Greetings from the Elon Teaching Fellows Office!

Fall Semester of 2016 saw the passing of an Elon legend, Dr. Earl Danieley. Dr. D’s impact is hard to comprehend, but his grandson, Teaching Fellow Michael Shutt ’14, hints at it: “I decided to become a teacher because of my Granddaddy … he was the greatest teacher to ever walk this earth and he showed me just how rewarding it can be.” May we all approach our work as educators aspiring to demonstrate the same tenacity, giving spirit, and love that Dr. Danieley demonstrated over the course of his inspirational life.

We began the fall semester by welcoming 20 new Class of 2020 Teaching Fellows into the program. This cohort comes from 13 different states and with the addition of a Fellow from Honduras, we are now a truly international program (see page 8 for more information). For the first time in several years, we also added two lateral entry students into our 2019 cohort.

The First Years have bonded through their participation in the Challenge Course, and involvement in other activities with older Fellows. The cohort also benefitted from being in two specially tailored Elon 101 sections. First year Fellows participated in a second cycle of our revamped and gamified Mentor - Mentee program which includes both mentor-mentee pairs and families. Sophomores Rachel Cole, Danielle Marzullo, and Lauren Ventresca provided excellent leadership for the program. The First Years also enjoyed a visit to two special-education-focused schools and the International Civil Rights Center in Greensboro.

This year’s sophomores, the Class of 2019, participated in our second Elon Teaching Fellows Sophomore Retreat. Our retreats are meant to contribute to Fellows’ individual personal and professional development, as well as the strengthening of each cohort as a whole. The 2017 cohort also took part in a retreat, our first ever Senior Retreat, held this year at Lake Gaston (see page 6 for more information). Going forward, the plan is for the program to feature these two regular retreats during the sophomore and senior years.

Just over half of the sophomore cohort has recently begun their study abroad experience in Oxford, UK at St. Clare’s College. The St. Clare’s program has an excellent Education Studies program, diverse local school placements, and housing options that include rooming with international students from places such as Belgium, France, Italy, and Germany. This year, we also have our first Fellow taking advantage of the opportunity to live with an Oxonian host family. Three Fellows have also begun their semesters abroad in Toledo, Spain, and Copenhagen, Denmark, while the remaining two members of the cohort will depart for Costa Rica on March 5th (see page 7 for more information).

In terms of past and future Teaching Fellows events, in October the program hosted an Alumni Panel titled “Beyond the Classroom: The Opportunities of an Elon Education Degree.” We thank the Teacher Education alumni who contributed their valuable time and shared their experiences with the variety of different career paths one can follow within education. On March 28-29, we will welcome to campus as our sponsored spring speaker Joel Baum from the organization Gender Spectrum. We hope to see many alumni and other community members attend his main public presentation “It’s About All of Us: Expanding Understandings of Gender” in Lakeside Meeting Rooms at 7 p.m. on the evening of March 28.

Dr. Jeff Carpenter, Director
On September 18th, the First Year cohort got together to take part in Elon’s Challenge Course. The day was spent participating in a range of activities spanning from name games to balancing acts and everything in-between. No one knew exactly what to expect as the day began; however, the hours were filled with laughs and determination as everyone worked together to achieve the goals of the course. We were given group challenges that focused on trust, vulnerability, and loyalty.

Our program started with a question: Where have your shoes taken you? We went around in a circle, one by one, telling the group about our favorite adventure, whether it was a story about Italy or the simple idea that our shoes had taken us to and from classes. Then, all of our shoes brought us to the next step in our day-long journey. Next up was the blindfolded partner walk, forcing us to be vulnerable and trust one another on a path we did not know. Later, we were faced with the challenge of fitting ten people on a small block of wood. This brought out the determination in each of us, causing a few laughs as we all accepted the sweatiness and silliness of the day while singing, "Row Row Row Your Boat" at the top of our lungs, stuck together on a 1’ by 1’ block. Moving on, we held on for our lives on one of the low rope activities that brought out various leadership skills in each of us. After trying to figure out the tightrope individually, our cohort realized the only way for the challenge to be solved was to work hand in hand - literally. We devised a similar plan and did the same for the next adult sized see-saw.

