

Elon University Division of Student Life

Vision for 2025

The Division of Student Life will be recognized as a visionary leader and national model for programs, services, and partnerships across the institution focused on engaged learning and transformative student experiences.

The Division of Student Life

The Division of Student Life facilitates a transformational student experience that integrates in-and-out-of-class learning, promotes holistic development, and facilitates student engagement within their communities. Our staff and faculty partners are committed to fostering an equitable and inclusive community that is essential for students to learn, develop, and thrive.

As we serve our students and each other in important and meaningful ways, we are also guided by core professional values that inform our work and help us to be deeply caring, committed, and innovative educators:

- Leadership that is visionary, transformative, and learning-focused
- Decision-making that is purposeful, strategic, and data-informed
- Relationships that are genuine, inclusive, and just

Our vision for 2025 was developed with engagement from staff across the Division of Student Life and guided by the values and vision of Elon University. Seven themes provide guidance for departmental and individual commitments to our roles outlined in *Boldly Elon*, the University's strategic plan for 2020-2030:

- **MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS**
- **LEADERSHIP and SKILL DEVELOPMENT**
- **INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE**
- **WELLNESS and WELL-BEING**
- **VIBRANT RESIDENTIAL CAMPUS**
- **CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**
- **DIVISIONAL EXCELLENCE**

These themes will serve as a foundation to guide the establishment of annual priorities at the division level and inspire the goals implemented by departments, committees, and work groups. Within each theme, *Areas of Focus* are identified to invite collaboration between Student Life staff, faculty or staff partners, and students to accomplish the change we seek. They should not be seen as limitations or boxes to be checked, but rather a handful of the many complex ways we will be working to accomplish our greater vision for 2025.

To successfully advance this plan, our first efforts will include defining key terms and developing practices to support consistent division-wide involvement in the annual priority setting process and identification of measurable outcomes.

Themes and Areas of Focus

1. Mentoring Relationships

Ensure all students have access to high-quality mentoring relationships, learn how to build a mentoring network, and are empowered to serve as peer mentors.

We believe in the transformative power of mentoring relationships and want all students to have access to high-quality mentoring experiences. These relationships begin as students transition into our community and continue throughout their college journey. Through engagement with a diverse network of mentors, students are challenged to find meaningful curricular and co-curricular opportunities while at Elon. They are supported in the process of exploring their passions, making meaning from their experiences, finding purpose, developing essential skills and fluencies needed to shape the future, and living with integrity to make a positive difference in the world.

All Student Life staff are educators uniquely positioned to serve as mentors to students, and support their development of a constellation of mentors to include peers, staff, faculty, alumni, and community members. Through intentional leadership development and training opportunities, these same students will be empowered to be mentors for their peers.

Areas of Focus:

- Prepare all staff members to have strong and meaningful mentoring relationships with students.
- Develop initiatives and strategies that communicate the importance of mentoring and teach students how to build a network of mentors.
- Advance effective training and development of peer mentors and create structures that contribute to a layered, collaborative system of peer mentoring.

2. Leadership and Skill Development

Leverage co-curricular experiences to produce graduates who are ethical leaders with essential skills the world needs and employers desire.

Elon's mission expresses our commitment to "integrate learning across the disciplines and put knowledge into practice, thus preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common good." Student Life will engage all students in developing essential skills and "fluencies needed to shape the future – writing, speaking, creative problem solving, collaboration, intercultural learning, data competency, media literacy, ethics, and personal and professional agility."

As a division, working alongside various campus partners, we aim to re-envision relationships, strategies, and tools to guide students in integrating and making meaning of their Elon experiences. We envision the development of strategies through our student employment, organizations, leadership, mentorship, and community development opportunities that aid in the development of these essential skills. This focus will encourage students to see leadership not just as a position but as the interdependent and ethical process of working with others to accomplish positive change.

Areas of Focus:

- Establish pathways that both challenge and empower students to use their time at Elon in an intentional way and make meaning from those integrated curricular and co-curricular experiences.
- Work with campus partners to define the essential skills that will prepare graduates for their future and create a comprehensive strategy to emphasize the development of those skills through student organizations, peer mentor roles, student employment, and leadership.
- Re-envision the Elon Experiences Transcript as a tool to help students thoughtfully select co-curricular engagement opportunities, integrate their campus experiences, communicate the development of skills, and reflect on their development in the areas of meaning and purpose.

3. Inclusive Excellence

Advance a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community.

At Elon, we believe that inclusive excellence is the shared responsibility of all community members to act deliberately toward equitable outcomes. We embrace collective strength derived from people of all identities, abilities, and perspectives; pluralistic orientation reflected in pedagogies, programs, and policies; and positive cross-cultural engagement at all times and in all places. But, we admittedly have work ahead to advance the inclusion and success of students, faculty and staff from a wider range of experiences, talents, abilities, nations, cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, genders, sexual orientations and socio-economic backgrounds. Elon's curricular and co-curricular experiences will establish intercultural learning and multifaith understanding as hallmarks of an Elon education, and position all students with the necessary skills, attitudes, knowledge, and dispositions to live and thrive in an ever-changing and diverse world.

In pursuing inclusive excellence, the Division of Student Life will develop and implement robust plans designed to strengthen high-impact practices and reinforce learning through engaged learning experiences. The division will systematically involve stakeholders in policy development, assessment of practice, and programmatic offerings. Through these offerings and experiences, majority and historically underrepresented students will be charged to engage across differences, and understand principles of power, privilege, and oppression. Students will cultivate cultural humility and multifaith understanding in their interactions and relationships.

