First Time At Bat

A typical day as a Student Assistant in the Registrar’s Office looks like this: first, we clean out the email inbox and take care of any scanning left from the previous day. Second, we answer phone calls and assist any and every one that comes into the office. And right when your shift is done, your backpack is packed, and your earphones are in your ears playing the new Nick Jonas song, the Registrar himself gives you a project to work on inside and outside the office. Cue tears. This somewhat dramatic true tale is how this newsletter came to be.

Our office has been trying to connect more with the student population and Dr. Parks thought a great way to do so would be for the Student Assistants to make an effort to connect with their peers. At first, I was very hesitant to take on the project. Aside from living vicariously through Zoe Barnes in House of Cards (if you don’t watch, START NOW), I had very little experience with writing articles let alone editing an entire newsletter. However, Dr. Parks is very persuasive and gave me the confidence to take on this project. (The business lunch he bought me at The Root didn’t hurt either.) So, after a semester of brainstorming ideas and hounding down my coworkers for their articles, The A-Plus Newsletter was born. Most of my favorite publications, including The New Yorker and Seventeen magazines, contain a “Letter from the Editor.” I was thinking about what I, as an editor, wanted to say to readers and I decided to reflect on how proud I am to be the creator of the inaugural issue of The A-Plus.

The word inaugural is defined as “marking the beginning of an institution, activity, or period of office. An inaugural speech, especially one made by an incoming US president.” Since I plan on one day running for office, I figure this letter will be a practice run for when I make my actual inaugural speech that hopefully will be co-written by Mindy Kaling or Amy Schumer.

My fellow Eloners, this premier issue of The A-Plus is one of monumental importance, for today we journey towards closing the gap between administrative offices and students. You and I have the right and obligation to leave this campus better than the day we took our first steps on the grounds of this beautiful botanical garden. As your editor in chief, I promise this newsletter will provide relevant information with the sole purpose of making your time at Elon more rewarding. Thank you, God Bless you, and may President Lambert forever bless this Elon University.
Who Is the Registrar?

Well, we asked, and 35 of you answered! Who exactly IS the Registrar...and what do they do?

CORRECT ANSWER: Rodney Parks! Yes, it is true; we do have an office full of hard working staff, each with their own tasks and projects. However, the true “Registrar” is Rodney Parks! He has been with us since January of 2013, and he is the Registrar, Director of Summer College, and Director of Winter Term. He earned his Ph.D. in Counseling from the University of Georgia, is a U.S. Navy veteran, and even serves on the Nominations and Elections Committee for AACRAO, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

CORRECT ANSWER: Transcripts, Class Schedules. Graduation, Transfer Credits. We also assist with name changes, address changes, AP credits, certifications of enrollment, withdrawals, diplomas, and too many other duties to list here! We are always here by phone or in person to assist you. You can also check our website for other services!
CORRECT ANSWER: It’s online! The entire process can be accomplished through our website, elon.edu/registrar and clicking on the link that says “Transcript Request.” Easier than you thought.

We love visitors! We are located in Alamance Building, Room 102, and we are open every day from 8am to 5pm. In addition to our four hardworking in-office Student Assistants, we have eight fulltime staff members here to greet you with a smile, and help to answer your question. We also recently added a satellite office in Global Commons 316 where Robin Straka, Associate Registrar is located.
As anyone can plainly see, communication technologies are becoming ever more integrated into everyday life. Social media in its various forms has become an increasingly important communication platform for both individuals and organizations as a result. Yet the ways that these two groups utilize social media is much different.

At a base level, social media is an even playing field for everyone, more or less. Profiles owned exclusively by individuals or profiles designed to represent a larger corporation/entity have the same tools and options when submitting content. Yet despite such similarities, how each group ends up using these options is vastly different. Corporations, for instance, have a greater ability to market their product and provide incentives for subscribing to their content (“like our page for a free XYZ”).

Thus, such pages tend to be more informational in nature, trying to either present a product or inform users more about the nature of their operations. On the other hand, profiles used for personal use are much more conversational in nature. It wouldn’t be unusual for someone to post questions, convey their current personal state, and display content that they find entertaining. Because of this, such profiles feel more spontaneous, genuine, and less contrived. They appear as if it is a real person on the other end of such content.

Following this trend, the Registrar and other campus official’s social media outlets tend to present students and faculty with information relevant to its operational goals. It would not be surprising, for instance, to see a tweet from the registrar encouraging students to be prepared for registration in the weeks prior to preregistration deadlines. While certainly informational, students tend not to respond as well to such utilitarian use of social media.

Students would follow campus dining to find what meals were being served, or like the campus recreation Facebook page to find out what hours they will be opened over fake-break, or subscribe to the office Facebook page that they work for on campus. When they view such pages, they were doing so to gain information, and not for pleasure. To put it differently, a student would follow Smith Jackson on twitter so that they were the first to know when we were having a snow day, rather than a genuine interest in the day to day activities of our esteemed Vice President for Student Life.

Thus, it seems that while students use social media as a communication tool and a source of entertainment, social media use by Elon administrators is seen more as an informational tool of their respective office.

BTW...Like us on Facebook
And follow us on Twitter! Where “we the students” post updates and tweets and at times we are both quite entertaining and informational. Even if we do say so ourselves.

@ElonRegistrar
Reflections from Our Student Ambassador

As the Student Ambassador for the Office of the Registrar, I am never bored. Between projects, research, and everyday office duties, there is never a dull moment. My final year in the Registrar’s Office has been exciting, to say the least. In October, I was asked to accompany members of the Registrar’s staff on a site visit to the University of Richmond in Virginia. As an undergraduate student aiming to have a career in higher education, this site visit was a fantastic opportunity. I met with the staff at their Registrar’s Office and contributed to the sharing of ideas and technology, in an effort to improve our office and enhance our ability to better serve our own students. The campus was gorgeous, the staff was very friendly, and the trip was a great success.

