Mentoring for Learner Success

Final Report of the American Council on Education's
Learner Success Laboratory at Elon University

February 18, 2022

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No other institution is looking at mentoring with this intensity, particularly using the constellation model. This report makes the mentoring work that is already happening at Elon explicit. Your Relationship-Rich Mentoring Map also is excellent and should be helpful for prospective mentors.

W. Brad Johnson, Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy and John Hopkins University

Mentoring needs to be clearly articulated to the campus community. You offer a clear and common definition of mentoring while still demonstrating the value of other meaningful relationships across campus. As constellation mentorship becomes institutionalized, there needs to be consideration of the capacity for faculty and staff of color.

Dawn Whitehead, Vice President, Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community and Careers, AAC&U

There was great interest, engagement, and thoughtful conversation about mentoring during the site visits. Boldly Elon is an ambitious plan but high participation in the ACE initiatives at all levels speaks to the commitment and hope to improve the experiences of all students through mentoring.

Lyssa Palu-ay, ACE Lab Advisor and Dean of Justice, Equity and Transformation at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design

#MentoringMatters

I have a few [mentors] that have just been phenomenal. I would say that mentoring has been the cornerstone of my Elon experience. I didn't expect that when I came in, but I have been absolutely overjoyed with the amount of guidance that I feel and support that I felt like I've had. [My mentor] is incredible ... and really great in her field and knows so much. And so every time we talk, I leave with more questions than answers ... like my brain is exploding. She does a really awesome job of letting me explore things on my own while still giving me guidance.

(Perspective of a mentee)

To me, a mentor is a person who provides scaffolding and support to get you to where you want to be next, hopefully in a positive and encouraging way, but also with constructive feedback. I think the job of a mentor is to help you grow, and sometimes growth is painful. So, a combination of both pushing and encouragement to help you reach your goals.

(Perspective of a mentor)

Many people have asked me, "Why is it that you chose the work that you do?" I believe that I am constantly growing and learning and becoming, and this work allows me to maximize that opportunity because it's so relationship-rich and so diverse and so challenging.

(Perspective of a mentor)

#MentoringConstellations

I feel like there's somebody who is an expert in every area of my life. There's a big intersectionality with all parts of my identity. So that's very, very important because I may not understand all the aspects of all the things that I am, but at least there's somebody that knows enough about one aspect.

(Perspective of a mentee)

I think it's useful to have a number of people who serve different needs, and it helps people develop a sense of belonging, it helps people develop a sense of, "I can problem solve, I can figure out who I need to talk to or what I need to do next in order to address whatever issue is going on in my life."

(Perspective of a mentor)

I love this whole idea about the constellation of mentors ... part of my role as a mentor is connecting them to other people. And that's such an important part because often I'm not the right person. ... By modeling collaboration and demonstrating it, and then promoting it and facilitating it, I see that as an important part of what we do, absolutely.

(Perspective of a mentor)

The question is, if there's a constellation, how are students making connections? It's not just creating the constellation, it's who's helping them see it, who's helping them make sense of their place in the constellation and their connections between the experiences? And again, I do think it is possible to just say, "Constellation of mentors, every student has one." But being Elon, I want us to go to the next step of, "Where's the integration, where's the conscious reflection, the making sense of [strengths, interests and values]"?

(Perspective of a mentor)

Executive Summary

We were honored to be accepted into the inaugural cohort of the ACE Learner Success Lab with an institutional focus on "Mentoring for Learner Success." President Book charged the Steering Committee on November 5, 2020, observing that mentoring is the cornerstone of Boldly Elon and the ACE work will be crucial in laying the foundation for a future task force charged with developing plans for implementing Boldly Elon mentoring initiatives.

Brief Synopsis of the Self-Study Process

Adapting the ACE model and self-study process to fit the Elon context and focus (see Figure 1), we conducted a 12-month self-study with the following **processes and outcomes**:

- External site visit by ACE Lab Advisor Lyssa Palu-ay with 67 campus constituents (January 19 – 21, 2021)
    - External site visit report
    - Thematic analysis
- Formation of four working groups: Curriculum; Co-Curriculum; Partnerships (student employment, alumni, and community partners); and Research.
- Working group SWOC analyses
- Data collection including:
    - Working groups' interviews, focus groups, and surveys with campus and community constituents
    - Research group
        - Interviews with 118 faculty, staff, and students
        - Surveys with 460 members of the 2024 and 2021 classes and alumni
- Creation of a "Definition Package," tested and revised iteratively with community members, including:
    - Definition of mentoring relationships in the Elon context
    - Overview of the research
    - Composite cases and constellation maps
    - Relationship-rich map, explanation, and models
- Development of preliminary recommendations by each working group
- Steering Committee critical review of and feedback on recommendations
- Campus Conversation (November 5, 2021)
- Steering Committee facilitators' feedback on Campus Conversation
- Development of integrated set of recommendations using an ecological systems approach
- Draft of final report for external peer review site visit

- Peer review virtual site visit by Brad Johnson, Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy and John Hopkins University; Dawn Whitehead, Vice President, Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community and Careers, AAC&U; and Lyssa Palu-ay, ACE Lab Advisor and Dean at MassArt (January 31, 2022)
- Submission of final report to ACE and Elon (February 2022)
- Communication of findings through social media, website, presentations, and publications (Spring 2022)

Figure 1. Self-Study Process

Primary Recommendations

Elon University's 2030 strategic plan, Boldly Elon, calls for the adoption of a groundbreaking mentoring model in which *all* **students will learn to build meaningful mentoring constellations that include near peers, staff, faculty, and others beyond the university**. As written in the plan, "this lifelong constellation of mentors will emerge as a hallmark of an Elon education, guiding reflection to integrate learning across students' educational and professional trajectories and engaging all students in developing essential skills and fluencies to shape the future."

Based on the self-study research, the ACE Mentoring for Learner Success Committee developed the following integrated set of recommendations (see more detailed recommendations later in the body of the report). These recommendations were developed utilizing a campus-wide ecological systems model, and approved, with appropriate cautions, by the Steering Committee.

1) **Adopt and consistently apply a common definition of mentoring relationships that offers clarity about what constitutes a mentoring relationship within a continuum of other meaningful relationships in a supportive, relationship-rich context.**

   The following definition was generated out of an extensive review of extant theory and scholarly research, further refined through interviews and surveys conducted with the Elon community, and iteratively tested and revised in response to extensive feedback.

   > Mentoring relationships are fundamentally developmental and learner-centered. Within Elon's relationship-rich campus environment, mentoring relationships are distinct from other meaningful relationships in that they:
   >
   > - promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused learning and development in intentional, sustained, and integrative ways;
   > - evolve over time, becoming more reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and
   > - are individualized, attending to mentees' developing strengths and shifting needs, mentors' expertise, and all members' identities.
   >
   > Although mentoring sometimes is conceptualized as a one-to-one hierarchical relationship, mentoring relationships function within a broader set of relationships known as a mentoring constellation. The number and nature of specific relationships within these mentoring constellations vary across individuals, time, and contexts, with different mentors and peer mentors offering varied forms of support and expertise. As a result, mentors play significant roles serving one or more mentoring functions, though few mentors will serve all mentoring functions.

The full report includes a comprehensive definition package.

2) **Make the mentoring constellation model a signature component of students' Elon education and ensure students have multiple pathways to identify and develop mentoring relationships, with attention to building agency and capacity across all years**.

High-quality mentoring demands multiple guided opportunities for reflection across all years, from the first-year experiences, such as Core courses, through advanced and culminating experiences, such as capstones and signature work. Based on recent task force reports and extensive research in the literature and on our campus, we know that we must attend particularly to the needs of our students with minoritized identities so that they are not only succeeding but also thriving.

3) **Develop context-specific professional development for students, staff, faculty, alumni, and other participants in Elon's mentoring initiatives, to support the integration or deepening of mentoring relationships within a constellation framework.**

This recommendation represents a significant need identified by all members of our campus community in our research.

4) **Develop a centralized infrastructure with significant resources to facilitate, support, and promote the University's curricular and co-curricular mentoring initiatives, basing the design, delivery, and assessment of specific programs on the mentoring relationships definition and the accompanying mentoring constellation model.**

In the same way that high-quality teaching is supported by an ecosystem of campus-wide resources, mentoring must also be threaded throughout our campus and *be the work of all departments*.

Relationship-rich Mentoring Map

Mentoring Relationships and a Relationship-rich Environment

In a relationship-rich model of education, relationships of many kinds matter. As Felten and Lambert (2020) argue, "Key is not tasking each student with identifying a single mentor who will meet all of their needs, but rather creating a relationship-rich environment where students will have frequent opportunities to connect with many peers, faculty, staff, and others on and off campus" (p. 6). In this model and from this perspective, mentoring relationships become one of many kinds of meaningful relationships that, together, provide a supportive context for learning and development: a mentoring constellation.

As Ragins and Kram (2007) articulate, "We now recognize that mentoring relationships exist within the context of developmental networks" (p. 9). Mentoring relationships are, therefore, helpfully understood within a broader context of supportive, developmental relationships: a relationship-rich environment. They do not form whole immediately. Mentoring relationships develop over time, emanating out of other forms of relationships and contexts.

For instance, the mentoring relationships faculty and students develop frequently begin within the classroom, wherein the faculty serve in the role of teachers not mentors, at least initially. Those teacher-student relationships that develop into mentoring relationships do so over time and, often, outside the classroom context in which their relationships have the opportunity to germinate.

Of course, mentoring relationships form across a variety of contexts beyond the classroom, with on-campus employment functioning as a significant location for such relationship development. Though initially serving in the role of supervisor, staff across campus are often identified by students as key mentors, with the "office" context, understood broadly, serving as a locale out of which mentoring relationships have an opportunity to develop.

Teacher and supervisor are two kinds of meaningful relationships that reside within a broader relationship-rich higher education context. They are two among many, including advisor, RA, classmate, coach, teammate, librarian, and tutor. These relationships hold *potential* for developing into mentoring relationships, but they are distinct from them. Mentoring relationships require time to develop, and they do so out of other meaningful relationships.