We spent the day laughing at our own mistakes, day-dreaming of our future as teachers, and joking about who was the sweatiest of the bunch. Although we may have ended the day hot, and a bit irritable, our relationship as a group grew. In order to complete the obstacles we faced, we needed to step out of our comfort zones. Each of us had to learn to be vulnerable with one another even if we did not know each other well. Participating in the Challenge Course helped the cohort develop into a group of close friends. We learned about each member’s strengths and weaknesses and most importantly, that there does not have to be just one leader. Each member of our cohort has unique ideas and opinions that are all valuable.

Juliette Firla ‘20
On September 29th, Alumni Gym was filled with Elon students and faculty to listen to a speech delivered by famous journalist Bob Woodward. Woodward is most famously known for his work covering Nixon’s Watergate Scandal of 1972. His other famous articles range from topics like the Gulf War to John Belushi. During his time as a journalist, Woodward has interviewed eight presidents and has been publishing and editing for the Washington Post for 45 years. His mastery of his field is nationally known.

During his presentation, Woodward discussed his interactions with Presidents. He spoke about the power Presidents have and how to cope with it. During an interview with former President Nixon, Nixon told Woodward that Watergate happened because of political power, and without law, more scandals similar to it would probably happen. Nixon recognized, after his term in office, that concentration of power in a presidency is not safe in a constitutional democracy. Woodward also discussed an interview with President Obama, in which he said that being president is a difficult job, one with so much power and struggle to determine when to wield it. For example, Obama said that his biggest worry is the explosion of a nuclear bomb on American soil. He also said that much undercover work is dedicated to preventing that. From discussions of past presidents, Woodward explained his worries of both of our present candidates for future leaders. He explained his worries about their ages and their thirst for power. Throughout his presentation, Woodward polled the audience, giving interesting statistics of the population of Elon and where they stand for the upcoming election.

Throughout Woodward’s speech, he mentioned a few key things to remember in a future classroom. It is amazing to see how many things he learned on the job of journalist can apply to being a classroom teacher. Woodward explained the importance of knowing when to be quiet. He also warned the audience of bias and how difficult it can be to keep it from your writing and explanations. When teaching, we must be so careful of what we say and when. The students need freedom to think and develop their thoughts, no matter their age. They look up to us as teachers and follow our suit, making it incredibly important for us to monitor our discussions. I left Fall Convocation feeling surprised at the overlapping nature of teaching and journalism. Both occupations are there to spread information and wisdom to people. Both fields require us to be open and honest and helpful to others. These overlapping qualities make me even more excited to be a teacher, to know that I will be as influential as reporters. I felt empowered and ready to spread the knowledge I have acquired like journalists do.

Maia Salinger ‘18
One of the best bonding activities Teaching Fellows offers is the Fall Luncheon. All of the Fellows get placed at a table with their “family” members and are served an amazing lunch. We were all so excited to see tacos on the menu this year! During the luncheon, we eat and play multiple Minute-To-Win-It games. These include rolling an Oreo down your face and into your mouth without your hands or transporting M&Ms from cup to cup with only the use of a straw and your mouth. As the games are played, each table is loudly cheering for their members hoping to take home the prize of an Oak House gift card. The event is always fully of energy and friendliness as all of the cohorts come together to celebrate being at Elon in such an amazing program. At the end of our meal, we had the honor of helping Mrs. Fish celebrate her birthday. With cake and song, all of the Teaching Fellows enjoyed the birthday of our fabulous Assistant Director!

