Dear Class of 2024 parents and families,

As new members of the Elon community, you will receive frequent email updates from the university and the Office of Parent Engagement. Please see the important message below from President Connie Ledoux Book, which has also been shared with Elon students.

I look forward to working with you in the years to come.

Sincerely,

Jozi Snowberger '07
Senior Director of Parent Engagement
Elon University

Dear members of the Elon community,

Thank you for the dialogue over the past several weeks—authentic and courageous dialogue about accelerating change at Elon. It has never been more important than now to commit ourselves to the hope and the vision of these conversations and the ways we take steps forward as we study, learn and work together.

Action. That is what so many of you have called for to make Elon a more equitable and welcoming community—a university where Black students, faculty, staff and alumni can thrive and succeed, a university that fully realizes the commitment to respect for human differences found in our mission statement.

I agree. So today I am announcing several first steps Elon is taking, along with a promise for more action in the months ahead. These steps will put human dignity and diversity at the core of our community. By taking these actions, we will be a stronger more effective university in supporting student success, and we will be a richer and more just intellectual community.

I begin with a leadership appointment to drive our progress. I have named senior staff member Dr. Randy Williams to the new position of Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence. Dr. Williams has provided wise leadership at Elon for the past six years. As Elon's chief diversity officer, he will report directly to me. His responsibilities will cross all divisions of the university and he will provide transparent leadership on our progress in the important goals related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Learning must be at the center of change, so I am calling on Elon's faculty, Provost Aswani Volety and the academic deans to revise the curriculum. We must require students in all majors to take courses that drive deeper understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. I commit to providing the resources to fund this faculty initiative, including the addition of faculty, as needed.

I hope you saw last week's announcement that in April the trustees named the former Center for Leadership building in honor of Janice Ratliff, who served for 35 years as a mentor to Black Elon students. Janice exemplifies service to the community and the deep lifelong impact that Elon staff members can have on the lives of students.

Today I am announcing that the Board of Trustees has voted to immediately remove the name of William A. Harper from the residence hall in the Colonnades Neighborhood. Harper served as Elon president from 1911 to 1931 and advanced racist ideas of white supremacy. We understand that he played a role in an incident that led to the mob murder of an accused Black man. We have also received an initial set of thorough and thoughtful recommendations from the Committee on Elon History and Memory. We will follow these recommendations to establish a committee process to study building namings, along with holding a robust discussion this fall regarding William A. Harper.

Elon's bias response system has been at the center of many concerns over several years, so today I am charging Vice presidents Randy Williams and Jon Dooley to lead a process to redesign the system. We need Elon's bias response to be as effective and transparent as the law allows, and I'm asking for a public dashboard that provides our community with data regarding incidents of racism on our campus as well as the actions taken by the university.

Lastly, to promote accountability for the steps outlined here and the work ahead, going forward all future merit pay increases for faculty and staff will be based in part on their commitment to professional development related to diversity, equity and inclusion. That includes me and all of the vice presidents. In taking this action we recognize that each of us is responsible for the Elon community and each of us must open our heart and mind to the work ahead so that all of us can feel the reward of the richness and fullness of an Elon community where human dignity is fundamental in all we do.
These are five first steps in a deep agenda that will lead to real change for the future of the university. I am ready to push forward with this important work and I call on you to join me by making a personal commitment today to bring about the change that needs to happen now.

In determination for creating a more just and equitable Elon,

Connie Ledoux Book
President