These initial relationships and the contexts out of which they form are, thus, critical to the *possibility* of mentoring relationships. The development of mentoring relationships relies on this broader context and set of relationships. Put another way, the full range of meaningful relationships is not only significant but critical.

The Relationship-rich Mentoring Map below represents one way to understand, identify, analyze, measure, assess, and plan the development of a relationship-rich environment that recognizes the multiplicity and value of many relationships, including mentoring relationships. It draws salient relational characteristics and functions from the literature on mentors and mentoring to construct sliding measures that map out various kinds of relationships that support student learning and development.

Relationship-Rich Mentoring Map

Greater

CHARACTERISTICS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Reciprocity & mutuality   Intentionality

Trust   Identification

Intensity/ time/ duration

Mentoring relationships

Other meaningful relationships

Supportive context

Less   Greater

FUNCTIONS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Social/ engagement support   Academic support   Personal support   Cultural support   Career support

The graphic depicts **three kinds of valued relationship spaces** (mentoring relationships, other meaningful relationships, and supportive context) defined by a set of relational

measures (mentoring characteristics and functions), each depicted on a sliding scale from less to greater.

1. The upper-right of the graphic marks the space of **mentoring relationships**. In that space, there could be a variety of relationships, but all would be marked by individual relational measures that tended, in general, towards the "greater" end of the scale.
2. Moving toward the bottom-left away from the mentoring relationship space, the graphic marks the spaces of **other meaningful relationships**. These spaces recognize a variety of other important relationships within the relationship-rich educational environment that aid student development and offer important forms of support.
3. Finally, the bottom-left of the graphic marks relationships that may be less significant independently but are part of a broader, **supportive context**. Much of the literature on mentors and mentoring addresses the value of (a) a broader institutional culture that values relationships, (b) the individuals that make up and activate those cultures, and (c) the opportunities for and development of the individuals within, as well as the institution as a whole. This third relationship space may include less well-developed relationships, but as in the case of a residence hall, they can provide a broad supportive context.

Relationships matter, across the board. The Relationship-rich Mentoring Map helps us understand, value, and differentiate the wide range of meaningful relationships that characterize a relationship-rich educational environment, while also distinguishing mentoring relationships as special and significant among other meaningful relationships.

Why "Mentoring Relationships"?
A great deal of the literature focuses on "mentors" or "mentoring" as a primary construct and unit of analysis. These orientations tend to lift up a single individual with exceptional characteristics (a mentor) who serves deeply and holistically a wide range of functions (mentoring). As a result, they tend to lead toward three problematic trajectories:

- an all-or-nothing end, whereby one is either a mentor or is not
- an overloading of expectations, whereby one has to serve excellently across a wide range of roles and functions
- a diminishing of other meaningful relationships, whereby those who offer important supportive and developmental relationships are considered less valuable or are not recognized or valued at all because they do not meet the criteria of the singularly valued mentor.

As a foil to these problematic trajectories and in a democratizing effort to recognize a wide range of valued relationships and functions, institutional practices often lean toward overly broad,

inclusive definitions that erase significant differences between kinds of relationships: everything and nothing becomes mentoring.

The construct of *mentoring relationships*, rather than mentors or mentoring, frames a differently powerful orientation. Approaching mentors and mentoring from the construct of *mentoring relationships* does not deny that there are such individuals – mentors – serving others in exceptional ways – mentoring – and through very deep and broad relationships. Instead, it places those kinds of relationships – mentoring relationships – within a broader set of relationships that are different but of great value and even critical to the possibility of mentoring relationship development.

Brief Conclusions

A constellation model, in which students have multiple meaningful relationships with peers, staff, and faculty, among others who provide multifaceted support and guidance, acknowledges the complex realities of developmental relationships and the continuum along which mentoring occurs. In this model, mentoring relationships become one of many kinds of relationships that, together, provide a supportive context for learning and development. Because mentoring relationships are sustained, developmental, and learner-centered, it is imperative that we scaffold opportunities for students to develop agency to build mentoring relationships throughout their time at Elon, through diverse pathways in the curriculum and co-curriculum. A mentoring constellation framework fits our institutional context and offers opportunities for mentors to connect with and support each other and their mentees.

Throughout the self-study, a number of compelling questions and emergent tensions surfaced around topics such as academic and student life mentorship; formal and informal mentoring structures; the necessity of training and time/capacity/resources to undertake it; selective, programmatic mentoring and scaling up; students' need for mentors from marginalized identities; and saturation, capacity, and overloading a few, highly sought and talented mentors. The mentoring initiatives developed out of this self-study must be responsive to emergent contextual challenges, integrated with our work on diversity, equity, and inclusion, and considerate of human and systems capacities that bear the strains of scale, scope, and quality.

Introduction to the Inaugural Cohort of the
American Council on Education Learner Success Lab

In the spring of 2020, the American Council on Education (ACE) launched a new inclusive learning community called the Learner Success Lab (LSL), supported by the Strada Education Network. With institutional partners, the initiative aims "to create environments conducive to learning in all its forms, developing learners who demonstrate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and agency necessary to navigate their life course, achieve personal fulfillment, and contribute to civil society" (Turk et al., 2020, p. 3). The COVID-19 pandemic and racial crises that ensued during the spring of 2020 forced higher education to reconsider structures and supports for learner success. In May, ACE re-established the vision for the LSL as follows:

> Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, pressures from new economic realities, disruptive technologies, changing student populations, and a broader educational paradigm shift were already mounting. The pandemic has exposed existing inequities and created new challenges that demand resilient institutions that can adapt and innovate.

Also in early spring of 2020, Elon University launched a new strategic plan for 2030, Boldly Elon, developed through an extensive, 18-month planning process. Most of the new initiatives in the plan were paused during the global pandemic. The ACE LSL afforded a timely, structured opportunity for review and reflection on learner success at Elon during this pause.

We were honored to be accepted into the inaugural cohort with an institutional focus on "Mentoring for Learner Success." These aims of Boldly Elon form the foundation of our work in the Learner Success Lab:

> Through a groundbreaking mentoring model Boldly Elon will magnify the transformative power of student- and learning-centered relationships at the core of an Elon education. All students will learn to build developmental networks that include peers, staff, and faculty, as well as others beyond the university. . . . This lifelong constellation of mentors will emerge as a hallmark of an Elon education, guiding reflection to integrate learning across students' educational and professional trajectories and engaging all students in developing essential skills and fluencies to shape the future.

President Connie Book charged the ACE LSL Steering Committee on November 5, 2020 (see the charge in Appendix B), noting the alignment of this work with Elon's mission:

> The Elon University mission statement describes a foundational belief in how our "academic community transforms mind, body, and spirit and encourages freedom of thought and liberty of conscience." Underpinning Elon's thriving and supportive learning

community are close mentoring relationships occurring everywhere students learn—from classrooms to global study to on-campus employment to residence halls and student organizations—and with all members of our community, faculty, staff, advisers, supervisors, peers, and alumni.

In her remarks, President Book observed that mentoring is the cornerstone of the strategic plan, cutting across the four themes of Boldly Elon (Learn, Thrive, Connect, and Rise). Her charge to the committee integrates the self-study process of the LSL with Elon's strategic plan to deepen mentoring relationships:

> "The ACE Learner Success Steering Committee will collaborate with ACE and consultants to develop a comprehensive strategy for mentoring relationships that supports learner success and lifelong learning for *all* students. We will evaluate existing policies and practices related to mentoring and learner success and identify and work to address structural inequalities and other barriers to thriving and succeeding.
>
> The work of the ACE Learner Success Steering Committee will be crucial in laying the foundation for a future task force charged with implementing Boldly Elon mentoring initiatives."

The leadership team and members of the Steering Committee are listed below (roles and titles updated here as of Fall 2021).

Co-leaders
Amy Allocco, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Multifaith Scholars Program
Nancy Carpenter, Assistant Director of Career Services for Student Employment
Sylvia Muñoz, Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education (CREDE)
Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, Professor of Psychology, and Director of the Center for Research on Global Engagement (CRGE)

Steering Committee
Stephanie Baker, Associate Professor of Public Health Studies
Vanessa Bravo, Associate Professor and Chair of Strategic Communications
Steve DeLoach, Professor and Chair of Economics
Marcus Elliott, Director of Odyssey Scholars Program
Bob Frigo, Assistant Dean of Campus Life and Director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement
Shannon Lundeen, Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships and Associate Professor of Philosophy

Jessie L. Moore, Director of Center for Engaged Learning and Professor of English
Scott Morrison, Associate Professor of Education
Tim Peeples, Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of English
Brandy Propst, Director of Elon 101 and Assistant Director of Academic Advising
Sandra Reid, Lecturer in Human Service Studies
Joan Ruelle, Dean of the Library and Associate Professor
Evan Small, Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness for Experiential Learning
      and Outdoor Adventures and Instructor in Wellness
Sean Walker, Media Services Lead

Learner Success in the Elon Context

Institutional profile

Elon University is a private, mid-sized comprehensive institution in central North Carolina with approximately 6,100 full-time and 175 part-time undergraduate students, and 825 graduate students. Most of the students are women (60%), White (79%), and 18 to 21 years old. The four-year graduation rate is 79%, and 91% of first-year students are retained. From the Fall 2021 Registrar's report, the top four states represented include North Carolina (25%), Massachusetts (9%), New Jersey (8%), and New York (7.5%), but also represented in the total student enrollment are 46 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and 49 foreign countries. International students comprise 6.5% of the population.

Elon is a tuition-driven institution and continually ranks among the nation's most affordable private universities. We emphasize a strong liberal arts and sciences foundation within our core curriculum and shelter a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa. We are one of only seven private universities in the country with accredited schools of business, communications, education, law, and health sciences. As of Fall 2021, the undergraduate majors number 2874 in the Elon College of Arts and Sciences, 1912 in the Love School of Business, 1423 in the School of Communications, 291 in the Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education, and 47 in the new nursing program in the School of Health Sciences. The largest undergraduate majors are Finance (520), Strategic Communications (474), Psychology (459), and Marketing (433).

