

The Elon Commitment: Engaged minds. Inspired leaders. Global citizens.

Elon is a university poised to achieve national prominence. During the past decade, Elon University has defined one of the great success stories in American higher education, rising quickly in stature through wise strategic planning and a student- and learning-centered culture characterized by challenging and innovative academic programs. Guided by the NewCentury@Elon strategic plan, the university has substantially achieved its goal of being a national model of engaged learning, earning top national accreditations for academic programs and accolades such as “number one school to watch” and “hottest college,” national rankings in study abroad, service learning, best value, sustainability and a host of other categories.

Through the next strategic plan, our community will affirm our place among colleges and universities known for academic excellence and exceptional student achievement. The greatest asset in carrying out this plan is our shared sense of mission: that we are an academic community committed to student transformation; that we value freedom of thought and liberty of conscience; that we are a liberal arts university with distinctive professional schools and graduate programs; that we believe in active student engagement; that we are dedicated both to teaching and scholarly accomplishment; and that we believe passionately in the preparation of global citizens, civic engagement, and preparing our students for meaningful lives of work and service. From this shared mission our community has titled our plan for the next decade **The Elon Commitment**.

Our vision for **The Elon Commitment** is simple and powerful: to engage students’ minds and inspire them to act as leaders and global citizens. Key to our success will be a continued focus on increasing the level of academic challenge at the university, with a strong emphasis on liberal arts and sciences at the foundation of an Elon education. We will also continue to value and nurture Elon’s strong sense of community, a link to our historic roots and a source of strength for our future.

The Elon Commitment Strategic Plan is organized around eight themes:

- An unprecedented university commitment to diversity and global engagement
- Supporting a world-class faculty and staff
- Attaining the highest levels of achievement across our academic programs
- Launching strategic and innovative pathways in undergraduate and graduate education
- Stewarding Elon’s commitment to remain a best-value university
- Developing innovative alumni programs to advance and support the Elon graduate
- Establishing a national tournament tradition of athletics success along with the highest academic standards for Phoenix athletics
- Significantly enhancing Elon’s campus with premier new academic and residential facilities and a commitment to protecting our environment

The Elon Commitment Themes

An unprecedented university commitment to diversity and global engagement

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Double need-based financial aid
- Provide 100 percent study abroad access
- Triple international student enrollment and create a campus community that better reflects the world's diversity
- Be a national leader in preparing students to succeed in a multicultural world
- Build a multi-faith center and promote interfaith dialogue
- Develop the Elon Academy as a national model

Elon must do everything possible to prepare students for successful lives in a diverse 21st century world. Today, students' first employment may very well be outside of the United States, and they certainly will compete for careers on an international basis. They will encounter differences in language, cultural perspectives, race, nationality, religious traditions, and political and economic structures like no other generation before them.

In a major initiative to better reflect the world's socio-economic, ethnic and cultural diversity, Elon will double the institutionally funded **need-based financial aid** budget in ten years, and expand endowment-funded need-based financial aid. Elon must not become a gated community open only to those of privilege, and our classrooms and campus life will be much richer when we recruit more students from diverse backgrounds who challenge and lead us by sharing their own life stories, like our Watson, Eure and Susan Scholars.

In addition, Elon will reconfigure **merit-based financial aid** awards, including presidential scholarships, which will be targeted to benefit students whose goals are most in keeping with Elon's mission and values. Students who are serious scholars and experiential learners, those with special artistic or performance talents, and others who have demonstrated passions and skills in service or leadership, will be provided with recognition and financial support as they seek a challenging academic environment and continue their journey of learning.

While Elon leads the nation in **study abroad** participation rates, we have much more work to do in fully engaging with the world. To further strengthen our commitment to global engagement, we will provide new endowed scholarships so that 100 percent of our students can have access to the experiential transformation of international study, regardless of their family finances. Study abroad will be enhanced to include stronger curricular roots and rich international experiences in service, leadership, internships and language study. It will also be essential that we expand study abroad programs to include additional nations, especially China and India, which will have profound influences in the world during our students' lifetimes. Efforts to embrace the world more fully will also be apparent on campus as we triple the number of **international students** who are members of our community.

