It is an exciting month in New Student Programs, as months of planning are beginning to materialize. In March, we are looking forward to training our newly selected staff of 100 Orientation Leaders, participating in the Southern Regional Orientation Workshop, and hosting a common leader training focusing on diversity and inclusion. We will also welcome the inaugural cohort of students for the Gap Semester during Spring Orientation weekend, and continue to recruit excited incoming students for our five First-Year Summer Experience programs (including a new one)! Find out more about all of these exciting things in this month’s New Student Programs newsletter!
Steve Morrison, Coordinator of Gap Programs, is a 2003 Elon alum. He was actively involved in alternative service trips, El Centro, Love School of Business, Alpha Kappa Psi and study abroad as a student. After 2.5 years in corporate America, he traded in his briefcase for a backpack and joined the Peace Corps in Peru. Most recently, he completed his MBA from the University of Arizona where he was a Peace Corps Fellow. He's happy to be back dodging falling acorns and coordinating the new gap semester for 15 very adventurous incoming students.

Katie Hight

Katie joined the Student Life staff as the Director of New Student Programs in June 2011. She most recently completed her Master of Education degree in College Student Affairs Administration at the University of Georgia. A proud 2007 Elon alum, Katie is thrilled to be back where she "belongs" and have the opportunity to work with such dynamic students. In her role, Katie provides vision and framework for effective transition programming for new students at Elon including Opening Weekend, First Year Summer Experiences, and the Gap Semester Program. Highlights of her job include working closely with student leaders who are part of Head Staff, the Orientation Leader Team, FSE facilitators, and Challenge Course facilitators. In her free time (ha), Katie is passionate about running (she is currently training for her third half-marathon), a cappella music, baking and reading.
The Elon Gap Semester

The Charge → Why have a Gap Semester?

Theme four of the Elon Commitment calls for “strategic and innovative pathways in undergraduate and graduate education,” specifically “to launch a service program as part of a gap-year program.” A further elaboration of the theme expresses the goal of a Gap Program this way: “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 the innovative gap-semester experience, Elon partners with students to defer traditional courses and participate in a semester Elon service or internship experience. This provides an attractive alternative for many students and a good fit with the University’s mission and strength in service and experiential learning.

The Program → What does this entail?

The Elon Gap Semester Program is a 13-week “bridge” program designed for an initial cohort of 15 students who plan to attend Elon but who wish to begin their college experience through a different pathway.

Students will earn 8 hours of academic credit and participate in three distinct international, leadership and service experiences. Following an initial orientation to the Gap Program during a spring Admissions orientation weekend, students will complete the program off-campus during the fall semester and return to Elon as full-time students for the January Winter Term and spring semester. The semester begins with a 3-week outdoor skills, leadership and environmentally focused program under the direction and management of the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in Wyoming. Gap students would receive the same credits currently accepted by Elon as elective credits in physical education (2 credits) and philosophy (2 credits) from the University of Utah through NOLS. NOLS staff will develop and manage this program exclusively for Elon.

The service learning component of the Gap program will follow as a month-long experience with the student cohort traveling across the United States.

Students will spend approximately one week in four different locations engaging in different types of service each week.

The service component will not offer academic credit, but will include guided reflection, journaling and other activities designed to heighten students’ self-awareness and understanding of responsible citizenship and service. Tentatively, our service sites include an Oglala Lakota Indian Reservation in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, Mountain Removal Mining and Appalachian Culture in Harlan and Kentucky.

Following a short fall break, students depart for the Elon Centre in Costa Rica for six weeks studying Spanish and Costa Rican culture. Like all Elon students, Gap students live with families in university-approved domiciles. Travel within the country focuses on environmental issues, the Costa Rican culture, and the broader responsibilities of global citizenship.
The Student Development Side…

Through participation in the Gap Semester, first year students will experience dynamic growth in three distinct (though not mutually exclusive) themes. Students will develop a keen self-awareness including physical and manual competence, emotional intelligence, moral development, sense of purpose and integrity. They will also develop ability to navigate team dynamics through utilizing effective interpersonal communication, demonstrating initiative and teamwork, and gaining multicultural competence. Leadership skills will be taught through goal setting, problem solving, and exposure to experiences that require ethical decision making. These broad themes are drawn from literature on student development and align with the learning domains for new student programs according to the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS 2009; Chickering & Reisser, 1993).