In October, I attended the Students in Transition (SIT) National Conference in Denver, CO. At the conference, I presented my research on traumatic brain injury and assisted Dr. Parks with a presentation on the changes to the Elon Experiences Transcript, which is making quite an impression. This conference was different from the SACRAO and AACRAO conferences I had attended the past two years. The SIT conference focused on the theme of supporting students in transition, whether as first-year student, transfer student, returning veterans, or seniors preparing to graduate. Because it was not directed at any specific campus office, the conference had a very different feel and environment. The participants’ passion for supporting the students at their various institutions was palpable.

Also, the American Association for Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) launched a new scholarship designed to help students attend the organization’s annual national conference. The Connor Scholarship provides support for new and aspiring professionals in enrollment and academic services fields to facilitate travel to and presentations at AACRAO meetings. I was honored to receive the 2014 Connor Scholarship in the amount of $400. I used the award to attend the AACRAO 2014 National Conference in Denver, CO last year. At the conference, I presented a recently published study from the SACRAO Journal that I had co-authored, entitled “Transgenderism and the College Experience.” I absolutely loved participating in this conference. Attending sessions, networking with colleagues, and presenting my research at a national conference were all unforgettable experiences.

Last semester, I was informed that I would be able to do it again! AACRAO contacted me to let me know that I have been awarded the Connor Scholarship for the second year in a row. The $500 scholarship covered my airfare, conference fees, and other costs involved with attending the spring conference in Baltimore, MD. Furthermore, I was invited to present my most recent study, "Traumatic Brain Injury and the
Reflections from Our Student Ambassador (cont.)

College Transition: Support from a Student Support Perspective” as a poster session at the conference. The conference was a huge success and was a bittersweet moment, as it was my last as an undergraduate. I was incredibly thankful for the opportunity to connect once again with my peers and to learn even more about the field of higher education administration. I am scheduled to graduate this spring, and that date is quickly approaching! This year I have launched a new study focusing on returning student veterans with PTSD and TBI. The study is in its data collection stage, with a hopeful completion date sometime this summer. Between my research, attending conferences, the job search, and my academics, it has been a

and I have loved every part of it. Current after-graduation plans involve a big move to Norfolk, Virginia. Here’s to whatever the future brings!

Erin Walker, a past research assistant to Dr. Parks, says her experiences conducting and publishing research gave her the confidence in her intelligence and academic abilities that she needed to apply to graduate school. She says that her work researching disorders among veterans and military personnel helped her realize that her interests lie more in the field of social work than psychology, which helped her actualize her career path. She writes, “I will always be grateful to Dr. Parks for giving me a chance and working with me on my research interests.” Erin was recently accepted to graduate school.

Registrar Alumni: How Researched Helped Me Succeed

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Now I'm no Lauren Conrad but after watching (and sometimes laughing) at my friends as they navigated their post-grad careers, I feel as though I have at least five pieces of advice to give. It also helps that I am a TV junkie and have seen many of my favorite characters go from High School Hottie to Head Honcho many times. (I mean Gossip Girl's Blair Waldorf took over her mother's fashion line before she was 30…) 

1. Find a survival job that also fulfills an interest of yours. Love yoga or fitness? Become a certified instructor and see if a local gym is hiring. You can even find a space and teach classes on the side with a group of friends or people in the community. Love writing? Find a magazine or website that will allow you to be a freelance writer while you look for that amazing salaried job.

2. Plan a day in advance to see old college friends (ah, I can’t believe I just used that term) and even high school friends. A small group of my friends just decided we will come together on one certain day a year. Do we have this day? Of course not, but the thought of being able to share my life experiences with them when it does happen makes my heart soar.

3. Go out and stay out. Try not to become someone who spends their days at home binge watching Netflix and living off Mom’s cooking. Take a cooking class, go to the gym, volunteer in the community, and especially attend as many alumni networking events as possible. The connections you make can lead to potential jobs. Also, be sure to say hi to the people you meet along the way. Be it the cutie next to you on the treadmill or a fellow volunteer, you never know if you could be speaking to a potential new friend (or boyfriend if you’re still single like me).

4. Commit like your life depends on it. Yes, this is the time to test out waters and try different career paths but once you find something you love, commit to it. (This is also excellent relationship advice, just saying.) If you love something, do it. Don’t eat, don’t sleep, don’t think—just do it. Most of the time, the hardest part about living your dream is just getting the courage to begin. Become OBSESSED with what you want to do and set little goals to achieve along the way. Hopefully you’ll find that the terrifying post-grad journey was merely a stepping stone to reach your dreams.

5. Your life is about YOU. Remember that your journey is going to differ from the people around you. Whether you get a job right out of school or decided to take time off and travel, the idea of comparing your journey to someone else’s can become a dream killer and should be avoided at all costs. You are beautiful, unique, and deserve to have your dreams come true.
Meet the Registrar Student Assistant Authors
featured in the pioneer edition of The A-Plus

Ashley Edwards was the Student Ambassador for the Office of the Registrar, and graduated in May with a B.A. in Psychology & a Neuroscience minor. After graduation, Ashley will be moving to Virginia with her fiancé, Steven, and their White Shepherd/Akita mix, Casper.

Ryan McElroy is a Junior Human Service Study Student with a minor in Statistics. One day, he wishes to work in counseling or in public policy.

Phylicia Pearl Mpasi was a proud member of the Class of 2015 and graduated with a BFA in Musical Theatre. She one day plans to write and star in her own television show and marry Leonardo DiCaprio.

Zoe Sachs is a sophomore majoring in human service studies, and minoring in child development and psychology. She once was 5'5” but swears she is shrinking.