

# Seminar ditches cash for time-based currency

Honors course project provides services through time-based currency

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When students return to Elon University in the fall, there will be a new way to find a ride to Harris Teeter. The Better Alamance Timebank — a way for students and community members alike to acquire hours that act as currency through service — will officially launch May 9.

The timebank is the product of a long-term project by the Honors seminar called “Building Better Communities with Civic Technologies.”

**An hour is always an hour — regardless of the service offered. You can use the credits in turn to receive services — or you can donate them to others.**

“The timebank is an alternative form of currency that uses time exchange instead of money,” said sophomore Lindsey Jordan, director of the project’s community outreach team. “It doesn’t matter what the scale is — somebody’s hours spent teaching a yoga



class is equivalent to somebody’s hour babysitting or somebody’s hour driving or anything like that. It places more value on any work that people do.”

The concept of timebanking has been around for decades, according to Derek Lackaff, associate professor of communications. Lackaff, who proposed the class as a sophomore spring seminar for the Honors Fellows cohort, said the creation of digital platforms for managing timebanks has “changed the game.”

“Before digital, you basically had a club of people that already knew each other,” he said. “And with these digital platforms, you can actually find people that you might not already know, so

they allow for these more diverse types of interaction.” Lackaff said that timebanks are a perfect way to participate in the growing “sharing economy” in the United States, which includes things such as Uber and Airbnb. “A timebank is actually a real sharing economy because it’s not a company that’s extracting profits out of all these interactions, it’s a group of people that come together and are volunteering their time and volunteering their efforts to help each other out,” he said.

Lackaff said a project was built into the class curriculum, but the students ultimately decided they wanted to work together on a larger initiative such as the timebank. The class formed three teams — community outreach, strategic planning and technology — to divide responsibilities.

“Over the course of several weeks, we looked at several different types of platforms and types of projects that we thought might be feasible for this type of project,” he said. “The timebank was

kind of what emerged as the most likely candidate. It’s been a focus of the class since about Spring Break, more or less.”

The class decided on a platform called hourworld.org, which allows community members to sign up online, where they can log hours, request services and offer their own skills to the other members.

“We’ve been starting to do exchanges on the timebank just within our class to get it up and running, and now we actually have some community members that have signed up and made accounts as well,” said sophomore Hope Koene, the class’s project manager. “I think we have 19 or 18 members, which is really cool for us to see that it’s actually spreading to the community already.”

Despite the official launch not being until right before finals, the class isn’t concerned about its long-term prospects. According to Jordan, conversations about sustainability have been a part of the process. They have discussed several options, including Lackaff’s continued management,

## TIMEBANK LAUNCH

**What:** Official launch of the Better Alamance Timebank

**When:** May 9 | 7-9 p.m.

**Where:** Elon Community Church

monthly member meetings over the summer or passing the timebank off to another organization.

The class hopes to work with Elon organizations that may already have connections throughout the community to spread the word about the Better Alamance Timebank.

“Our hope is [the timebank] really is open to everybody in Alamance, both Elon students and community members,” Jordan said.

The launch event will take place 7-9 p.m. May 9 at the Elon Community Church. You can join by going to hourworld.org and selecting “NC-Elon: Better Alamance Timebank” from the list of communities.

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Contributor

Sophomores Ricky Moody, Anna Cosentino, Kimberly Wilson and Lindsey Jordan meet with their team to discuss their civic technology project Better Alamance Timebank.

# Local students perform at NPHC Yard Show

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Elon University’s National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) is hosting its annual Yard Show, in which the historically African-American fraternities and sororities partake in stepping. This year is different from years prior, as the invitation to step in the show has been extended to Elon Elementary’s Step Club.

Elon Elementary’s Step Club has previously performed at basketball games and has been cheered on by the student section. This time, they are showing their stepping skills at 5 p.m. May 6 in Iconic Plaza.

The guest appearance was coordinated by junior Janae Williams, NPHC vice president, who is also a member of the Xi Omnicron chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

Williams has been working directly with the children in the Step Club. She volunteers at the elementary school every Friday, and was the one who asked them to be part of the event.

“The kids have been practicing for the past month,” Williams said.

STEPPING IS VERY IMPORTANT TO MY ORGANIZATION AND TO THE DIVINE NINE ORGANIZATIONS IN GENERAL BECAUSE IT PROVIDES AN EXPRESSIVE OUTLET TO SHOW DEDICATION AND EVEN DEFERENCE TO OUR ANCESTRY. MODERN DAY STEPPING CAN BE TRACED BACK TO AFRICAN DANCE.

**ERIC CUNNINGHAM**  
ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY INC.

“They have performed before, but I think they are a little bit more nervous considering this performance is outdoors and they will have to be as loud as possible. They are nervous, but also very excited to perform.”

Those who were in attendance still remember the basketball game performance by Elon Elementary’s Step Club. Freshman Megan Hernandez-Greene recalls seeing the children perform.

“I was caught off guard at how good they were,” Hernandez-Greene said. “There were some kids in particular that caught my attention because of how passionate they were. Their energy and confidence made me enjoy the performance and I

cannot wait to see them again.”

One of the many components of the NPHC organizations is the stepping they perform at probates or events such as the Yard Show. Eight of the nine total fraternities and sororities in NPHC have been chartered at Elon. The nine organizations are popularly known as the “Divine Nine.” Currently, there are only six active chapters.

Those performing at the Yard Show include: the Sigma Delta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, the Omnicron Epsilon chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, the Sigma Mu chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, the Omnicron Iota chapter of Delta

Sigma Theta Sorority, the Alpha Beta Beta chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, and the Xi Omnicron chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.

Sophomore Eric Cunningham is in Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, and has been stepping with his brothers since his freshman year.

“Stepping is very important to my organization and to the ‘Divine Nine’ organizations in general because it provides an expressive outlet to show dedication and even deference to our ancestry,” Cunningham said. “Modern day stepping can be traced back to African dance.”

Several of the NPHC organizations have visited the

## NPHC YARD SHOW

**What:** Historically African American fraternities and sororities partake in stepping.

**When:** May 6 | 5 p.m.

**Where:** Iconic Plaza

members of the Elon Elementary Step Club in the past. The children know about the importance of stepping and what to expect at the event.

“The children have been taught the history of stepping,” Williams said. “The audience knows them, so I am confident they will support them.”

Williams hopes that everyone in attendance will cheer on the Step Club and appreciate what they bring to the table.

“The kids are going to be amazing,” Williams said. “I love the kids and I hope everyone else that goes to the Yard Show does as well.”

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