The Gap Semester program is intentionally structured to weave these themes throughout the experience, yet extract them individually via a three-pronged approach. As is developmentally appropriate, students will focus on psychosocial development from the “inside out,” moving from self-awareness (intrapersonal competence), to team dynamics (interpersonal competence), to leadership in a global context (organizational competence and awareness of systemic global issues).

More information can be found on the Gap Semester at the website:

www.elon.edu/gapsemester
Meet Head Staff

Head Staff members are a group of 16 student leaders who were previously Orientation Leaders. Each leader has specific responsibilities and duties throughout the school year to help prepare and implement pieces of the Orientation program. They also help with the training and supervising of the Orientation Leaders to assure a smooth Orientation Weekend and transition into Elon University for all new students. These leaders build community among first-year students during Opening Weekend.

Meet 2012 Head Staff:

- **Jill Padfield**
  - Head Team Captain
  - **Hometown:** Marvin, NC
  - **Major:** Math with a Teaching Licensure
  - **Favorite thing about Elon University:** The feeling of community between the faculty and students. It is a unique connection of respect that is hard to find at other campuses.

- **Maggie Achey**
  - Elon Files Liaison
  - **Hometown:** Charlotte, NC
  - **Major:** English Professional Writing and Rhetoric
  - **Favorite thing about Elon University:** The wide range of clubs and activities to get involved in
  - **Favorite thing about Orientation:** Move in day when all the new students and their parents are arriving.

- **Melissa Bing**
  - Community on the Commons Liaison
  - **Hometown:** Arlington, TX
  - **Major:** Public Administration w/ minors in Political Science and Spanish
  - **Favorite thing about Elon University:** College coffee!
  - **Favorite thing about Orientation:** The people you meet!

- **Katherine Bain**
  - Family Relations Liaison
  - **Hometown:** Alpharetta, Georgia
  - **Major:** English with a Teaching Licensure Concentration
  - **Favorite thing about Elon University:** The bubble. Not because Elon is in its own little world, but because Elon has some unique quality that everyone here understands it, but no one can explain it. I guess it’s another way of saying Elon’s community. There is no way to fully understand it until you experience it yourself!

- **Kathryn Knaus**
  - Student Coordinator
  - **Hometown:** Dayton, MD
  - **Major:** Biochemistry
  - **Favorite thing about Elon University:** The incredible support network of faculty, staff, and students that help each individual in our community thrive and grow.

**Favorite thing about Orientation:** The camaraderie between the Orientation staff and their passion for working with new Elon students.
Meet 2012 Head Staff:

Genevieve D’Cruz
Faculty Assisting New Students (F.A.N.S.) Liaison
Hometown: Chapel Hill, NC
Major: Double Major in Spanish and Religious Studies
Favorite thing about Elon University: There are so many different ways to get involved with the student body and the campus!
Favorite thing about Orientation: All the cheers and excitement!

Lauren Kepke
Alumni Relations and Banquet Liaison
Hometown: Raleigh, NC
Major: Special and Elementary Education
Favorite thing about Elon: The level of involvement and community between everyone that works as a part of Orientation, and the dedication we all have for the program.
Favorite thing about Orientation: I really like the sense of community between everyone that works as a part of Orientation, and the dedication we all have for the program.

Bobby Rawlings
Transfer Liaison
Major: Double Major in Biology and Biochemistry
Hometown: Cumming, Georgia
Favorite thing about Elon University: The magnolia trees and the garden area behind Alamance.
Favorite thing about Orientation: I really enjoy helping new students get excited about being an Elon student.