Elon is a primarily residential campus, with the majority of students living in on-campus housing organized into eight different living and learning neighborhoods, offering a holistic approach to education.

The Elon community is deeply committed to student success. The 2022 U.S. News & World Report has recognized Elon as #1 for excellence in undergraduate teaching and #9 in the Most Innovative category. We ranked #83 among national universities, and for the seventh consecutive year, we have been named a leader in Student Success as the only college or university in the country ranked in the top 20 in all eight categories of high-impact academic programs. Every student at Elon participates in two Experiential Learning Requirements (ELRs), including internships, leadership, service learning, study abroad/away, and undergraduate research. Elon has been ranked highly by Zippia for post-graduate employment outcomes.

Elon undergraduates lead the nation in engaged learning:

Study abroad
(Elon **82%**, National Average 15%)

Complete an internship
(Elon **85%**, National Average 48%)

Hold a leadership position
(Elon **71%**, National Average 35%)

Work with a faculty mentor on a research project
(Elon **42%**, National Average 23%)

Participate in a learning community
(Elon **42%**, National Average 23%)

Have a culminating senior capstone experience
(Elon **87%**, National Average 45%)

Participate in two or more "high-impact learning practices"
(Elon **96%**, National Average 59%)

(Sources: Elon student surveys, National Survey of Student Engagement, Institute of International Education)

Teacher-Scholar Model

Teaching is the primary focus of the Elon faculty, and scholarship is the foundation of excellent teaching. Thus, we are dedicated to a teacher-scholar model, as noted by past provost Dr. Steven House in this letter to the community, that "holds in balance the practices of teaching and scholarship, explicitly including the related work of mentoring. The teacher-scholar model embraces the *both-and* tension (that is, not *either* teacher *or* scholar, but *both* teacher *and* scholar), recognizing the valuable outcomes that emanate from that tension." Elon is committed to creating an environment that affords opportunities for faculty to excel as teachers, scholars, and mentors.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Our last strategic plan, the Elon Commitment, prioritized initiatives in support of a commitment to diversity and global engagement. This plan created and refined a number of positions, programs, centers, practices, and policies related to diversity and inclusion. A Division of Inclusive Excellence was created to support Boldly Elon initiatives "to promote a more diverse, equitable and inclusive community where all experience belonging and well-being."

We also support inclusive and engaged learning and teaching with resources for faculty development and scholarship, including (among others) the Center for Engaged Learning, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, the Center for Research on Global Engagement, and the Center for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society.

Our last strategic plan focused on diversifying our student body through initiatives such as the Odyssey Program, with increased funding from 30 to approximately 180 selective, merit-based scholarships. The program has a 100% retention rate from the first to the second year. We doubled the number of international students. The number of students of color increased by 75% (450 Black and 450 Hispanic students).

Despite this progress, there is obviously much work to be done to diversify our student and campus community and to foster equity and inclusion. The second theme of Boldly Elon is *Thrive*, with a focus on building a healthier and more diverse, equitable, and inclusive community where all students, faculty, and staff experience belonging and well-being. In ongoing conversations throughout the LSL self-study process, the phrase "mentoring for surviving, not thriving" was applied to the experience of students with minoritized identities. There is a clear need to integrate the work of the Boldly Elon implementation committees moving forward.

Mentoring for Learner Success and the ACE LSL Model

Based on the longstanding Internationalization Lab Model, the LSL includes a 12- to 18-month self-study process guided by a Lab Advisor and regular meetings with cohort team members and the program directors. We are deeply gratified to have been paired with Lab Advisor Lyssa Palu-ay, Dean of Justice, Equity and Transformation at MassArt. Her wisdom, support, and guidance have been instrumental in our accomplishments.

In the LSL, learner success is operationalized in three domains, including life design, workforce and career readiness, and persistence and completion. The LSL was informed by an extensive literature review of these three domains, as well as the Strada-Gallup Education Consumer Survey with data from nearly 350,000 respondents (for an executive summary, see Turk et al., 2020). One key finding from this survey was that people value their higher education experiences more when they see direct connections between their education and their careers and daily lives. Unfortunately, only 25% of participants agreed that their education related to their work and lives.

As shown in the figure below, the ACE Model for Learner Success includes six interconnected target areas and three strategic lenses through which each area is examined. Each institution is encouraged to adapt the model to their own context. Given our unique focus on mentoring and our institutional structure, we developed four working groups. Briefly, each working group was led by one of the four ACE LSL co-leaders, with a co-facilitator and three to five additional team members, most of whom were also on the Steering Committee.

ACE Model for Comprehensive Learner Success

The four working groups included: 1) Curriculum Working Group; 2) Co-Curriculum Working Group; 3) Partnerships Working Group, focusing on student employment, alumni, and community partners; and 4) Research Working Group. Each working group utilized the three strategic lenses, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Data-Informed Decision-Making; and Agility & Transformation. Each also considered the target areas of Leadership & Structure and Faculty & Staff Support as they developed recommendations. The focus and primary findings of each group are included in subsequent sections of this report.

Timeline of Major Milestones 2020-2022

(Detailed timeline in Appendix C)

ELON UNIVERSITY
ACE LSL SELF-STUDY TIMELINE

5 NOV '20
President Book charges
the Steering Committee

JAN '21
Site visit with
Lyssa Palu-ay

FEB-MAR '21
SWOC analyses

MAR-MAY '21
Data Collection

JUNE-AUG '21
Summer research

SEP-OCT '21
Data analyses and
reccomendations

5 NOV '21
Campus Conversation

NOV-DEC '21
Write and review
deliverables

FEB '22
Peer Review

MAR '22
FINAL REPORT DUE

Site Visit with Lab Advisor Lyssa Palu-ay

On January 19, 20, and 21, 2021, Lyssa Palu-ay and Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler met with 67 members of the campus community for a virtual external site visit (itinerary in Appendix D). Palu-ay's report is included below. A thematic analysis supported by participants' selected questions and comments is in Appendix E.

Executive Summary

Identification of mentoring successes and challenges was sometimes deeply embedded in the role of the person at the institution, as they represented a niche perspective. A number of compelling questions surfaced, as well as some emergent tensions around topics such as academic and student life mentorship; formal and informal mentoring structures; need for training and time/capacity/resources to do it; selective, programmatic mentoring and scaling up; students' need for mentors from marginalized identities; and saturation, capacity, and overloading a few, highly sought and talented mentors.

Across all the meetings, people often began by telling a story of themselves as a mentor, or someone who was a mentor to them. These stories bring mentoring to life. We continue to ponder the question, "How can we harness this to bring the whole community in?"

External site visit report

ACE Learner Success Lab Advisor: Lyssa Palu-ay
Virtual Site Visit: January 19 - 21, 2021

What does it mean to move mentoring to the center of the organization?

Peter Felten

Elon University is engaged in the American Council of Education's (ACE) Learner Success Lab to more fully develop mentoring as a central feature within the Boldly Elon strategic plan. As the lab advisor for Elon, I attended a virtual site visit January 19-21, 2021. Dr. Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler invited individuals to take part in these meetings to discuss mentoring in practice, concerns, benefits, challenges, possibilities and engage questions. I will note these meetings took place in virtual Zoom rooms, since we have found ourselves still squarely in the midst of global and racial health pandemics. Even with these obstacles we found high participation with 67 individuals which included senior leadership, staff, deans, directors, faculty, students, provost, the current president and a former president. Dr. Vandermaas-Peeler organized meetings according to areas that overlap. We used the following questions to loosely guide our conversations.

- What would mentoring success look like in ten years?
- How do we know we succeeded?
- What would it take to get there?

The high participation demonstrated a great interest and engagement with the idea of mentoring. The two and a half days of meetings illuminated areas of mentoring currently at Elon and the need to more fully understand how this initiative can be scaled to meet every student.

Definition of Mentoring

From our conversations, no single definition of mentoring was identified which mirrors the literature (e.g., Jacobi 1991; Crisp et al. 2017). However, there are ways relationships that might emerge from mentoring are described in the Elon context. Boldly Elon's plan describes a constellation of mentors where "students will learn to build developmental networks that include peers, faculty and staff, as well as others beyond the university". Leo Lambert and Peter Felten elaborate on this idea in their book, *Relationship- Rich Education*. Because there is no current operational definition, individuals recognized the need for one as our discussions unfolded. There seemed to be agreement that mentoring is multi-directional, mutually beneficial and reciprocal between the mentor and the mentee. There were also specific interactions with mentors that described relational interactions such as emotional support, care and encouragement. Within the context of undergraduate research and programs where students are in cohorts, mentors also provided academic support.

Some of the most intimate moments in our conversations were when individuals spoke gratefully of their own personal mentors who helped guide their career and personal paths. Individuals also spoke fondly of students who they mentored. Our conversations seemed to land on the sentiment that you know when mentoring is happening. Yet a tension emerged in the very need to define it and not dilute its benefits.

Formal and Informal Mentoring

Individuals described how mentoring can present in formal or informal ways. Formal mentoring was described within specific programs such as undergraduate research, peer mentoring, CREDE, Elon 101 and internships. The Odyssey scholars program was identified as a successful formal model with 95-96% graduation rate, higher than other groups. In our conversations, it was also suggested to frame opportunities for mentoring through on-campus employment. Informal mentoring was described within interactions such as advising/coaching, with community partners, first-generation to college students and the maker hub. There was also a feeling that currently mentoring was inconsistent. Students who were part of cohorts, had more opportunity to find mentoring relationships than students who were not in those types of programs. In both informal and formal mentoring, how to sustain and scale mentoring culture came up.

Mentoring Minoritized Students

Within our conversations, a concern surfaced about providing mentoring for minoritized students. Even though the retention and graduation rate for minoritized students is high, there is a challenge of navigating a predominately white institution (PWI) like Elon. Odyssey scholars was identified as a signature program with successful outcomes for minoritized students, but the question is how to scale this up. Another problem surfaced; there are not enough minoritized faculty or staff to provide mentoring. Minoritized students seek out mentors they can identify with and because there is a dearth of minoritized faculty or staff, these mentors are stretched thin and overextended. More support is needed for those currently doing this work, and these difficulties need to be taken into account for the future sustainability of these mentors.