Areas of Focus:

- Strengthen support networks to ensure the success of historically marginalized groups.
- Create structures and learning opportunities that engage all students, staff, and faculty in advancing their intercultural learning, multifaith understanding, and related competencies for leading social change.
- Advance an inclusive excellence framework across all Student Life departments to ensure equitable access to programs, services, and experiences.
- Develop and begin to implement a plan that addresses, promotes, and infuses anti-racism strategies across the division.

4. Wellness and Well-Being

Foster holistic wellness by inspiring and educating students who are active, resilient, and mentally healthy and engage in meaningful and purposeful commitments within their communities.

Wellness and well-being are consistent with the university's founding vision to be an academic community that transforms mind, body, and spirit. Student Life is committed to cultivating a campus culture and creating programs that support all aspects of personal wellness – community, emotional, financial, social, physical, and spiritual – and collaborating with faculty and other departments to engage our community in learning and conversations around holistic wellness. We are giving careful attention to community awareness, understanding, and action for young adult mental health in the process of working toward the designation of being a JED campus.

Student Life will demonstrate this commitment through an exemplary network of care involving all departments within the division, resources, and facilities that support wellness, relationships with students that model healthy and purposeful behaviors, and opportunities for all members of the Elon community to learn about and practice personal wellness.

Areas of Focus:

- Develop plans to renovate the Koury Athletic Center to support comprehensive community wellness, physical and mental health, and recreation in the heart of campus.
- Establish more seamless programs and services among Student Life departments that address recreation, wellness, physical and mental health, and resiliency, creating strong operational collaboration in advance of facility renovation.
- Model and assist with the development of wellness strategies for students, staff, and faculty.

5. Vibrant Residential Campus

Advance the goals for an innovative, integrated approach to living and learning at Elon, establish the next set of priorities to advance a vibrant residential campus, and deepen student belonging and traditions within the Elon community.

The university has a continued commitment to support a healthy living and learning environment that promotes students' intellectual, personal, and social development. Student Life will utilize collaborative and innovative strategies to create and sustain an inclusive and vibrant residential campus through continued investment in programs, staffing structures, and infrastructure that support formal and informal mentoring, holistic well-being, increased affinity to Elon, positive social engagement, and academic achievement.

A vibrant residential campus community will have active student engagement in campus activities and traditions, an increase in partnerships throughout the university, and identify staff, faculty, and peer mentors to support their personal and academic success. With the guidance of various university and division taskforce reports, Student Life will continue to re-envision and innovatively implement the recommendations that will guide our development of a vibrant campus.

Areas of Focus:

- Expand and deepen academic-residential partnerships, increase staff and faculty engagement in the residential experience of students, and continue to advance Elon's nationally-recognized living-learning communities.
- Complete and implement a housing master plan to address residential facility renovation and new construction.
- Complete the implementation of recommendations from the *Presidential Task Force on Social Climate and Out-of-Class Engagement* which include programmatic and facility recommendations such as reimagining and renovating Moseley Center as a vibrant hub of student activity.
- Strengthen systems designed to respond to community concerns, including emergency response, student care, and restorative practices.

6. Civic Engagement

Prepare every student to engage with communities, developing the next generation of informed leaders motivated by the common good who will help strengthen communities and shape democracies.

A pillar of an Elon education involves integrating learning across the disciplines and putting knowledge into practice, thus preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common good. Student Life educators, in partnership with faculty and community colleagues, will facilitate experiential learning opportunities designed to prepare all students to engage with diverse communities and actively contribute to civic life. These opportunities will allow students to make a difference in the life of our communities and develop a combination of knowledge, skills, values, and an overall understanding of their civic responsibilities.

This focus will challenge students to engage in educationally purposeful reciprocal experiences that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. As a result, students will be prepared to emerge as the next generation of engaged citizens who are contributing members of a larger social fabric in democracies.

Areas of Focus:

- Incorporate civic learning, service, civic responsibility, and community partnerships across the work of multiple Student Life departments and programs.
- Expand and deepen dialogue opportunities for students to engage with beliefs different from their own that lead to understanding multiple perspectives and discussing the common good.
- Partner with community organizations and increase opportunities for engagement around current local, state, national, and international issues.

7. Divisional Excellence

Advance a culture of excellence as a Student Life division, providing exceptional programs and services and supporting a team of educators committed to student success, inclusive excellence, professional growth, and wellness and well-being.

The Division of Student Life is comprised of educators committed to being excellent by engaging in best practices to support Elon's mission of providing a transformative student experience. Every staff member plays an important role in contributing to student-centered engagement and experiential learning opportunities. To support a dynamic division, we will advance a culture that deepens support for a multi-generational staff of diverse identities and backgrounds.

Investing in the transformation of mind, body, and spirit will cultivate a healthy culture of work-life integration that embraces essential aspects of professional development and wellness for all staff. We will establish advancing a range of professional competencies as a hallmark of the divisional experience for all staff. Our division will engage in strategies that affirm a commitment to wellness for our staff and model the importance of well-being to our students.

Areas of Focus:

- Increase our effectiveness with recruiting, developing, and retaining excellent staff who are diverse in identities, backgrounds, and experiences.
- Deepen and expand innovative professional development, coaching, and mentoring experiences that are accessible and responsive to career stages or pathways, advance intercultural learning and multifaith understanding, and promote staff wellness and well-being.
- Regularly assess divisional culture, evaluate departmental programs and services, and establish strategies and systems for continuous improvement.