A Life-Changing Journey

In May 2019 we welcomed our 13th cohort of Elon Academy scholars. Twenty-six bright and eager Alamance County youth now make up the Xi class. Since the Elon Academy began in 2007, we have supported and guided 325 scholars and their families through this transformative program. An impressive 100 percent of scholars who complete Phase 1 Academy have been accepted to college. This year we celebrated our 86th college graduation. In addition, we have gone beyond Elon’s campus to share important lessons we have learned to inform the national conversation on college access and success.

In this report, you will hear from some of our scholars across all phases of our program: high school, college and college graduates. Their accomplishments would not have been possible without the leadership and commitment of our generous supporters. We thank all our donors for supporting the Elon Academy with their gifts as well as their time, expertise and words of encouragement. An Honor Roll of Donors for the 2018-19 fiscal year is included on Page 9.

Our work is not finished! We will continue to raise funds to support operations of the Academy as well as to build the endowment (see Page 8), which will secure the long-term future of this amazing program. I hope we can count on your continued support.

On behalf of Academy scholars and their families whose dreams you fulfill and whose lives you transform, I thank you!

Terry Tomasek
Elon Academy Director | Associate Professor of Education & Wellness

Our Mission
Elon Academy serves students and their families in Alamance County who demonstrate financial need and/or no family history of college, known obstacles to a college education. We provide information and opportunities to academically promising high school students to pursue and complete higher education. Through a structured support system, students strengthen academic and interpersonal skills, build leadership skills, and develop an active sense of self-worth and social responsibility. Once students are accepted into the program in ninth grade, they remain Elon Academy Scholars until they graduate from college – a seven-year commitment.

As of 2019...

26.1% of children in Alamance County live below the poverty line.1
Only 22% of Alamance County residents who are 25 or older have a bachelor’s degree.1
14.4% of the Alamance County population age 25 or older have less than a high school education.2
Only 11% of low-income, first-generation college students are expected to graduate from college within six years.2

1Piedmont Health Counts 2 Pell Institute

Together, we are changing these statistics...
Our Students

Students begin in the Elon Academy as rising high school sophomores and remain in the program until they graduate from college.

- **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**
  - 73 high school scholars are from Alamance County.
  - 88% are from families who are below the average income for Alamance County (56% are either very low or extremely low income).
  - 96% will be the first in their family to complete a four-year college degree.
  - 100% of high school scholars enroll in honors, Advanced Placement or dual enrollment courses.

- **College Students**
  - There are currently 81 Elon Academy college scholars attending 20 different colleges and universities.

- **College Graduates**
  - Out of 86 Elon Academy scholars to graduate from college so far...
    - 8 scholars completed graduate school
    - 50 work in North Carolina
    - 17 work outside North Carolina
    - 1 serves in the military
    - 9 are in graduate school

- **Degree Attainment Rate**
  - 71% Elon Academy 6-year graduates
  - *60%* All U.S. students
  - *14%* Low-income U.S. students

*The National Center for Education Statistics (2018)
**Angel Scales**  
**Epsilon Scholar**  
2014 graduate of Southern Alamance High School  
2017 graduate of Wake Forest University with a degree in sociology

Angel will begin her studies at Georgetown Law this fall. At President Book’s reception in May, she encouraged Lambda Scholars not to be afraid to step outside their comfort zones, to create opportunities for themselves and to rely on their support networks. Trying the new and the unfamiliar takes courage, but it is an investment in the future and can provide new opportunities that can pay off over the long run, she advised. Angel also talked about how her connections to Elon Academy and its continued support helped her through challenging times while she was at Wake Forest. “Taking a little risk each time and relying on lots of support, I created an opportunity for myself that turned into something positive for my future,” she said.

**Jenny Te Vazquez**  
**Kappa Scholar**  
2018 graduate of Southern Alamance High School  
Second-year student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

During the summer of 2019, Jenny was an intern in the mayor’s office for the City of Albuquerque, New Mexico. A Morehead-Cain Scholarship recipient, she worked with three other Morehead-Cain Scholars on sustainability and equity projects. Jenny spent eight weeks researching how to improve food access to low-income communities. Her project revolved around encouraging the city to support programs that not only improve nutritious food access but educate and assist low-income people in building social networks. Her recommendation emphasized that such programs must empower those in need, giving them the skills to advocate for themselves. She says this internship has helped her realize the importance of social determinants of health, which will help her in her planned career as a doctor. Jenny thanks the Elon Academy for the three years she was able to spend in a dorm room because it taught her how to live with others and made her more independent. She says she took the skills she learned at the Elon Academy summer programs and used them to enhance her experience in New Mexico.

**Maria (Ari) Tiznado**  
**Kappa Scholar**  
2018 graduate of Walter M. Williams High School  
Second-year student at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ari was awarded a scholarship to go to Bududa, Uganda, to work with the Foundation for International Medical Relief of Children for two months in the summer of 2019. She worked with a team of medical students and physicians in FIMRC clinics and hospitals and talked to members of medically underserved communities about their hygiene and general health. Ari credits Elon Academy for helping her succeed. “The Elon Academy allowed me to exercise my independence at an early age, which encouraged me to explore my options at UNC. The Elon Academy also taught me about making connections in hopes of finding hidden opportunities, and that is something that is applicable to my success at UNC.” Ari hopes to charter an FIMRC organization on her college campus to assist with local health care advocacy.