The Elon community has already experienced the positive impact students from diverse backgrounds can make on the learning environment. Laith Majali '05 of Jordan, a Sundance Film Festival award winner, and Watson Scholar LaToya Marcus '04, who helped transform young lives in Texas through her Teach for America work, are just two examples of young leaders who have influenced all of us in profound ways. They now exemplify the power of an Elon education through their professional accomplishments and service to society. We can imagine the extraordinary effect 300 more students like Laith and LaToya would have on this university, and we understand the importance of recruiting the kind of students who will enrich the experiences of the entire student body.

This same unprecedented commitment to student diversity and global engagement will be furthered by the university in its hiring of faculty and staff and through opportunities for employees to engage in global thinking and have global experiences.

In an aggressive and sustained effort to support and increase ethnic and cultural diversity, Elon will expand support for students of diverse populations and implement elements of a bold plan developed by a special committee to strengthen and expand the role of the **multicultural center**.

We will expand Elon's support for the many religious and spiritual traditions on our campus by building a **multi-faith center** and additional religious living-learning houses, promoting a rich dialogue and championing interfaith understanding and respect, the building blocks for greater world peace in an era of religious conflict.

Strong **civic engagement** and service learning programs are the hallmark of an Elon education. We will partner with local, regional, national and global communities to create innovative solutions to society's most pressing problems at home and around the world. Through **The Elon Commitment**, the School of Education will lead our campus community as we partner with the Alamance-Burlington School System to build stronger schools, provide community leadership and advocacy on behalf of K-12 education, and develop the Elon Academy as a national model of university-school collaboration.

Supporting a world-class faculty and staff

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Accentuate and support Elon's teacher-scholar model
- Fulfill the objectives of the Presidential Task Force on Scholarship
- Establish new professional and leadership development programs
- Accelerate progress on faculty/staff salaries

Elon's greatest asset in support of the goals of the strategic plan is its talented faculty and staff, who are committed to student success, invested in the university's future and make up the fabric of an intimate, caring intellectual community. The university will place a priority on investing in professional development for faculty and staff, fulfilling the vision of **The Elon Commitment**.

The report of the **Presidential Task Force on Scholarship** is one of the cornerstones of this strategic plan. We will continue to expand the number of faculty positions, provide greater summer research and reassigned time funding, and implement other elements of the plan to make the teacher-scholar model of faculty work at Elon a national exemplar. Through this, we will encourage and support faculty scholarship that exemplifies engagement, enriches classrooms and seeks to bring about positive change in the world.

In addition to scholarship, faculty provide leadership in their classrooms and across campus throughout their careers. These roles are critical to the university fulfilling the goals outlined in **The Elon Commitment** and we recognize the riches these efforts bring to our students. We will continue to support and seek new opportunities for faculty in these important roles.

Elon's outstanding staff will be provided opportunities to enhance their leadership and service to the university by gaining new knowledge and skills, including flexibility in pursuing advanced degrees, opportunities for scholarship and engagement with professional associations, and short-term sabbatical opportunities. Staff at every level of the university provide important extensions of our classrooms and share in our vision of engaging minds and inspiring leaders.

Department chairs and staff with supervisory responsibility, as well as those who might follow in their footsteps, will benefit from a newly created **leadership development** program. This initiative will encourage effective mentoring and planning in departments, divisions and schools and make sure that the goals of **The Elon Commitment** are achieved

Finally, Elon must maintain its edge in recruiting and retaining excellent talent through an aggressive plan that provides a rewarding quality of life for our **faculty and staff**.

Attaining the highest levels of achievement across our academic programs

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Create the nation's finest General Education program
- Launch a Center for Engaged Learning
- Graduate students with prestigious academic fellowships, including a Rhodes Scholar
- Advance key programs of national stature (top-100 law school, top-50 undergraduate business school, and others)

At the center of Elon's transformation during the past 10 years has been the strategic choice to nourish the liberal arts and sciences. This, coupled with an already successful practice of engaged learning, are now the cornerstones of an Elon education. New initiatives were launched in the last decade to support these goals, such as an enhanced honors program and the Lumen Prize program, major expansion of the print library collection and technology resources, celebrating faculty, staff and student scholarship at higher levels, and much more. This effort— sometimes summarized under an umbrella phrase “the journey to Phi Beta Kappa”— required broad-based faculty leadership, a significant commitment of resources, and administrative and Trustee support.