Kim Lilienthal
Catch the Fire Liaison
Hometown: Bel Air, MD
Major: Double Major in English Professional Writing & Rhetoric and Literature
Favorite thing about Elon: Winter Term is the best. It’s a great time to relax and hang out with friends, as well as to take a class that you wouldn’t get chance to take during the semester. Also, I love avoiding the freezing Maryland winters!
Favorite thing about Orientation: Move in day! It’s so nice to give each family individual attention and advice. I can’t count the number of times I told northeastern families how to stay away from I-95 and bypass D.C. traffic.

Jessica Simmermeyer
O-Team Liaison
Hometown: Finksburg, MD
Major: Exercise Science
Favorite thing about Elon University: The drive to become the best version of yourself; everyone is truly invested in learning in the classroom, developing their interests in organizations, and becoming an informed individual through experiences like study abroad, internships, and research!
Favorite thing about Orientation: The people. I have loved getting to know people through Orientation, as a new student meeting other members of my class, as an O.L meeting the other leaders and bonding with my new students, and as a member of Head Staff getting to know all the O.Ls and become to close with my fellow Head Staffers. Orientation has truly introduced me to so many amazing people!

Michael Soucy
Technology & Marketing Liaison
Hometown: St. Louis, MO
Major: Media Arts and Entertainment: Broadcast and New Media
Favorite Thing about Elon University: All of the people. The students here are all awesome people and incredibly driven. Also, the faculty and staff on this campus are all rockstars! They are always willing to put in the extra time to help you out with a problem or even just to go get coffee and chat.
Favorite Thing about Orientation: My favorite thing about orientation was all of the people I met as a new student, an Orientation Leader, and now as a Head Staff member. I have so many amazing friendships because of the orientation process, and I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to meet and work with these people.

Alexa Sykes
Pep Rally and Extravaganza Liaison
Hometown: Shaker Heights, OH
Major: Strategic Communications
Favorite thing about Elon University: The level of involvement of all the students here - I don't know a single person that just goes to class ends their day there. Regardless of what your major or concentration is, there is some way for you to gain experience in that field in some capacity both on and off campus.
Favorite thing about Orientation: Meeting the new students and seeing how Orientation Leaders really help them feel comfortable and transition to life at Elon smoothly.

Patrick Lynn
bELONG T-Shirt Liaison
Hometown: Raynham, MA
Major: Public Administration
Favorite thing about Elon University: The people at Elon are great; there is really a strong sense of camaraderie among the student body.
Favorite thing about Orientation: I really like the sense of community between everyone that works as a part of Orientation, and the dedication we all have for the program.

Chelsea Saggese
Live the Maroon Life Liaison
Hometown: New Canaan, Connecticut
Major: Environmental Studies
Favorite thing about Elon University: The amazing people! Everyone is so friendly and welcoming. When you walk across campus you will see so many people smiling.
Favorite thing about Orientation: Meeting the new students and seeing how Orientation Leaders really help them feel comfortable and transition to life at Elon smoothly.

Janice Spearbeck
Evaluation & Assessment Liaison
Hometown: La Plata, MD
Major: Double Major in Environmental Studies and Management
Favorite thing about Elon University: The relationships that you build between the faculty and staff throughout your time at Elon.
Favorite thing about Orientation: Meeting and interacting with other students who are as passionate, invovled, and willing to help aid in the transition of new students and their families.

Meet 2012 Head Staff:
The ball is rolling on First Year Summer Experiences! We are already receiving phone calls and mail from new students eager to participate in these exciting programs. This month, we will begin training for our newly hired student facilitators who will guide new students through the week-long experiences in the summer.

FSE programs are designed to help incoming students feel more confident and prepared for entering Elon University. The FSE programs embrace the University's commitment of experiential learning, and use this guiding philosophy to help students developed self-awareness, enhance relationships, and define community in preparation for their Elon experience.