Faculty/Staff Mentoring

There seemed to be agreement that more people need to do the work of mentoring, but particular supports and recommendations were suggested. Mentoring is currently happening above workload. Adjusting the expectation to have mentoring be part of one's job and incentivized were discussed. Consistent with this thinking, mentoring would then be valued in promotion. More mentoring needs to happen, though a feeling surfaced that not everyone should mentor. Mentor training and professional development was recommended with an intentional focus on cross cultural mentoring particularly for white faculty and taking into account diversity and inclusion perspectives.

Conclusion

There was great interest, engagement and thoughtful conversation about mentoring during this visit. Increasing capacity was the biggest challenge and aspiration. A holistic approach to mentoring was also held up in many of our conversations. The twin concerns of supporting minoritized students and faculty and staff in mentoring efforts is something to take into consideration. Boldly Elon is an ambitious plan but high participation in the site visit, at all levels, speaks to the commitment and hope to improve the experiences of all students through mentoring.

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Interviews with the Elon Community

Aims

To advance our knowledge about extant mentoring practices and relationships in the Elon community, the co-facilitators of the Research Working Group, Jessie L. Moore and Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, with support from Amy Allocco, conducted a large-scale, in-depth interview study with 118 participants to date. This ongoing IRB-approved research study examines participants' perceptions of what mentoring *is*, and what it is *not*. We inquire about mentoring functions, characteristics, practices, models, and interrogate the framework of *mentoring constellations*. In addition to informing the self-study, this research will make a unique contribution to the scholarly literature, as few studies have examined mentoring relationships from multiple perspectives and mentoring constellations within a higher education context.

Key Findings

When participants described their mentoring relationships, they noted the importance of balancing challenge and support while providing constructive feedback, and the significant skill and time required to develop and sustain mentoring relationships. The interviews suggest that **academic support, personal/emotional support, career-focused support**, **social networking support,** and **identity development support** are the most common functions of current mentoring relationships at Elon. Participants embrace the idea of developing mentoring constellations, and identify benefits (e.g., multiple perspectives and different mentors supporting various functions without being responsible for *all* functions) and the simultaneous challenges/opportunities (e.g., negotiating and navigating multiple perspectives, building connections among mentors in the constellation, and time needed to develop mentoring relationships) of those constellations.
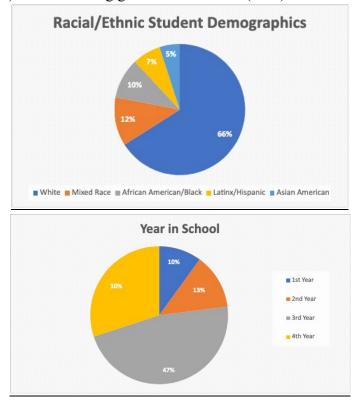
Participant Recruitment

Using a snowball sampling technique, we emailed invitations to students, faculty, and staff to participate in one 30- to 45-minute interview. Through committee members' and student partners' networks, additional undergraduates were invited to augment the numbers of students with minoritized identities, those in a Fellows or Scholars cohort (e.g., Odyssey Scholars, Business Fellows), those not in a cohort-based program, and from diverse majors, among other groups. Recruitment of faculty and staff followed a similar pattern. To date, 62 undergraduates, 50 faculty and staff, four graduate students, and two community partners participated in interviews or one of several focus groups. Recruitment will continue through spring of 2022 with participants from selected groups not yet represented in the data.
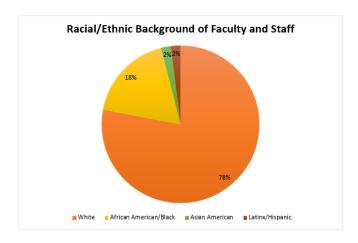
Student Sample Demographics

The racial/ethnic composition of the sample can be seen in the first chart below. As seen in the second chart, all years in school were represented, though a majority were in their 3rd year. Most
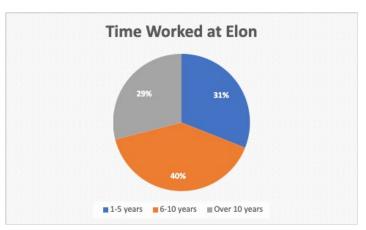
participants were in a Fellows or Scholars program (68%), female-identified (79%), not affiliated with Greek Life (69%) and continuing generation students (89%).

Racial/Ethnic Student Demographics

White	66%
Mixed Race	12%
African American/Black	10%
Latinx/Hispanic	7%
Asian American	5%

Year in School

1st Year	10%
2nd Year	13%
3rd Year	47%
4th Year	30%

Faculty and Staff Sample Demographics

The racial/ethnic background of the faculty (50%) and staff (50%) sample is represented in the first chart below. The second chart shows the number of years they were employed at Elon, working in many areas across campus. The sample was primarily continuing generation (76%) and female (63%).

Racial/Ethnic Background of Faculty and Staff

White	78%
African American/Black	18%
Asian American	2%
Latinx/Hispanic	2%

Time Worked at Elon

1-5 years	31%
6-10 years	40%
Over 10 years	29%

Interview Questions

The interviews are conducted on Zoom using a semi-structured process beginning with the open-ended question, "What does it mean to be (or to have) a mentor?" After the initial response, interviewers offer this framing about the breadth of mentoring functions: "In our review of the research, we have learned that mentoring relationships can promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused development." The next set of questions is focused on the participant's mentoring relationships, the essential characteristics of mentoring relationships, and who serves in helping roles but would *not* be identified as mentors. The participants are asked to talk about how their mentoring relationships developed, whether they have a mentoring constellation (mentees) or see themselves as part of a mentoring constellation (mentors), and to offer suggestions for strategic planning at Elon, among other topics. Interviews generally last 30 to 45 minutes, and the number of questions asked depends in part on length of responses.

Coding and Analyses

The interviews are audio-recorded, professionally transcribed, and coded in the Dedoose software package with overarching "parent codes" (e.g., characteristics of a mentor) and more specific "child codes" (e.g., empathetic, experienced, knowledgeable) applied to the participants' responses. Conventions of qualitative coding are used in the coding and analytic processes (e.g., "Sort and Sift, Think and Shift," as described by Maietta et al., 2021). In an iterative process, we are "diving in" to the data, identifying key quotes and themes, and then "stepping back" to assess what we are learning, with the aim of developing evidence-based and thematic narratives as a means of sharing the findings (Maietta et al., 2021). Given the vast amount of data yielded from the interviews, the analyses are ongoing, and results will be shared with the campus community and in professional venues in the coming year.

Composite Cases

From the qualitative analyses, we are creating a set of composite cases to illustrate "the lived experiences and perspectives" of participants (Maietta et al., 2021, p. 2053). Together, these composites relay important stories in the data and help us to identify larger themes that thread through the study. Each composite includes a short description, illustrated with quotes from different participants. For the student composites, student partner Jordan Young created visual maps of their mentoring constellations. One student composite case and map is included in the definition package and nine additional student, faculty, and staff composites are in Appendix F.

Defining what mentoring is and what it is not

When asked *what it means to be a mentor*, participants offered a wide range of responses, demonstrating the complexity of conceptualizing mentoring. One prominent theme was that **mentors balance challenge and support while providing constructive feedback**. They have (more) experience and share expertise and insights, but there also must be a relational component. The second prominent theme was that **developing and sustaining mentoring**

relationships requires significant skill, dedication, and time. High-quality mentoring is time-consuming, and relationships do not form whole. The third theme identified in the interview data is that **mentoring relationships are reciprocal and of benefit to mentors as well as mentees**. Faculty and staff participants animatedly reported significant personal and professional gains from mentoring experiences (e.g., finding meaning in their work and learning more about their profession).

When asked to talk about *relationships that are beneficial but not mentoring*, participants most often discussed relationships of short duration or of a transactional nature. Sometimes they acknowledged that with more frequency and intensity of interactions, these relationships could become mentoring. Relationships focused on one specific need or goal were not seen as mentoring. Friends and family were often mentioned in these conversations, though some participants did identify mentors in these categories. Examples included conversations about grades during office hours, brief advising appointments focused on scheduling, and friends giving advice about a particular situation.

Mentoring Constellations

Given the dearth of literature on mentoring constellations in higher education, it was important to explore this framework in our research. The interview participants whole-heartedly embraced the concept of mentoring constellations, though most had not heard the term previously. Some people immediately elaborated the metaphor, talking about their "North Star" mentor and naming their constellations. Nearly every interviewee indicated they have (or are part of) a mentoring constellation, a broad set of meaningful relationships that includes within it one or more mentoring relationships. Interestingly, after learning about the concept of a constellation during the interview, students often began to name additional mentors as they thought about their relationships. **Moving from a one-mentor model to conceptualizing a constellation of meaningful relationships, including mentoring relationships, fits well with the interview participants' lived experiences**.

When asked to name the mentors in their constellation, students most often talked about faculty mentors. Peer and staff mentors were also mentioned frequently. This may be partially explained by the fact that two-thirds of the students interviewed were part of a Fellows or Scholars program, with faculty, peer, and/or staff mentoring built into the program structure. However, the survey data in this report provide additional evidence that students have multiple mentors. Only a few students reported that they did *not* have a constellation of mentors, most of whom were in their first year, and they cited the pandemic as a possible reason for challenges in identifying mentors. Students identified people missing from their constellation as well, citing desired connections with faculty, staff, and alumni, as well as successful professionals, with some shared identity characteristics, in their intended future pathways.

Most mentors saw themselves as part of a constellation, though the degree to which they connected with other mentors varied widely. The most frequently reported connections between mentors were in relation to supporting students' well-being. Particularly when they had concerns, mentors reached out to each other and to the relevant support networks on campus. The opportunity to connect with other mentors within and across constellations was identified as a potential opportunity by many mentors.