**Nompahla Mtsambiwa**  
**Delta Scholar**  
2013 graduate of Walter M. Williams High School  
2018 graduate of North Carolina Central University with a degree in biomedical and biological sciences, magna cum laude

Nompahla was the keynote speaker at Elon Academy’s 2019 summer program opening ceremony. In fall 2019, she will begin the Doctor of Optometry program at Salus University Pennsylvania College of Optometry. Nompahla says she chose optometry because she loves research and patient interaction. The opportunity to job shadow many medical practitioners helped Nompahla make her decision. She said that the Elon Academy staff “helped provide healthy coping mechanisms for when I become stressed and overwhelmed. They taught me how to ask for help and provided resources to help me make decisions. They supported me emotionally by encouraging me and always being available to answer questions.” Nompahla hopes to conduct research and to eventually work in Zimbabwe.

**Lives Transformed...**

**Dreams Realized...**
Elon Academy hosts first Tri-Area College Access Summit

In January 2019, the Elon Academy organized and hosted the first Tri-Area College Access Summit. More than 20 college access professionals from neighboring cities attended. Organized by Elon Academy Assistant Director of College Success Princess King, this initiative aimed to provide a space for college access professionals to share experiences and resources for improved support for first-generation college students and their families.

One outcome of the Summit was a Transition to College Retreat during the summer of 2019 with Elon Academy, Student-U, Partnership for Youth Opportunities and the Emily K Center. The Elon Academy Lambda cohort was among the 64 recent high school graduates who attended. The 17 Lambda scholars received more than 100 college acceptance letters and $3.9 million in merit-based scholarships. Lambda Class member DiMari Faucette described Elon Academy as a guide during the past four years as he navigated “the trials and tribulations of high school.” Faucette said the experience has created another family for him and given him a clearer vision of what pursuing college means and what it can mean for the future.

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THANK YOU, ELON DAY DONORS!

On March 5, 2019, 110 generous donors contributed more than $12,000 to the Elon Academy! This was a 77% increase in donors and a 99% increase in dollars received compared to Elon Day 2018. More than 60% of the gifts were from Elon University alumni. Elon faculty, staff, parents, grandparents, students and friends made up the remaining gift givers. Thank you so much for your commitment to Elon Academy.

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NEWS

LabCorp Internship

Eight Elon Academy high school scholars took part in a four-week LabCorp internship during the summer. Since 2008, LabCorp has graciously provided full-time paid internships to scholars after completion of the summer Elon Academy program. The purpose of the internship program is to help scholars learn social and professional skills that will assist them in pursuing career goals. We are sincerely grateful for the commitment LabCorp has made to the Elon Academy and its scholars!

Career Trek to Cone Health

Second-year scholars spent a summer afternoon at Cone Health Alamance Regional Medical Center as part of the Career Trek program. The group toured the hospital and listened to a panel of healthcare professionals discuss the benefits, challenges and career opportunities in the field of medicine. “It’s really inspiring to see everything they’ve done, to hear their stories and to see how they’ve grown,” said Nakyrien Bradshaw, a student at River Mill Academy. “It makes me want to see how I can grow.” The Career Trek was a partnership with Elon’s Student Professional Development Center.

Scholar Voices

“Coming to the Elon Academy felt like safety, security. It felt like the first door to ever open in a life like mine. EA staff challenged me. Mentors reassured me when life seemed to be falling apart. Donors to the Elon Academy have given me access to my dreams. There are no words capable of explaining how thankful I am for that.” — Diana, Mu Scholar

“Until I entered the Elon Academy, I hid a huge part of my identity just because I did not want to be different from the other people around me. Being in this program allowed me to be around other people who are like me, and it also allowed me to meet people from different backgrounds. I was thrilled to be in an environment that was as diverse as my life felt. I learned to love and celebrate myself, even if other people did not. Elon Academy showed me that I could be proud of who I am.” — Eva, Mu Scholar

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Investing in Future Leaders

Elon Academy scholars who are not in college often return to campus as to serve as mentors for Alamance County teenagers in this impactful program that provides a pathway to college for young students who might not otherwise have the opportunity. Eighty-six Elon Academy scholars have earned college degrees and transitioned into careers. They are now aiding Elon Academy with monetary donations — paying back and forward at the same time in support of an education success story. This year, eight Elon Academy graduates made donations to the program through recurring gifts. What’s more, 17 Elon University graduates who acted in mentor roles as part of the Elon Academy Scholars Program possible. It costs nearly $500,000 per year to operate, and the Elon Academy Endowment supports 20%-30% of the operation budget.

Donors make contributions in a variety of ways. Many start their own endowment funds or make provisions in estate plans. Corporations and foundations, such as LabCorp, the Riverside Foundation and ING, have provided annual and endowed gifts. Duke Energy and Gap International offered gifts through matching programs with their employees. Many start their own endowment funds or make provisions in estate plans. Corporations and foundations, such as LabCorp, the Riverside Foundation and ING, have provided annual and endowed gifts. Duke Energy and Gap International offered gifts through matching programs with their employees. Individuals make an impact through more modest donations via recurring gifts, payroll deduction or outright gifts. We are thankful for each donation that helps continue the mission of Elon Academy to improve the lives of our students and to generate leaders for our communities!

Thanks to this generosity, the market value of the Elon Academy Endowment stands at $5.2 million. The support makes this essential program possible. It costs nearly $500,000 annually to operate the program, and the Elon Academy Endowment supports 20%-30% of the operating budget.

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Elon Academy students learn on the Challenge Course that working together leads to success.