Adventures in Leadership (July 8-13, July 15-20)

AIL is offered by the Center for Leadership and Campus Recreation. AIL is camping, hiking, rock climbing, and white-water rafting. The experience begins with group initiatives on campus and travels to the Appalachian Mountains of West Virginia where the rest of the adventure takes place.
First Year

Summer Experiences

Discovery (June 24-30)

Discovery is a week outdoors that enables participants to discover new friendships while building teamwork and leadership skills through service and fun. The program begins by familiarizing students with campus and then moves to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia where new friendships begin and outdoor skills are developed. During Discovery, participants will hike the Appalachian trail, spend time serving the community of Luray, VA, canoe the Shenandoah River, and tour local attractions.

Pre-Serve (June 24-29)

Pre-SERVE is offered by the Kernodle Center for Service-Learning and Community Engagement. While spending a week living on campus, students volunteer within the Burlington community, familiarize themselves with the Elon campus, and become acquainted with students, faculty and staff they will see again in the fall. Projects may include Habitat for Humanity, Boys and Girls clubs, local animal shelters, and community gardens.

Quest (July 11-17)

Quest is designed for interfaith understanding and exploration. The group will travel to Atlanta, GA and visit places of worship from several major world religions, spending time with leaders of those traditions, learning of their history, practices, and beliefs. Quest is offered by the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life.
Introducing Live the Maroon Life!

Live the Maroon Life is a weeklong experience that allows participants to learn more about Elon's values and get excited to be an Elon Phoenix! Participants will learn how to "live the maroon life" by appreciating diversity, exercising sustainability, and valuing community as well as learning Elon cheers, meeting faculty on campus, and talking to current students about what makes Elon the place they bELONG. Participants will begin the week by hearing from University administrators and engaging in discussion with professional staff on important social issues. Then, participants will travel off campus and explore issues of sustainability, service and diversity while building relationships with one another and learning how to be social justice advocates when they enter Elon in the fall.

A team of dedicated student leaders has put energy behind this program to brainstorm themes, materialize an itinerary, generate learning outcomes, and collaborate across campus. With their ideas and talents, Live the Maroon Life is sure to be a meaningful experience for a group of first year students!
After serving as an Orientation Leader, Head Staff Coordinator in Training, and Head Staff Coordinator and graduating from Elon University with her Bachelor of Science in 2007, Amy served two years as a Campus Compact AmeriCorps*VISTA. She completed her national service years at Tufts University with Massachusetts Campus Compact and at Mars Hill College with North Carolina Campus Compact. She credits former Elon staff, Mallory Anderson and Kathleen Edwards, for encouraging her to serve and is continually thankful for their guidance, wisdom, and support. After completing her Master of Arts in Community and Organizational Leadership at Emory and Henry College, she accepted the Director of First Year Experience position at Mars Hill. She knows her experiences with Elon’s strong program prepared her well for the position and she modeled parts of Elon’s program into aspects of her job. Amy and her husband (also a Phoenix Alum) moved to PA where she recently accepted a position with Pennsylvania Campus Compact. As the Program Manager she will be responsible for two federal grants funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service: the AmeriCorps*VISTA and the Community Fellows Education Award programs. She begins March 1 and couldn’t be more excited to rejoin the world of civic engagement and to remain connected to institutions of higher education. Amy laughs when she says that Elon is wound all through her professional and personal experiences. She completed an “Outdoor Educator” National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) course after extended conversations with Rex Waters and still lives and works by the motto “Whatever it Takes!”
Keeping Up with New Student Programs

Ways to Stay Connected

See why so many other students choose Elon!

Like us on Facebook!

Our Facebook page is a quick and convenient way to stay up to date on what’s happening at Elon!

Check out our YouTube!

Follow us on Twitter to receive updates regarding Elon and the events that are taking place on campus!

Our website contains a list of events that Elon Leaders are involved in.

Visit Our Website

See why so many other students choose Elon

Check out our YouTube!