Mentoring Functions

We were interested in the types of support mentors provide to undergraduates. From the literature, we identified the following mentoring functions:

- provide personal and/or emotional support
- advance academic learning
- support identity development
- support social networking
- develop cultural knowledge
- plan and prepare for life after college
- find purpose

In addition to direct questions about each type of support, we coded the frequency of times each mentor function was mentioned throughout the interview. In the analyses, we also examined the ways codes co-occurred in the data.
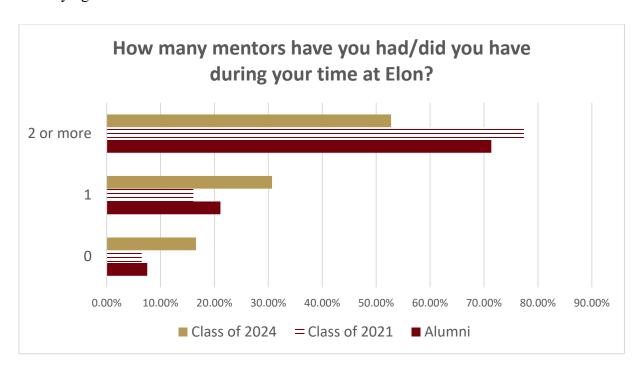
Our results indicate that mentors support students' learning and development across **all** the categories listed above, suggesting that mentoring relationships serve a broad range of functions. The two most frequently applied codes were **academic support** and **personal/emotional support**. These also co-occurred most often, along with **career-focused support** (e.g., plan and prepare for life after college). The other types of support mentioned frequently included **social networking support** and **identity development support**. Although we did not examine the relationships between the role of the mentor, the mentoring context, and the types of support provided in the interview questions, this is an interesting line of inquiry for future research that could inform professional development opportunities.

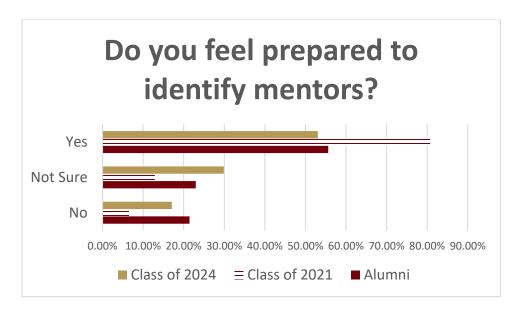# Surveys of Student and Alumni Experiences with Mentoring at Elon

Members of the Research Working Group (co-PIs Jessie Moore and Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler) partnered with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment and the Office of Alumni Engagement to survey first-year students (Class of 2024), seniors (Class of 2021), and alumni **to benchmark student and alumni experiences with mentoring on campus**. The surveys were administered in May 2021 (first-years and seniors), August 2021 (alumni), and October 2021 (members of the class of 2024 who did not complete the May survey). Alumni participants' graduation dates ranged from 1977 to 2021, with a majority of participants drawn from the classes of 2016-2020. The Office of Alumni Engagement sent targeted invites to Elon's alumni affinity networks, in addition to inviting participation from a broader pool of 5,000 alumni. **The surveys could be replicated in the future to measure the impact of Elon's future mentoring initiatives initiated by an implementation team.**

A 2021 Benchmark of Mentoring at Elon
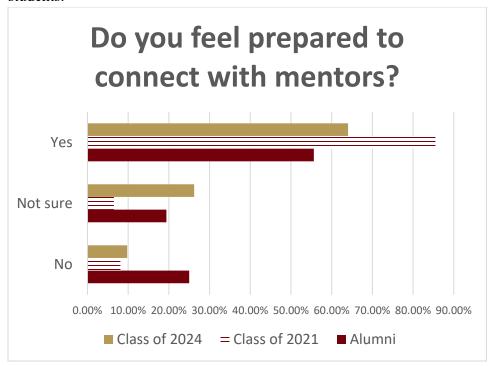
The survey results suggest that Elon is building its mentoring initiatives on a strong foundation. Most students and alumni already have 1 or more mentors, and many have 2 or more. Nevertheless, at the end of their first year, 17% of participants from the Class of 2024 had not identified a mentor and 6.5% of participants from the Class of 2021 graduated without identifying a mentor.
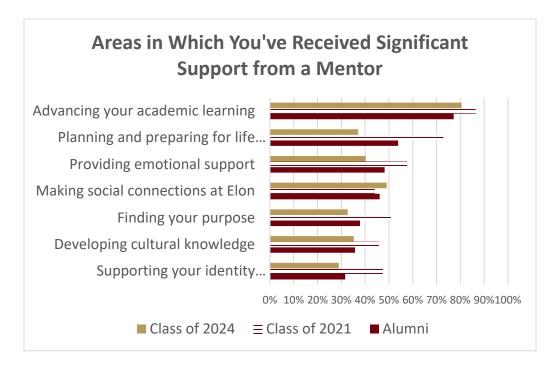
Students appear to gain confidence in their ability to identify mentors as they advance in their studies, but the transitions after graduation appear to pose new challenges that reduce confidence slightly for alumni.

Do you feel prepared to identify mentors?

Horizontal bar chart comparing Yes, Not Sure, and No responses across Class of 2024, Class of 2021, and Alumni, with x-axis from 0.00% to 90.00%.
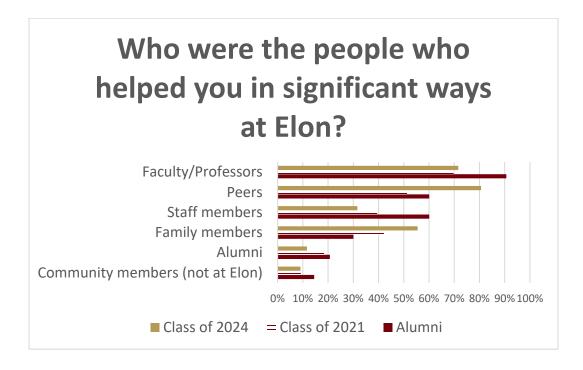
Many students feel prepared to connect with the potential mentors they identify, but again the transitions after graduation led alumni to be less confident in their preparation than current students.

Do you feel prepared to connect with mentors?

Horizontal bar chart comparing Yes, Not sure, and No responses across Class of 2024, Class of 2021, and Alumni, with x-axis from 0.00% to 90.00%.
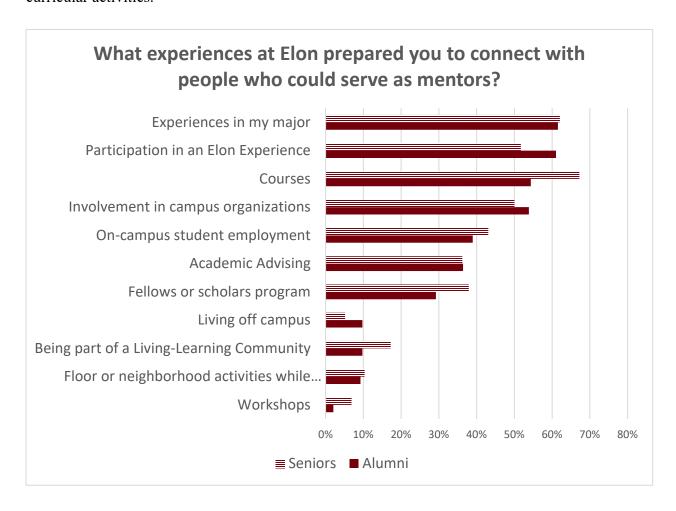
Students and alumni identified mentoring functions that correspond with the types of support outlined in prior scholarship on mentoring. While some mentoring functions (e.g., advancing your academic learning) remain prevalent across academic career stages, others are more prominent at specific times (e.g., planning and preparing for life after college, for seniors).

Areas in Which You've Received Significant Support from a Mentor

Students' mentors represent a range of campus roles, with many of students' and alumni's mentoring constellations drawing members from multiple roles.

Who were the people who helped you in significant ways at Elon?

Seniors and alumni attribute their preparation to connect with mentors to both curricular and co-curricular activities.

What experiences at Elon prepared you to connect with people who could serve as mentors?

Interview data highlights the range of experiences within these areas, though, so campus members should not assume that experiences with higher identification by participants work well for *all* students. **Rather, the collective survey and interview data suggests a need for multiple pathways to mentoring to ensure more equitable access to mentoring relationships for more students.**

A "Definition Package" of Mentoring Relationships

The Research Working Group, including Jessie Moore, Tim Peeples, Joan Ruelle, and Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, was charged with defining mentoring in the Elon context. The "definition package" comprises an interrelated set of materials that offer context for the conceptual framework of mentoring constellations. **Considering each of the materials in relation to the other components of the definition package is critical for developing a full picture of mentoring at Elon.**

Process

We began by identifying and reviewing a core set of resources on mentoring, focusing on comprehensive literature reviews of definitions, conceptual frameworks, characteristics and functions of mentoring and other developmental relationships, and studies in higher education. After a collective review of the core resources, all of which conclude that there is *not one accepted definition of mentoring*, we each began drafting a definition to fit Elon's context. We engaged two students as partners in this work, Alanis Camacho-Narvaez and Jordan Young, who also reviewed core resources and wrote definitions. We compared our definitions, scrutinized them against the literature to identify overlaps and omissions, and spent the next few months reviewing and refining a short definition as well as accompanying materials in this definition package. We obtained extensive feedback in multiple meetings with others in the campus community (including a campus-wide conversation) and revised accordingly.

The definition package developed by the Research Working Group includes:

- A Definition of Mentoring Relationships in the Elon Context
- An Overview of Relevant Research
- An Annotated Definition
- A Relationship-rich Map of Mentoring
- Composites and Maps of Undergraduate Students' Mentoring Relationships

Definition of Mentoring Relationships in the Elon Context

Mentoring relationships are fundamentally developmental and learner-centered. Within Elon's relationship-rich campus environment, mentoring relationships are distinct from other meaningful relationships in that they:

- promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused learning and development in intentional, sustained, and integrative ways;
- evolve over time, becoming more reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and
- are individualized, attending to mentees' developing strengths and shifting needs, mentors' expertise, and all members' identities.

Although mentoring sometimes is conceptualized as a one-to-one hierarchical relationship, mentoring relationships function within a broader set of relationships known as a mentoring constellation. The number and nature of specific relationships within these mentoring constellations vary across individuals, time, and contexts, with different mentors and peer mentors offering varied forms of support and expertise. As a result, mentors play significant roles serving one or more mentoring functions, though few mentors will serve all mentoring functions.