Maia Salinger ’18

Fall Luncheon
On Monday November 27th, the Teaching Fellows held their annual Fall Social. Faculty and staff hand-picked by the senior cohort attended along with all of the first-years, sophomores, and juniors. This dinner is always highly anticipated as the seniors have the chance to introduce each other to the group. The sometimes funny and often emotional speeches focus on the friendships and adventures that have been shared because of the opportunities given to the members of this Program. The seniors this year did not fail to disappoint; there was lots of laughter, a few tears, and, as always, a great amount of confusion for the first-year cohort! As a junior this year, there are equal amounts of terror and excitement when I think about the fact that in only a year, it will be my cohort that is speaking and reminiscing about our time as Teaching Fellows. As we all enjoyed seeing how far the seniors have come, I think it was clear that everyone wishes nothing but the best for all of them as they begin the journey of student teaching next semester!

Jossie Geyer ’18
On the weekend of September 9th, the senior Teaching Fellows joined together for a few joyful days on the shore of Lake Gaston. Amidst the sunshine, warmth, and water, students were able to reflect on who they are, where they’ve been, and where they want to go. Through a series of thoughtful activities, seniors were both able to reconnect and rejuvenate while thinking critically about the future. Students were able to meet individually with Dr. Carpenter and Mrs. Fish to discuss their prospective path and how to connect with resources. Additionally, we were each able to discuss how to intelligently reflect the impact and importance of their unique Teaching Fellows experiences both in a job interview and on a resume. They encouraged us to think cumulatively about the History Study Tour, field trips, Life Entrepreneurship Program, study abroad, Washington Center, conferences and inquiry projects among other extracurricular activities. It was so lovely to reminisce on fond memories and share kind words before embarking on a challenging and busy senior year! It was a beautiful culmination of the Teaching Fellows Program that emphasized reflection and celebration for the 2017 cohort.

Isabelle Thibault ‘17
Excitement, anxiety, fear, nervousness, curiosity, eagerness, and uncertainty are probably just a few of the jumbled emotions running through each sophomore's mind as the departure date looms closer. This spring, the Teaching Fellows program will send students to Oxford, Costa Rica, Toledo, and for the first time, Copenhagen. Each student will spend approximately four months living, traveling, studying, and interning at a school in his or her host country. I checked in with a few of my fellow cohort members to see how they were preparing both physically and emotionally to go abroad.

This year, the largest of percentage of students are choosing to study at an international school in Oxford, England called St. Clare’s. Caroline Bowen, an elementary education major, told me that she is most excited to see the famous cities that she has only seen pictures of. Additionally, she is looking forward to her internship in a British school system where she will be able to analyze the difference between their school system and American schools. She is preparing to have to balance a tough workload with time spent exploring and traveling.

Our cohort’s two Spanish minors, Samantha Collins and Lauren Ventresca, will be spending their spring semester in Toledo, Spain. I spoke with Sam to get a read on how she’s feeling about moving to a country so different than our own. Sam explained that she was most nervous about the language barrier in particular. She stated, “Although I have taken many Spanish classes and have done well, I am nervous for my first few weeks in Spain. I know it will be a big adjustment for me and although I am nervous, I know that my Spanish skills will vastly improve and I will learn a lot.” While she is nervous about communicating, she is excited to learn about the local culture and live with a host family where she can learn about a different worldview and way of life. Lauren is most excited to finish her Spanish minor, take trips to places like Morocco, and experience a classroom internship in a foreign country.

Virginia Little is one of the several students also choosing to study in a Spanish speaking country, Costa Rica. Virginia, when asked what she expects to be her biggest challenge, said that it would be “learning the new city (as there are no street addresses in Costa Rica) and talking to people seeing as I am nowhere near fluent in Spanish.” The Costa Rican bound students will depart in early March.

Nathan Hunnicutt, a lateral entry student to the 2019 cohort, is taking advantage of the Teaching Fellows new partnership with the Copenhagen, Denmark program. He picked Copenhagen because of his personal interest and research that he is conducting with Dr. Morrison relating to environmental education. He explained to me that Copenhagen was one of the earliest places to use environmental education in their education systems. He says, “I want to learn about how they utilize it inside and outside the classroom setting.” He and Dr. Morrison are specifically focused on how deep and shallow ecology is taught within sustainability education and how that style of teaching is connected to place-based environmental and experiential education. In regards to preparing for going abroad, Nathan is taking steps now to set him up for success. He is looking for the best housing options, carefully picking the right classes, and researching the various education styles that originated in the Scandinavian region.

