Becoming an Elon Academy Scholar

Elon Academy is a cooperative venture between Elon University, Alamance-Burlington School System and other community partners. One hundred percent of scholars engage in community service. Some of our community partners have been Habitat for Humanity, Keeper Tip and the Elon Community Garden. The Elon Academy Ambassadors program is a service project with local elementary and middle schools. High school scholars share their “college and career knowledge” and inspire younger students to consider pursuing college after graduation.

Our mission is to inspire those promising students — who are often underrepresented on college and university campuses — to pursue higher education, build leadership skills and develop an active sense of social responsibility. We want them to gain the academic strengths, interpersonal skills and sense of self-worth that will position them to succeed in college and beyond.

The Elon Academy Family

The Elon Academy is a partnership among students, families, schools, the university and the community. University and high school faculty and staff, community members and college students serve as mentors, teaching assistants and academic coaches. They also provide academic and social support to scholars and their families. The Academy is based on a holistic youth development model that builds on the strengths the scholars and families bring to our program. While access to information about college is essential, that information alone is insufficient. In addition to information, we provide experiences that inspire our scholars to develop their skills, find their passions, make meaning for and of their lives, and imagine new futures for themselves and their families. We work together, from entry into the program through the college years, to ensure that all scholars in the program have the opportunity to achieve their dream of a college education.

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An Overview of the Elon Academy

**The Elon Academy** is an intensive, four-phase college access and success program based on academic strengthening, leadership development, college-going knowledge and culture, service, and family involvement.

**Phase I: The College Access Program** is a high school program. Each year, a new cohort of ninth graders is selected to join the Academy. The year-round program combines three intensive 4-week residential experiences at Elon prior to the 10th, 11th and 12th grades with a monthly Saturday Academy during the academic year. The residential component of the program mirrors college life, providing exposure to academic classes, co-curricular, service and cultural experiences, as well as college planning and college visits. In addition, families and scholars meet with a college planning staff person during each summer program. University faculty, high school teachers and community members teach classes while college students serve as teaching assistants and mentors. Local businesses provide paid internships for many of our scholars during the second half of the summer and during the school year, helping to develop work and leadership skills.

The Saturday Academy includes SAT preparation, college selection, essay writing, college grant and scholarship information and guidance. Since family involvement is crucial, parallel programs are offered for family members four times per year. Scholars are mentored between Saturday programs by specially-trained college students who answer questions and provide support and encouragement. Scholars are expected to take a rigorous high school curriculum, including honors and AP classes. To ensure success, we provide Academic Coaches on an as-needed basis. Counseling services and referrals to community agencies are also available to both scholars and their families.

**Phase II: The Transitions to College Program** is designed to prepare scholars and their families for the financial, academic, personal and social challenges in transitioning to college. This phase of the program includes an intensive three-day summer retreat, family workshop and celebration. Peer leaders (scholars currently enrolled in college) are an integral part of this program by serving as facilitators during the transitions retreat and as mentors during the academic year.

**Phase III: The College Success Program** is designed to ensure college completion for scholars once they enter college. In this phase of the program, Academy staff visit scholars on their campuses to provide scholars and families with additional academic, social and mentoring/advising support, as well as assistance in securing additional financial aid. The impact of the program is expanded when EA college scholars return to the campus and the community to inspire and support Elon Academy Phase One scholars who also dream of a college education by serving as mentors and teaching assistants during the residential summer program.

**Phase IV: The Alumni Program** was refined in 2014 when our first cohort of scholars, the Alpha Class, began to graduate from college. Through a career transitions and graduate school retreat, graduating college scholars are supported in developing plans for life after college. Elon Academy continues to provide encouragement and support for as long as an Elon Academy scholar remains in college.

The Elon Academy is a nonprofit college access and success program located at Elon University in Alamance County, North Carolina. This highly selective program recruits academically promising high school students with limited income and/or no family history of college. The Academy is a multi-year, year-round program beginning in the summer after the ninth grade and continuing to and through college.