THE Leadership PROGRAM AT ELON LAW

LAW.ELON.EDU/LEADERSHIP
WHERE HAVE ALL THE LEADERS GONE?

We hear the question repeatedly. Amid business and corporate scandals, political gridlock, a struggling economy, unprecedented levels of unemployment, and ever more coarsening debates in the public square, honest and principled leaders of integrity appear to be in short supply. The nation, indeed the world, is looking for these leaders to build a better society for ourselves and our children.

Traditionally, lawyers have been among the members of our communities whom we expected to assume leadership roles, especially in difficult times. Now, some studies show, fewer lawyers are involved in civic and public life than have been in more than a generation. Just as unsettling is the finding by the American Bar Association that less than 20 percent of Americans are “extremely” or “very” confident in lawyers or the legal profession.

If lawyers are again to be seen as respected leaders who serve their clients and their communities, we should reexamine how we teach and prepare them for the profession.

Elon University School of Law is preparing men and women to embrace the role of lawyer as leader. In addition to their need to develop excellent skills in analysis and reasoning, we understand that future lawyers must also begin to form the ethical foundations and leadership skills required to confront the complex issues they will encounter throughout their careers. To help students achieve greater self-understanding and develop the skills and vision necessary to lead others, Elon Law has developed the comprehensive leadership program described in this brochure.

To be sure, we face a world of unprecedented challenges. But those challenges provide enormous opportunities for principled, ethical leaders of integrity to shape the future of their communities, the nation and the world in ways we cannot yet imagine.

George R. Johnson, Jr., Dean
Elon Law seeks something greater for legal professionals. A leader of our profession must be willing to carry himself or herself in a manner above the requirements of the law. If you are going to lead, you have to be worthy of leadership. You must be a person whom people trust. It’s that foundation that Elon Law seeks to develop in students and more broadly for the profession.

Henry E. Frye, former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of North Carolina and Member, Elon Law Advisory Board

What is happening at Elon has created for me a new excitement about what legal education can do for the legal profession and the people and communities it serves. The law school is instilling in students the understanding that to be a lawyer is to be more than just a person who makes his or her living practicing law, it’s a person who is a professional, who uses his or her time, skills, and learning to both lead and serve in all areas of community life.

Rhoda Bryan Billings, former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of North Carolina and Member, Elon Law Advisory Board

“I’m convinced that Elon Law is unique in what it’s doing to realize the vision that we have for it, to inspire students from the very first year they are here to embrace the leadership and service responsibilities that come with the privilege of practicing law. The school seeks to reinvigorate the profession’s notion of its obligation to lead in the resolution of some of the most challenging issues of our country and indeed the world have faced in a long time.”

James G. Exum, Jr., former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of North Carolina, Member, Elon Law Advisory Board, and Distinguished Jurist in Residence, Elon Law

As one who has been involved in trying to work with the next generation, to prepare a fresh generation of leaders for this country, public leaders that I think we need so much, Elon Law’s emphasis on community service and leadership has enormous appeal to me.”

David Gergen, former Presidential Adviser, Director of the Center for Public Leadership, John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and Chair, Elon Law School Advisory Board
Elon Law prepares its graduates to be not only successful lawyers who excel at the highest levels of the profession, but also leading contributors to the well-being of the region, nation and world.

Capstone projects allow third-year students to apply legal knowledge and leadership skills toward initiatives of their choice that benefit the profession, the community, or society.

Second-year students work directly with nonprofits and public agencies to tackle legal issues facing those institutions. Students gain experience in managing client relations, advancing complex legal research, and working in and leading teams.

Through a series of model law firm experiences in first- and second-year leadership courses, students learn techniques for project management and collaboration.

Communications experts, faculty, and practicing lawyers help students to refine their written and oral communication, legal research practices, and interpersonal skills.

Students meet one-on-one with executive coaches and practicing attorneys to explore values, identify interpersonal strengths and weaknesses, and design step-by-step plans for personal and career development.

Elon Law's Preceptor Program connects attorneys with first-year law students in a mentoring relationship, introducing students to the business and professional dimensions of law practice.

Elon offers a rigorous core curriculum taught by faculty with a passion for innovative teaching.
ONE of Elon Law’s distinctions is our Preceptor Program, through which more than 50 experienced lawyers from a broad range of practice settings mentor law students.

Preceptors observe first-year students in law classes and provide feedback, facilitating a reflection process that helps students improve in their preparation and development as lawyers.