Courtney Kobos ’19
MEET THE 2020 FELLOWS

Where are we from?

The 2020 cohort comes from thirteen different U.S. states and one international!

This year, the new Teaching Fellows had the opportunity to get to know each other right off the bat by being placed in Orientation groups together. They met once a week throughout the semester in their Elon 101 course. This was a new element to the Teaching Fellows Program, allowing the cohort to get to know each other and their community more deeply.

Sarah Barron & Paige Knapke ‘20
New Technology in the CRC

Over the summer, new Curriculum Resources Center (CRC) director, Allison Bryan, helped upgrade our education technology. The new gadgets that can now be found in the CRC range from a set of iPads and Chromebooks to a 3-D printer and everything in between. Student favorites include Spheros, round robots that can roll around and complete obstacle courses, Ozobots, which follow color coded lines drawn on white paper, and Osmo, a kit that utilizes an iPad and different sets of pieces for educational games. If none of these new inventions catch your attention, we also now have Little Bits, Raspberry Pi, Makey Makey, and Swivl.

While all of these new educational toys are out and ready to be played with in the CRC, they are not able to be checked out quite yet. Soon, students will be able to check out these devices to use for class, their practicum, or just for fun. Feel free to swing by and see all of these incredible new gizmos for yourself!

Jossie Geyer ’18

Environmental Education

The School of Education has recently begun offering courses in environmental education, and, in collaboration with other programs around campus, is exploring a possible minor. Dr. Scott Morrison is the major driving force behind these courses and the potential minor due to his passion for taking students outside and placed-based education - utilizing the local community as a resource and context for learning. In an interview, Dr. Morrison explained that taking students outside is usually more feasible in elementary and middle school, and it is especially common in early childhood education because it revolves around play. The minor will involve a 400-level capstone course titled “Environmental Education,” which is a mixture of the history of the field and current practices. It will take place at Loy Farm, rain or shine! Students will also be required to take EDU 211 “Education and Society” and three other courses that are environmentally focused. There will be future postings around Mooney regarding details of the minor. More to come!

Emily Gaa ’18
And the winner of the Lumen Prize is... Sam Friedman!

The Lumen Prize was created by President Leo Lambert to recognize exceptional scholarly achievement. This award gives those students an opportunity to further their research and knowledge by providing them with a monetary prize.

Sam Friedman, a junior Teaching Fellow, is one of those exceptional scholars. She is working alongside Dr. Scott Morrison and Dr. Jessica Wery on a research project titled “Investigating the Effects of Outdoor Learning Environments on Children with Autism”. She has had a lot of experience working with children with autism and sees many benefits of being outside. She believes the outdoors to be a very calming and stress-relieving place, and this in turn can benefit children with a high level of sensitivity and anxiety.

Sam has already met with teachers who will be participating in the study and has interviewed multiple experts on this subject to gain more information. Data collection will soon take place, as well as developing a literature review. While all of the junior Teaching Fellows are engaging in inquiry projects this year, Sam will continue her research this coming summer and into her senior year.

Always up for a challenge, Sam applied for the Lumen Prize because she knew this opportunity would give her valuable experience with undergraduate research and writing a research proposal. The effects of the outdoors on children with autism is something that Sam is very passionate about, and the Lumen allows her to further investigate this topic with financial support and mentorship. The prize will also enable Sam to travel to various conferences and training opportunities to refine her skills in outdoor education. Sam is grateful for this opportunity and is eager to learn more about the effects of outdoor learning environments on children with autism.

Bryanna Schoenblatt ’18
Many thanks to our Fall Alumni Panel: (l to r) Eric Hale ’11, Jenny Sabin ‘06, Erin Hone ’04 and Lauren Kepke ‘14.

We welcomed Nathan Hunnicutt and Ben Rogers to the 2019 Cohort!

Emily Gaa and Stefania Monti, both juniors, served us well as our TA’s for Elon 101.

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