Through the initiatives of this plan, Elon intends to move from its present position, as an emerging force in higher education, to become a university of true national prominence. The strategies will include innovative approaches that build on Elon's academic strengths.

Elon's distinctive **General Education** program, already recognized by many as one of the best, will be reconfigured to respond to the 21st century environment, becoming a national beacon for excellence and innovation in undergraduate education. An additional emphasis will be placed on exploring curricular and experiential elements of leadership and how we **inspire the development of leaders** throughout the student's Elon experience.

Elon is also perfectly positioned to become *the* leader of the national conversation on engaged, experiential education by establishing a **Center for Engaged Learning**. We understand the inherent power in Elon's approach to teaching and learning and are ready to make significant contributions to the evolution of higher education through workshops, conferences and publications. We are also committed to deepening the quality and support for each of the Elon Experiences, attaining a position of national leadership for each one. For example, Elon will make the program enhancements and investments to support the best undergraduate research program in the nation.

As part of our commitment to attaining the highest academic benchmarks, Elon is committed to developing a robust model for preparing students to compete for **national fellowships**, including Rhodes Scholarships, and fellowships from the nation's top graduate schools.

In many respects, Elon's academic reputation will be defined during the next decade by programs that reach the very highest level of quality, and we are well on the way toward achieving **national stature** in several areas. Examples include the music theatre program, which regularly sends its graduates directly to Broadway productions; the School of Communications, which has burst onto the scene and is already winning the coveted Hearst awards and challenging the nation's top journalism and communications schools; and the Elon University Center for Public Opinion Polling, which regularly supplies incisive data to regional and national media as well as government agencies.

At the core of Elon's general education and honors programs is **interdisciplinary teaching**. **The Elon Commitment** seeks to build on this strength with the consideration of innovative degrees and minors that intersect discipline areas. Our new interdisciplinary minor in neuroscience provides new thinking about possible undergraduate and graduate degrees in science and business, communications and environmental studies and a host of other possibilities.

As part of **The Elon Commitment**, every academic program will be challenged to rise to new levels of academic and scholarly accomplishment, meeting the objectives of the long-range plans of their departments and schools. For example, the Martha and Spencer Love School of Business will set its sights on achieving a top-50 national undergraduate business school ranking and the School of Law will aim to achieve a top-100 ranking by leading the national conversation about preparing lawyers for leadership roles in society.

Launching strategic and innovative pathways in undergraduate and graduate education

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Create innovative 4 + 1, 4 + 2 combination degree programs
- Investigate a School of Health Sciences and a physician assistant program
- Launch an Elon service experience as part of gap-year program

Patterns of college attendance are evolving as students seek to save costs, pursue online degree opportunities and find alternate routes to higher education. For example, more Elon students are entering the university with advanced placement college credits, and a greater percentage of our undergraduate students are planning to go immediately to graduate school. Students and their parents are expecting greater flexibility in their degree options, and **The Elon Commitment** features several initiatives to respond to those demands.

Through innovative **4+1 and 4+2** programs, Elon will provide attractive options for prospective students who wish to pursue two Elon degrees – a great undergraduate experience followed by a professional master’s degree. We already have a good model in place for this through our interactive media master’s program launched this year in the School of Communications.

In line with one of society’s greatest needs, Elon will investigate creating a **School of Health Sciences**, including a new physician assistant master’s degree. This school will provide great synergy with Elon’s existing health-related programs, including physical therapy and exercise science.

Elon will also expand its portfolio of **graduate programs** with one or two additional offerings, aligned with the university’s strengths and meeting the needs of today’s students, who understand that their career goals will require study at the graduate level.

We also understand that many young people want to spend time growing and maturing prior to their formal undergraduate studies, experiencing the world and reflecting on their life goals. Through an innovative **gap-year** experience, Elon will partner with students to defer traditional courses and participate in a semester or yearlong Elon service or internship experience. We believe this will be an attractive alternative for many students and a good fit with the university’s mission and strength in service and experiential learning.