Preceptors also invite students to accompany them to observe trials, client interviews, depositions and mediations. While primarily involved with first-year law students, preceptors interact with second- and third-year law students, as well as with alumni of the law school.

“Students benefit from their interactions with preceptors, receiving advice and guidance about the profession typically available only to new associates at law firms. Preceptors are an integral part of the Elon Law experience. They treat law students as members of the profession from the moment they enter law school, binding our program of legal education to the practicing bar in a really meaningful way.”

Margaret Robison Kantlehner
Associate Professor of Law and Director of Externships, Preceptors and Capstone Leadership Experiences

“Personally, I don’t have any attorneys in my family. The Preceptor Program gave me a way to interact with professionals in the field, to see what their daily work was like, to visit their offices, and to go to the courthouse with them. It was helpful to talk with someone engaged in the practice of law who could answer questions that don’t come up in class about working with clients, managing projects, and other practical aspects of a career in the law.”

Anna Buonya, Class of 2010
Leadership at Elon Law:
The First-Year Experience

WORKING with members of the faculty and with practicing lawyers in the introductory course, Lawyering, Leadership, and Professionalism, first-year students begin to learn more about themselves and how their personal values and skills will shape their professional lives.

The course consists of three components:

▲ lawyering exercises and simulations that reveal the interpersonal skills required to succeed in law firm and group settings,
▲ explorations in the role of the citizen lawyer,
▲ interviews with leading lawyers in the region, exploring their concepts of leadership in the law and their strategies for success in the profession.

In addition, students participate in the “Leadership Essentials for Lawyers” program led by the internationally recognized Center for Creative Leadership.

Through this program, students participate in a series of self-assessment exercises to develop personal and professional objectives, working closely with Elon Law’s Distinguished Leadership Coach-in-Residence and with practicing attorneys.

First-year law students also participate in academic skills workshops and intensive communications training, including one-on-one sessions as they prepare to deliver oral arguments in a first semester legal writing class.

“Having first-year law students evaluate themselves against established predictors of lawyering success enables them to develop a plan of action for personal and professional development early on in law school. We want to help students become highly skilled in the core competencies required for advancement in the legal profession and to begin to forge their own vision for leadership in the law.”

Roland Smith
Professor of Leadership at Elon Law
Senior Faculty Member at the Center for Creative Leadership
DEVELOPING VISION

“Through the first-year leadership program we’ve been encouraged to think deeply about the big picture – that we live in a complicated world, that we need to draw from many different perspectives in order advance the public good, and that we need to work collaboratively to achieve lasting results.”

Hamza Benzine, Class of 2012

EXPLORE VALUES

“The leadership course helped me to learn more about myself, my leadership style, and the values that are most important to me. The exercises helped me see how defined values become a guiding force for ethical leaders in the law.”

Marina Emory, Class of 2012

DEFINING OBJECTIVES

“We were able to sit down with professional coaches at the law school, and they were able to help us develop a personalized plan, not only for law school success, but for our careers, and even further, into our everyday lives. We were able to make our goals more tangible and our plans to achieve those goals more concrete.”

Ashley Smith, Class of 2012

IMPROVING SKILLS

“The self-assessment process is one of the most important parts of the leadership program for me. We were able to identify strengths and weaknesses in our interactions with others, to consider the skill sets we want to strengthen before entering the profession, and to place our focus on becoming effective legal practitioners at the outset of our law school experience.”

Jason Burton, Class of 2011
IN PUBLIC LAW AND LEADERSHIP, the second-year course, Elon students learn to work together in teams to tackle legal problems for nonprofit organizations and government agencies. The course gives students an opportunity to exercise leadership in the public arena with actual clients.

Under the supervision of law professors, students work in model law firms, employing client interviewing techniques, legal research methods, and written and oral communication skills to develop memoranda and presentations for their clients.

In-class discussions explore team dynamics and the attributes of effective team leadership. Executive coaches assist students in assessing their individual leadership styles and establishing goals for interpersonal development in the team context.

The course concludes with a plenary session dedicated to practical aspects of lawyering and leadership, with presentations from a variety of young and senior lawyers from diverse law firms and public sector practices.

Students emerge from the class with an understanding of the skills expected of lawyers in the profession and in public leadership roles.

“Engaged learning is very important to how we teach the law at Elon. Second year students, working directly with nonprofits as clients, begin to see how their legal skill and knowledge can propel them to leadership roles in the civic life of the communities where they will practice law.”

