different fields. Research is considered one of these experiences because it allows students to take what they are learning in the classroom and ask new questions, form predictions and reach conclusions.

Conducting research is necessary in answering important questions that can further academic disciplines or contribute toward solving bigger issues. Instead of looking at it as simply a requirement, students must look at

to conduct research in their line of work. Often, results from research in a number of different fields yield answers that can help people, a goal that so many college students have for themselves.

The research students conduct in college can be used as the groundwork for further research in their professions. It can be much more than just a requirement if students take the time to develop research proposals to their full potential and take the time to reach out to professors who will help their ideas flourish.

The university also places a large emphasis on the mentoring process during research. Through research, students have the unique opportunity to work intimately with their research mentor. This chance to learn from an experienced professor in a one-on-one setting is valuable to the learning process and is a privilege that is rare for students not pursuing research.

When we consider the opportunities for research Elon students are given, the percentage of those participating in research should be much higher than just 25 percent. The opportunities are here to give students a multidimensional learning experience, and they should be utilized.

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the bigger picture to realize what their research can accomplish.

In addition, research should not only be viewed as something done as an undergraduate, but also as a career. Many professors at Elon continue

Don't allow fall classes to ruin your spring

Besides the few people who truly mastered the four-year plan in “Elon 101,” April is known by students for more than just its showers.



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It's one of the few times of the year when we log into OnTrack and actually look at “Degree Audit.” We grab a notebook and jot down the next courses to take and what sections and teachers are being offered.

Some prioritize by class time, and may even filter their search to

only see classes that start after 10 a.m. Others focus on the professor and browse through RateMyProfessor.com, even though the reviews tend to come from either the teacher's pet or the kid who never did any of the readings but still attests his low grade to the teacher's lack of knowledge and understanding.

The problem is that it's just a piece of paper. Even after nervously watching the spots in the class slowly get filled as we await our registration time, the final schedule isn't real yet. We like the sound of it, the way it looks in our calendars, but we don't know how we'll feel when fall comes around.

Will we be as content as we are with that schedule now, or will

we look at it and wish we thought about how little time we've left ourselves outside of class? Will we fear that cumulatively the workload will be too much or, after a

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blue skies out the window it might be exhilarating to imagine a Friday with no classes, but it's still just a piece of paper. How are we to know if that day off will really be worth it

rejuvenating summer, will we wish we challenged ourselves more?

We are basing our fall semester on our spring semester mindset. As we sit in shorts and look at the

— if the extra classes we added on other days of the week cause more stress than just going to class on Friday would induce.

The answer is simple: We don't.

Without knowing what new things we will try, who we will meet or what we'll overcome this summer, we won't know exactly who we'll be. It's fair to assume our general interests and majors will remain the same, but every minor detail that we stress about now may not even matter by the time this piece of paper becomes reality.

So as we feel our hearts beating faster and faster with each spot that gets filled in our intended courses, we must remember that, as of now, it's not real. If in the end we don't change significantly, our schedules can. Letting lines on a piece of paper taint our last weeks here is just as silly as that kid's grammatically incorrect review on a tentative teacher's Rate My Professor page.

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THE PENDULUM

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