Stewarding Elon's commitment to remain a best-value university

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Successfully complete the Ever Elon Campaign
- Implement a strong, creative financial model
- At least triple the Elon University endowment

Elon enjoys a remarkable combination of “values and value.” The university’s affordable cost is a major strategic asset, providing a tuition rate that is \$10,000–\$15,000 below other private universities and within range of non-resident tuition rates at flagship state universities. Elon is committed to guarding that price advantage and implement a balanced financial model.

The goal of **The Elon Commitment** is to complete the Ever Elon Campaign and launch the university's next comprehensive campaign, tripling the university's endowment by 2020 and building an essential financial base for future generations. A strong and sustainable new **financial model** will support and maintain Elon’s core values as it establishes budget priorities, undergraduate and graduate enrollment growth, tuition increases, new programs and program enhancements, a salary plan, new facility construction, and fundraising goals.

Developing innovative alumni programs to advance and support the Elon graduate

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Identify and support the next generation of alumni leadership
- Create a premier Career Center
- Build a strong transitions program to careers and graduate school
- Launch new alumni service, travel and engagement programs
- Foster a culture of philanthropy and double the alumni giving participation

The composition of Elon’s nearly 31,500 Elon alumni body is unusually young, with a staggering 54 percent in their 20s and 30s. Understanding the ways in which the university’s future will be shaped by alumni accomplishments, **The Elon Commitment** seeks to support alumni by launching initiatives to celebrate their achievements. For example, Elon may invite successful alumni to return to campus as professors of practice, or the university may fund alumni sabbaticals or projects to support the good work of Elon graduates in their communities and around the world.

In a generation, this large group of alumni will also be ready to assume the mantle of leadership on the boards and councils of the university, including the Board of Trustees. The establishment of the Young Alumni Council was a positive step in giving a voice to this large segment of alumni.

The university is committed to developing relevant **young alumni programs** and appropriate communications strategies to keep our graduates connected with their alma mater. For example, new alumni international travel and service experiences will allow alumni to continue to pursue the passions they developed during their time on campus. Developing a new generation of active and committed alumni, and maintaining Elon as a partner in their efforts to impact the affairs of the world, is one of the most important strategic tasks facing the university.

Elon will enhance career services programs to advance alumni as they pursue graduate education, professional employment and work in non-profit organizations. Elon will engage alumni to assist current students and fellow alumni in job and internship searches.

Critically important will be an increased emphasis on **alumni giving**, doubling the participation level from the current 21 percent to 40 percent, and demonstrating an enhanced culture of philanthropy and tradition of supporting Elon.

Establishing a national tournament tradition of athletics success along with the highest academic standards for Phoenix athletics

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Consistently win conference championships in both men's and women's sports
- Fully fund scholarships in all sports
- Set conference standards in academics and gender equity

The role of intercollegiate athletics is not to be underestimated in planning for Elon's future. A successful athletics program contributes to a sense of community and institutional pride, is of great interest to students and alumni, and contributes greatly to national visibility. Elon's athletic peers are fine universities such as William and Mary, Richmond, Furman and Davidson, schools that believe strongly in the student-athlete ideal and understand that the intercollegiate athletic experience is wonderful preparation for leadership in life. **The Elon Commitment** seeks to develop an athletics program that is both a model of **academic integrity** and that establishes a strong and proud tradition of winning conference **championships** and advancing to succeed in NCAA regional and national competitions.

A goal for athletics in **The Elon Commitment** is the construction of a new multipurpose convocation center, providing a showcase facility for Phoenix athletics and, equally important, meeting the critical campus need for a large venue to host community events.

As part of its commitment to excellence, Elon will also fully fund athletics **scholarships** in all sports, especially through increased annual support and endowment resources.

Student-athlete academic performance and graduation rates will remain a top priority, and we will ensure that Elon consistently ranks among the leaders in the Southern Conference. We will also maintain a leadership position by meeting the established objectives of the university's **gender equity** plan.