Overview of Relevant Research

Mentoring has gained prominence in higher education as a critical component of student success during and after college. Benefits of mentoring relationships include enhanced personal and professional learning and development, as well as greater engagement at work and increased well-being post-graduation (Gallup Inc., 2014; Vandermaas-Peeler et al., 2018). The role of effective, high-quality mentoring has received significant attention with the increasing emphasis on students' participation in high-impact practices designed to facilitate cumulative learning and engagement. Mentoring has been linked to a variety of academic outcomes such as persistence and grades, as well as developmental outcomes contributing to students' academic success such as college adjustment (Crisp et al., 2017). Although seldom studied, there are also benefits for mentors in higher education, including personal satisfaction and fulfillment, professional rejuvenation, and networking (Johnson, 2016). Eby et al. (2008) suggest a developmental lifespan approach to the study of why mentoring matters, to understand the full breadth of mentoring benefits.

What, exactly, does high-quality mentoring entail? Despite over four decades of research on mentoring, there is no universally accepted definition (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Ubiquitous use of the term has not only created definitional and conceptual confusion, but also an "intuitive belief" that mentoring is a panacea for a wide array of personal and professional challenges in a multitude of settings (Eby et al., 2010, p. 7). Without a clear definition, our understanding of what it means to be a mentor becomes obfuscated.

The lack of clarity about the definition and key characteristics of mentoring stems in part from the complex and overlapping nature of developmental relationships in higher education. Indeed, being a mentor is often conflated with other student- and learning-centered relationships such as advising, coaching, tutoring, and supervising, among other roles. To avoid this confusion, Johnson (2016) suggested that mentoring relationships be considered along a continuum rather than as a distinctive category. He encouraged a shift in thinking about mentoring such that "Mentoring is not defined in terms of a formal role assignment, but in terms of the character and quality of the relationship and in terms of the specific functions provided by the mentor" (p. 28).

In order to support high-quality mentoring relationships at Elon University and enact a strategic plan with the ambitious aim for all students to build developmental networks, or mentoring *constellations*, we must elucidate the critical functions and characteristics along the continuum of *mentoring as a developmental relationship*.

Supporting research

Although scholars are not in agreement about a universal definition of mentoring, most incorporate the foundational work of Kathy Kram (1988) on developmental mentoring relationships in the workplace. In her original research, Kram conceptualized two primary

mentor functions as *instrumental*, focused on goal-directed activities, skill mastery and career development, and *psychosocial*, supporting socio-emotional, personal, and identity development (Johnson et al., 2010; Keller, 2010). Crisp and Cruz (2009) applied this framework to mentoring undergraduates in higher education and expanded it to incorporate four types of support, including psychological and emotional support; support for setting goals and choosing a career path; advanced academic subject knowledge in one or more fields; and identification of a role model. In their more recent review of research on mentoring undergraduates, Crisp et al. (2017) identified four cross-cutting tenets: 1) Mentoring relationships are focused on students' growth and development; 2) Mentoring includes professional, career, and personal/emotional supports; 3) Mentoring relationships are reciprocal; and 4) Mentors have more experience, influence and/or achievement as compared to their students (p. 19).

In their recent comprehensive review of the literature, Mullen and Klimaitis (2021) noted the widespread agreement in definitions of mentoring that it is "relational and developmental," and includes "phases and transitions" (p. 20). It is well-established that mentoring relationships are long-term, promote holistic growth through guided reflection, and shift over time to adapt to new contexts, skills, and identities (Irby, 2013; Johnson, 2016; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). Because of these dynamic interpersonal and contextual dimensions, mentoring relationships are complex and can be challenging to identify, interpret, and assess. A mentoring relationship "emerges from a series of interdependent, reciprocal interactions over time" (Keller, 2010, p. 31). Who is a mentor? The answer may vary depending on who is asked and when. A person may not be identified as a mentor until the relationship has progressed over time, particularly when developed organically, or in the absence of a formal structure. Additionally, designating someone as a mentor does not guarantee that an authentic mentoring relationship will evolve that is tailored to members' expertise, identities, and needs. The mentees' contributions to the relationships are also critical (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Although various models of mentoring take interpersonal differences into account, they seldom consider marginalized identities as a factor, despite the salience of racial, ethnic, cultural, gendered, and sexual identities for students' experiences and well-being in higher educational contexts (Harris & Lee, 2019). Longmire-Avital (2020a, 2020b) explores the need to tailor mentoring to historically underrepresented minority students, noting that critical mentoring is most transformative when it recognizes and nurtures students' existing capital (2019) and centers the identity-related needs, experiences, and strengths of learners. High-quality mentoring requires significant commitment, open communication, mutual respect, and acknowledgement of privileges and limitations (Phillips & Adams, 2019). However, classical mentoring can be seen as "unresponsive to dynamics of privilege and oppression in excluding historically underserved populations from purposeful mentoring," and mentoring opportunities may not be inclusive of all identities, particularly in predominantly White institutions (Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021, p. 21).

Traditionally, mentoring has been conceptualized as a hierarchical relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced mentee or protégé (Johnson, 2016; Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021). However, more recent, relational models of mentoring acknowledge the interdependent, mutually beneficial relationships between mentors and mentees and include a broader range of processes, mechanisms and outcomes (Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Ketcham et al., 2018). Relational qualities of mentoring relationships include *mutual engagement*, defined as shared involvement and commitment; *authenticity*, or developing self-knowledge and feeling the relationship is genuine; and *empowerment*, feeling personally encouraged to take action (Liang et al., 2002).

In relational models, mentoring relationships are conceptualized within developmental networks or constellations (Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007; Vandermaas-Peeler, 2021a). Recent research on mentoring constellations and developmental networks supports the utility and benefits of multiple mentors for personal and professional development (Felten & Lambert, 2021; Higgins & Thomas, 2001; McCabe, 2016; Yip & Kram, 2017). Higgins and Kram (2001) developed a typology of mentoring networks based on the diversity of social systems represented within the network and the strength of the relationship. Mentors in networks with greater diversity and strength facilitate access to a broad range of information, often resulting in significant personal learning for the mentee.

A constellation model, in which students have multiple meaningful relationships, including mentoring relationships, with peers, staff and faculty, among others who provide multi-faceted support and guidance, acknowledges the complex realities of developmental relationships and the continuum along which mentoring occurs (Vandermaas-Peeler, 2021b). However, the ambitious aims of Boldly Elon, that *all* students will develop multiple meaningful relationships in a mentoring constellation, have not yet been enacted in practice in higher education. Further exploration of this framework is critical.

An Annotated Definition

Other meaningful relationships include teaching, supervising, coaching, and advising. These relationships can evolve to become mentoring relationships but they are not *inherently* mentoring (e.g., Mullen & Klimaitis, 2021).

Mentoring relationships are fundamentally developmental and learner-centered. Within Elon's relationship-rich campus environment, mentoring relationships are distinct from other meaningful relationships in that they:

> promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused learning and development in intentional, sustained, and integrative ways;

> evolve over time, becoming more reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and

> are individualized, attending to mentees' developing strengths and shifting needs, mentors' expertise, and all members' identities.

These functions align with prior scholarship on mentoring (e.g., Kram, 1988; Crisp et al., 2017) and were identified by interview and survey participants as outcomes of their mentoring relationships at Elon.

Reaffirming prior scholarship on mentoring (e.g., Fletcher & Ragins, 2007; Ketcham et al., 2018), interview participants emphasized that mentoring becomes reciprocal and mutually beneficial, though what that reciprocity looks like varies by context.

Although mentoring sometimes is conceptualized as a one-to-one hierarchical relationship, mentoring relationships function within a broader set of relationships known as a mentoring constellation. The number and nature of specific relationships within these mentoring constellations vary across individuals, time, and contexts, with different mentors and peer mentors offering varied forms of support and expertise. As a result, mentors play significant roles serving one or more mentoring functions, though few mentors will serve all mentoring functions.

Interview and survey research illustrated that, within their mentoring constellations (Sorcinelli & Yun, 2007), students turn to different mentors for different support functions.

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Relationship-rich Mentoring Map

Mentoring Relationships and a Relationship-rich Environment

In a relationship-rich model of education, relationships of many kinds matter. As Felten and Lambert (2020) argue, "Key is not tasking each student with identifying a single mentor who will meet all of their needs, but rather creating a relationship-rich environment where students will have frequent opportunities to connect with many peers, faculty, staff, and others on and off campus" (p. 6). In this model and from this perspective, mentoring relationships become one of many kinds of meaningful relationships that, together, provide a supportive context for learning and development: a mentoring constellation.

As Ragins and Kram (2007) articulate, "We now recognize that mentoring relationships exist within the context of developmental networks" (p. 9). Mentoring relationships are, therefore, helpfully understood within a broader context of supportive, developmental relationships: a relationship-rich environment. They do not form whole immediately. Mentoring relationships develop over time, emanating out of other forms of relationships and contexts.

For instance, the mentoring relationships faculty and students develop frequently begin within the classroom, wherein the faculty serve in the role of teachers not mentors, at least initially. Those teacher-student relationships that develop into mentoring relationships do so over time and, often, outside the classroom context in which their relationships have the opportunity to germinate.
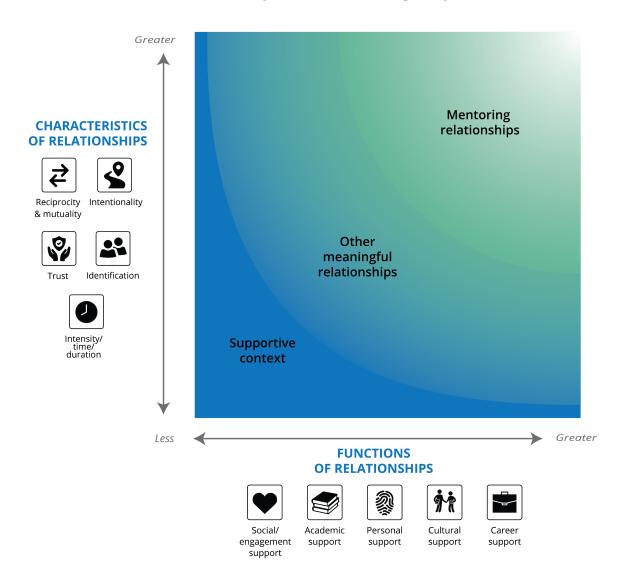
Of course, mentoring relationships form across a variety of contexts beyond the classroom, with on-campus employment functioning as a significant location for such relationship development. Though initially serving in the role of supervisor, staff across campus are often identified by students as key mentors, with the "office" context, understood broadly, serving as a locale out of which mentoring relationships have an opportunity to develop.