Faith Rivers James
Associate Professor of Law

Recent organizations served through the Public Law & Leadership course:
Action Greensboro • Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships • City of Greensboro University Roundtable • East Market Street Development Corporation • Greensboro Housing Coalition • Housing Greensboro, Inc. • Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc. • Self Help Corporation • Volunteer Center of Greensboro
LEARNING THROUGH PRACTICE

“Whether through the leadership course, working directly with nonprofit and public agencies, or through the opportunities we have to serve clients in Elon’s legal clinics, we’re going beyond learning the law at Elon; we’re applying it. Practical experiences put a human face on the law, enriching our understanding of the legal profession and informing our study of legal theory in the classroom.”

Justin Ervin, Class of 2010

EXPANDING PERSPECTIVE

“The second-year leadership course was a great experience for me not only because we got to apply our legal knowledge and skill on behalf of an actual client, but also because we adapted our work to address challenges facing our client beyond their immediate legal question. We developed our legal analysis and advice in ways that could improve their financial outlook and standing with governing entities in the region.”

Nathan Standley, Class of 2011

ENGAGING CLIENTS

“Our group assisted a nonprofit that helps young people who have recently entered into the juvenile justice system to overcome substance abuse problems. The experience was beneficial for me, because it was my first time directly interacting with a client. I’ve written briefs, I’ve briefed cases, and I’ve done a lot of legal research and study, but I had not yet worked with clients, exploring how I could help them and delivering results.”

Tiffany Atkins, Class of 2011

CHANGING LIVES

“I came to law school hoping to use law as a means to help people, and I genuinely believe we can affect people’s lives in a positive way through the practice of law. Elon has helped facilitate my development as a legal advocate by offering countless opportunities to get involved in the community, through work with nonprofits, with public institutions, and with leading attorneys in the region, statewide and on a national level.”

Lila Riley, Class of 2010
THIRD-YEAR LAW STUDENTS have the opportunity to participate in the law school’s Captstone Leadership Course, applying legal knowledge and leadership skills toward initiatives of their choice that benefit the profession, the community, or society more broadly.

Each project includes a written plan with defined goals, a description of methodology, an assessment of how undertaking the project will meet community needs and engage specific leadership skills, and identification of benchmarks to measure progress on the project over time. Students participating in capstone projects reflect on what they learn, both about the project and about the application of their leadership abilities in pursuing the project.

“The capstone experience allows us to be entrepreneurs, building a course around a project that can benefit others and that we’re passionate about. It provides a model for how to make long-term positive impacts as we prepare to enter the profession.”

Jeb Brooks, Class of 2010

“Capstone participants draw on the legal knowledge, advocacy skills, and leadership competencies they develop in the first two years of law study to begin working on projects of importance to communities far and wide. Everything we do in the leadership program at Elon Law is aimed at helping students become excellent lawyers and ethical leaders throughout their lives.”

John Alexander
Distinguished Leadership Coach-in-Residence
former President of the Center for Creative Leadership
THE JOSEPH M. BRYAN DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP LECTURE SERIES

The Bryan Leadership Lecture Series is an integral part of Elon Law's commitment to develop lawyers who are also leaders. Endowed through a generous gift from the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, the series brings accomplished leaders from a variety of disciplines to Elon to share their experiences and perspectives with students and faculty.

Speakers have included: The Honorable Cory Booker, Mayor, Newark, N.J.; Democratic Leadership Council Chairman Harold Ford, Jr.; Presidential adviser, scholar, and political commentator David Gergen; former North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt; Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough; Chairman of American Red Cross Bonnie McElveen Hunter; CNN legal analyst Jeffrey Toobin; and National Public Radio legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg.

THE LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM

Elon Law’s Leadership Fellows program is the newest feature of the school’s comprehensive leadership education program for law students.

In addition to scholarships, Leadership Fellows are provided an opportunity to serve in a public sector organization through a summer externship and are asked to assist in the leadership program initiatives at Elon Law.

Fellows meet regularly with national and world leaders to explore issues in leadership and the law. They are also encouraged to design initiatives in service to the public and the profession and undertake a capstone project in their third year.

THE DAVID GERGEN AWARD FOR LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONALISM

Each year, the faculty at Elon Law select for recognition an individual from the graduating class whose activities represent the twin principles of leadership and professionalism.

This award is named in honor of David Gergen, whose professional life and contributions have embodied the highest levels of selfless leadership and service. Gergen has served as adviser to four United States presidents. He is the Director of the Center for Public Leadership and Professor of Public Service at the Harvard Kennedy School, one of the country's preeminent political commentators, and Chair of Elon's Law School Advisory Board.
to lead and to serve