Significantly enhancing Elon's campus with premier new academic and residential facilities and a commitment to protecting our environment

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Expanded academic facilities for science, communications
- Transformation of the residential campus including 1,600 additional beds
- 5,000-seat convocation center
- 1,500-seat auditorium
- Multi-faith center
- Admissions center
- Career center
- Vibrant downtown Elon
- Implementation of the Sustainability Master Plan

Elon's beautiful campus is among its greatest assets and deserves our continued investment and imagination. This plan outlines an exciting master plan that will provide world-class new facilities and an improved environment surrounding the campus, and also demonstrate our commitment to being a faithful steward of our environment.

Major new academic building projects during the next decade will include much-needed expansion spaces for **science** programs, which have outgrown McMichael Science Center, and the **School of Communications**, which has surpassed the capacity of McEwen building and is now locating classrooms, labs and faculty offices in other buildings across campus. We will also assess the need for an expansion of Belk Library and respond to other academic space demands in support of **The Elon Commitment** initiatives.

Through **The Elon Commitment**, the university will develop a bold plan to create a campus with seamless connections among the academic, co-curricular and residential experiences on campus. A campus-wide Residential Campus Committee is exploring innovative models for this **transformation of the residential experience**, including residential colleges, a wide variety of living-learning and academic theme communities, faculty apartments and classrooms integrated in residence halls, expanded commons and recreational areas, graduate student housing and a new approach to the dining experience on campus. Making major investments in new facilities, Elon intends to provide housing for all juniors and seniors who wish to live on campus and bring all housing in line with modern student standards. The plan includes demolition of Harper Center and Story Center and construction of new residence complexes in the area east of Lake Mary Nell, at the Colonnades residence area, at the area east of the Academic Village and other possible sites. The new housing will respond to the growing student demand for on-campus residences, providing close proximity to cultural events, the library, technology and lab resources, athletic contests and much more.

Through **The Elon Commitment**, the university's long-standing need for a large gathering space will be met through construction of a 5,000-seat multipurpose **convocation center**. This showcase facility will provide a new home for Phoenix athletics as well as be a draw for regional and national attractions, supporting such major events as presidential campaign appearances or debates, appearances by international figures or performing groups, conventions and forums, and annual campus events such as Commencement and convocations.

Another major new community gathering space will be a new **auditorium** as part of an expansion of Moseley Center. This facility will provide a new venue for larger lectures and group functions, returning McCrary Theatre to its primary role as the stage for Elon's renowned performing arts productions.

A new athletics **field house** at Rhodes Stadium will support activities at the North Athletics Complex and allow for the repurposing of the Koury Center for academic, recreational and wellness use. A **multi-faith center** will support the importance of a student's spiritual journey and well-being. A new **admissions center** will allow Elon to remain competitive in its campus visit and recruiting operations. A new **career services** facility will provide a state-of-the-art center for students and alumni to prepare their applications for graduate school or employment, and to conduct interviews with recruiters.

The Elon Commitment plan envisions a zone in the **Town of Elon** that would allow locally owned or student-owned businesses to flourish, such as more professional services, restaurants, small grocery store and other establishments and services common in college towns. A more residential, pedestrian and bike-friendly campus will create a healthier environment and be in accord with the recommendations of the Presidential Task Force on Alcohol.

As an important part of **The Elon Commitment**, the university will evaluate its **governmental partnerships** to ensure a high level of public safety, infrastructure and municipal services to support the growing campus

During the next decade, Elon will implement the challenging and environmentally responsible recommendations of the **Sustainability Master Plan**, including a study of geothermal technology and the creation of a land preserve, the **Elon Forest**, to protect a large expanse of green space north of University Drive.

Commitment

A decade ago the Elon community imagined a different place for students and then built it – a new and innovative approach to higher education. In building this university, we came to deeply understand who we are, an asset claimed by few universities. That strong and deep understanding of our mission is a compass, guiding us to set our sights on the work ahead. That compass remains steadfast in what is clearly a critical time in history. Today we consider Elon University's future and understand more fully the interconnections of our global community. By building on Elon's strong community and spirit of innovation, we commit to engage minds and inspire leaders for the global good. More than ever before, we understand that the world needs Elon graduates.

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