Teacher and supervisor are two kinds of meaningful relationships that reside within a broader relationship-rich higher education context. They are two among many, including advisor, RA, classmate, coach, teammate, librarian, and tutor. These relationships hold *potential* for developing into mentoring relationships, but they are distinct from them. Mentoring relationships require time to develop, and they do so out of other meaningful relationships.

These initial relationships and the contexts out of which they form are, thus, critical to the *possibility* of mentoring relationships. The development of mentoring relationships relies on this broader context and set of relationships. Put another way, the full range of meaningful relationships is not only significant but critical.

The Relationship-rich Mentoring Map below represents one way to understand, identify, analyze, measure, assess, and plan the development of a relationship-rich environment that recognizes the multiplicity and value of many relationships, including mentoring relationships. It draws salient relational characteristics and functions from the literature on mentors and mentoring to construct sliding measures that map out various kinds of relationships that support student learning and development.

Relationship-Rich Mentoring Map

The graphic depicts **three kinds of valued relationship spaces** (mentoring relationships, other meaningful relationships, and supportive context) defined by a set of relational

measures (mentoring characteristics and functions), each depicted on a sliding scale from less to greater.

4. The upper-right of the graphic marks the space of **mentoring relationships**. In that space, there could be a variety of relationships, but all would be marked by individual relational measures that tended, in general, towards the "greater" end of the scale.
5. Moving toward the bottom-left away from the mentoring relationship space, the graphic marks the spaces of **other meaningful relationships**. These spaces recognize a variety of other important relationships within the relationship-rich educational environment that aid student development and offer important forms of support.
6. Finally, the bottom-left of the graphic marks relationships that may be less significant independently but are part of a broader, **supportive context**. Much of the literature on mentors and mentoring addresses the value of (a) a broader institutional culture that values relationships, (b) the individuals that make up and activate those cultures, and (c) the opportunities for and development of the individuals within, as well as the institution as a whole. This third relationship space may include less well-developed relationships, but as in the case of a residence hall, they can provide a broad supportive context.

Relationships matter, across the board. The Relationship-rich Mentoring Map helps us understand, value, and differentiate the wide range of meaningful relationships that characterize a relationship-rich educational environment, while also distinguishing mentoring relationships as special and significant among other meaningful relationships.

Why "Mentoring Relationships"?

A great deal of the literature focuses on "mentors" or "mentoring" as a primary construct and unit of analysis. These orientations tend to lift up a single individual with exceptional characteristics (a mentor) who serves deeply and holistically a wide range of functions (mentoring). As a result, they tend to lead toward three problematic trajectories:

- an all-or-nothing end, whereby one is either a mentor or is not
- an overloading of expectations, whereby one has to serve excellently across a wide range of roles and functions
- a diminishing of other meaningful relationships, whereby those who offer important supportive and developmental relationships are considered less valuable or are not recognized or valued at all because they do not meet the criteria of the singularly valued mentor.

As a foil to these problematic trajectories and in a democratizing effort to recognize a wide range of valued relationships and functions, institutional practices often lean toward overly broad,

inclusive definitions that erase significant differences between kinds of relationships: everything and nothing becomes mentoring.

The construct of *mentoring relationships*, rather than mentors or mentoring, frames a differently powerful orientation. Approaching mentors and mentoring from the construct of *mentoring relationships* does not deny that there are such individuals – mentors – serving others in exceptional ways – mentoring – and through very deep and broad relationships. Instead, it places those kinds of relationships – mentoring relationships – within a broader set of relationships that are different but of great value and even critical to the possibility of mentoring relationship development.

Composites and Maps of Mentoring Relationships

Composite cases, developed from the interview and survey data, illustrate different pathways to forming mentoring relationships, the functions and roles mentors serve, and the relationship-rich campus climate in which a constellation of meaningful relationships are formed. Each case begins with a brief description, includes quotes from different interview participants, and is illustrated by a map of the constellation of mentors. The case included below represents a student's development of a mentoring constellation in his first and third year. The additional composites can be found in Appendix F.

Composite of Undergraduate Student Brian
(White student, he/him/his, 1st year)

This composite case illustrates the development of a constellation over time.

Before coming to Elon, Brian was matched with a peer mentor in the major and this mentoring relationship continues even after the mentor's graduation the following year. In his first year, he identifies his Elon 101 advisor as a mentor, and the teaching assistant and orientation leader as peer mentors. The academic, social, and personal supports provided by these mentors facilitate Brian's transition and first-year experience, but these relationships are not sustained beyond the first year. In his second semester, Brian joins a campus organization and hopes some of the new relationships with peers will develop into mentoring relationships. In his first year at Elon, Brian feels intimidated by some of the faculty teaching his courses and does not know how to communicate with them. Given Elon's "relationship-rich" educational model, he thought this would be easier.

From survey data (all of the following responses are from first-years)

- "Elon needs to work more on helping students acclimate to college life when they first arrive. They also need to work more on helping people meet others and develop relationships."
- "Allow easier access to mentors if one is seeking."
- "Make it easier to reach out for help, as it can be intimidating."

From interview data

Challenges communicating with faculty
UG6: I remember my IR professor freshman year, he's really cool and really nice. I remember just being so overwhelmed by how intelligent he was … I feel like I can't

approach him as a freshman who took AP Gov and high school as my background versus what he's coming to.

UG19: For me, it was difficult to … create that relationship because I saw them as a professor and my idea of professor was very, very narrowed. I've never had that one-on-one relationship with them. And … they're pretty intimidating individuals to go and talk to. And I didn't find my other mentors to be intimidating people, even though they commanded that respect and that confidence, but that teacher or that professor-student dynamic has always been one that I've struggled with to create those personal bonds.

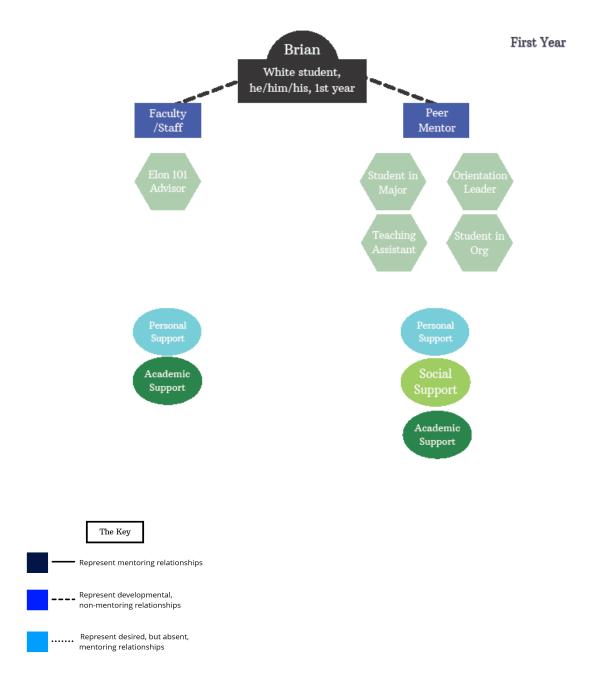**Peer mentoring relationships are particularly important in the first year**
UG33: Well, the structure of orientation is built on the relationship with your orientation leader. And to me, that is a mentor. And then … your [relationship with your] TA. So you're already diving into Elon with an informal relationship with mentorship because it's a student and you see them as only a year or maybe three years older than you.

UG13: And then a mentor I had … she was a senior, and she really was a mentor for a lot of people in the program. She helped run the new student orientation stuff for us and she is still in my life today because she's so important. So I ask her questions about the industry now, because she's graduated ... She's been really good as a social kind of mentor, to teach me when to move on from things, what classes to take, what events to go to and kind of as a good college life guide, would say, she's been incredible with that. … Our first year in college, she was helpful in that transition.

The need to develop agency and find supports early
UG30: And so I think incorporating it into your Elon 101, your orientation, those first kind of moments in classes you're here at Elon, those foundational things, really encouraging students to know that professors here are very much working in your best interest. Go to office hours, utilize these things that you may not think to use to get closer with your professors, because it can really serve you, especially within your particular major if that's something you're interested in too.

UG 67: I know, my friends who aren't involved [in fellows/scholars programs], they have a harder time figuring out, okay, where do I start? Do I just reach out to a professor or a faculty member? How does this work? I don't really know what to do. And maybe having that key person, who's able to facilitate all of that and tell them like, hey, these are the step-by-steps that you should be doing and providing advice on the overall mentor process on campus, would be helpful.

Brian

White student, he/him/his, 1st year

Faculty /Staff

Peer Mentor

Elon 101 Advisor

Student in Major

Orientation Leader

Teaching Assistant

Student in Org

Personal Support

Personal Support

Academic Support

Social Support

Academic Support

The Key

Represent mentoring relationships

Represent developmental, non-mentoring relationships

Represent desired, but absent, mentoring relationships

This composite case illustrates the development of a constellation over time.

Over the next three years, Brian increasingly develops agency in the process of finding mentors. Through on-campus employment, Brian's supervisor becomes an important mentor, as are peers in the major and in campus organizations. Through a campus leadership position, he is developing a relationship with a staff member in an administrative office. She provides important career-focused, social and personal support, including connecting him to a community partner who becomes his internship supervisor. Brian and the internship supervisor develop a mentoring relationship with career-focused development and personal support. Brian has not yet identified a faculty mentor but is talking with a professor he's had in several courses about the possibility of working in that field.

From survey of alumni

- 35% of alumni who had mentoring relationships with a staff member that developed over time indicated their staff mentor provided support making social connections and 48% indicated their staff mentor (developed over time) supported their planning and preparing for life after Elon.
- "Encourage students to seek out help from professors and older students within their major or in a class they really enjoy. I found mentors even in spending a lot of time in the music building and meeting people that I created strong, meaningful connections with."
- "Career services was critical as well as work study. These prepared me most for the workplace where I would seek out and develop new mentoring relationships."

From interview data

Work and internship supervisors are mentors
UG68: My boss from campus recreation and wellness, [name], he's just amazing. …he really lets us explore things on our own and ask questions. There were so many things that I wanted to do when I came into the [coordinator] role and he never was like, "You can't do that." Or, "I want you to do these five things instead." He'll just say, "Cool, do that and these other things." And we get to meet, it's very informal and I get to talk through my process and what I've been working on, and he'll take a look at it and give me feedback and send me articles and books to read. …And I really appreciate that he really believes in me in a way that I don't know I've experienced before … And it really

lets me feel like... I'm like, "Oh, maybe I can do this job." Like, "Maybe I do know how to do things." And that just feels great.
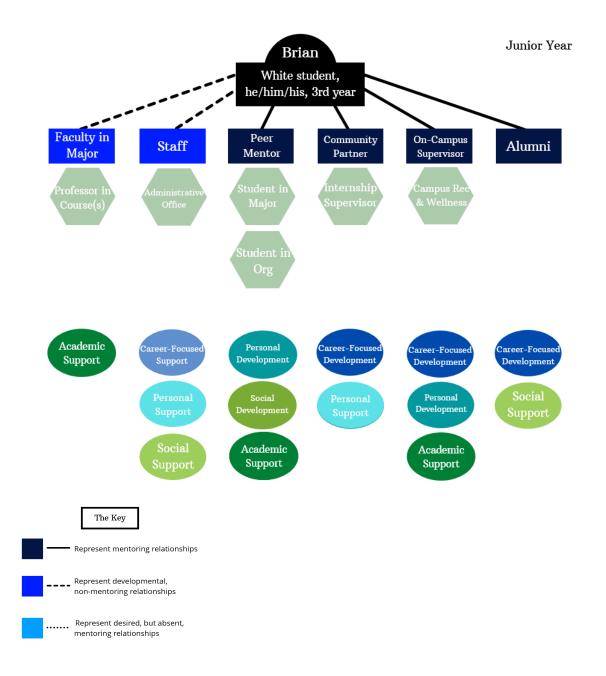
UG55: I think the most about my mentoring relationships in the office I work in just because those are the people I'm communicating with the most, but I do think I have a much wider network of mentors. … And I'm interacting with people [outside of Elon] and building relationships with those adults and also community members. And that gives me a very different perspective, which I'm really glad I have ... I had an internship over the summer and … I feel like I really started to build relationships with my superiors in that nonprofit. And then they did hire me as a contracted employee for six months afterwards … I started shaping my idea on what I wanted my professional career to look like based on these [relationships].

A developmental relationship
UG8: I've got the privilege to work with the [administrative office] and I got to meet [name redacted] and like … she's so cool and … the thing that's not making her a mentor quite yet is just the longevity of the relationship, you know I've met her and I've [only] known her for a while. And I have respect for her, and I trust her but like it's just like, almost- it's just not there yet, you know. … I would stop by her office, we would maybe go out and get lunch together and then … it slowly evolved and grew into something that's more mentorship and then she helped me, like, I'm having struggles with internships- "Oh, let me point you to this office, and you can go into this office and here's that. Oh, you're having issues"- so it's like it's someone who I can come to specifically, especially if I have an issue at Elon, she can immediately help.

Who is missing in your constellation?
UG32: I would like one of my professors, [name redacted, to be a mentor], he's a really good professor. … just getting his perspective of things and just seeing what his advice would be for a post-career and maybe [working in the field]. Yeah, I have a class with him now and I'm talking to him about it.

Brian

White student,
he/him/his, 3rd year

Faculty in Major	Staff	Peer Mentor	Community Partner	On-Campus Supervisor	Alumni

Professor in Course(s)

Administrative Office

Student in Major

Internship Supervisor

Campus Rec & Wellness

Student in Org

Academic Support

Career-Focused Support

Personal Development

Career-Focused Development

Career-Focused Development

Career-Focused Development

Personal Support

Social Development

Personal Support

Personal Development

Social Support

Social Support

Academic Support

Academic Support

The Key

Represent mentoring relationships

Represent developmental, non-mentoring relationships

Represent desired, but absent, mentoring relationships

Working Groups

In addition to the Research Working Group that developed the previously described mentoring definition package, three additional working groups were developed from the ACE LSL model and Elon's institutional context with a focus on mentoring for learner success. They include the Curriculum Working Group; the Co-Curriculum Working Group; and the Partnerships Working Group, focusing on student employment, alumni, and community partners. The co-facilitators and members of each group are listed in their reports.

All the working groups used Elon's 2030 strategic plan, Boldly Elon, calling on our community to deepen close mentoring relationships, as the foundation for their work:

> Through a groundbreaking mentoring model Boldly Elon will magnify the transformative power of student- and learning-centered relationships at the core of an Elon education. All students will learn to build developmental networks that include peers, staff, and faculty, as well as others beyond the university. . . This lifelong constellation of mentors will emerge as a hallmark of an Elon education, guiding reflection to integrate learning across students' educational and professional trajectories and engaging all students in developing essential skills and fluencies to shape the future.

Brief overview of process

Each working group began with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) analysis (see Appendix G). Building on these analyses, each group collected data from multiple campus constituents through interviews, focus groups, and surveys. In the fall semester, they developed preliminary recommendations based on their findings and selected a subset of recommendations to share during a fall Steering Committee meeting (see Appendix G). Members of the Steering Committee provided feedback on this subset of recommendations in an online survey, utilizing a "red, yellow, or green light" response system facilitated by Jessie Moore. A red light indicated, "I have cautions about this recommendation," yellow signified, "I support this recommendation but have questions about it," and green signaled, "I fully support advancing this recommendation." Brief comments were also collected in the survey.

Based on the Steering Committee feedback, an integrated set of primary recommendations was developed and shared with the campus community during Campus Conversation on November 5, 2021. Members of the Steering Committee facilitated table conversations and took notes on the feedback (see Appendix H for a summary). Based on this feedback and subsequent discussion in the last Steering Committee meeting, we revised the recommendations a final time. These primary recommendations and the working group reports are included below.

Primary Recommendations

Elon University's 2030 strategic plan, Boldly Elon, calls for the adoption of a groundbreaking mentoring model in which ***all* students will learn to build meaningful mentoring constellations that include near peers, staff, faculty, and others beyond the university**. As written in the plan, "this lifelong constellation of mentors will emerge as a hallmark of an Elon education, guiding reflection to integrate learning across students' educational and professional trajectories and engaging all students in developing essential skills and fluencies to shape the future."

Based on the self-study research, the ACE Mentoring for Learner Success Committee developed the following integrated set of recommendations with examples for consideration by a future implementation team. These recommendations were developed utilizing a campus-wide ecological systems model, and approved, with appropriate cautions, by the Steering Committee.

1) **Adopt and consistently apply a common definition of mentoring relationships that offers clarity about what constitutes a mentoring relationship within a continuum of other meaningful relationships in a supportive, relationship-rich context.**

   The following definition was generated out of an extensive review of extant theory and scholarly research, further refined through interviews and surveys conducted with the Elon community, and iteratively tested and revised in response to extensive feedback.

   > Mentoring relationships are fundamentally developmental and learner-centered. Within Elon's relationship-rich campus environment, mentoring relationships are distinct from other meaningful relationships in that they:
   >
   > - promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused learning and development in intentional, sustained, and integrative ways;
   > - evolve over time, becoming more reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and
   > - are individualized, attending to mentees' developing strengths and shifting needs, mentors' expertise, and all members' identities.
   >
   > Although mentoring sometimes is conceptualized as a one-to-one hierarchical relationship, mentoring relationships function within a broader set of relationships known as a mentoring constellation. The number and nature of specific relationships within these mentoring constellations vary across individuals, time, and contexts, with different mentors and peer mentors offering varied forms of support and expertise. As a result, mentors play significant roles serving one or more mentoring functions, though few mentors will serve all mentoring functions.

Additional materials comprising a "definition package" are detailed earlier in this report. We recommend that an implementation committee utilize this definition as a point of reference, along with the materials in the definition package, including the relationship-rich map.

2) **Make the mentoring constellation model a signature component of students' Elon education and ensure students have multiple pathways to identify and develop mentoring relationships, with attention to building agency and capacity across all years**.

High-quality mentoring demands multiple guided opportunities for reflection across all years, from the first-year experiences, such as Core courses, through advanced and culminating experiences, such as capstone courses and signature work. Based on recent task force reports and extensive research in the literature and on our campus, we know that we must attend particularly to the needs of our students with minoritized identities so that they are not only succeeding but also thriving.

An implementation committee might explore strategies such as the following:

- Embed scaffolded curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to develop agency and build a mentoring constellation across their Elon education that includes rigorous reflection (e.g., intentional programming with touchpoints across students' four years, such as Elon 101, COR courses, and capstones; integrated research opportunities in students' first-year academic experience).
- Build capacity and expertise for the increased use of course-embedded research experiences across departments to address issues related to scalability of faculty mentoring.
- Explore peer-to-peer mentoring opportunities as part of the First Year and Second Year experiences, through curricular and co-curricular initiatives, such as:
  - Intentional near-peer mentoring in Elon's residential campus, leveraging the two-year live-on requirement for students.
  - Expanded use of existing programs like the Teaching and Learning Apprenticeship (TLA) and Elon 101. Existing successful mentoring models and programs (e.g., SMART, Odyssey, Multifaith Scholars) that support students from specific populations could be extended to additional specific populations, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA, first generation, students with disabilities, and international students, among others.
  - Other first- and second-year peer mentoring programs adapted from peer and aspirant models.

3) **Develop context-specific professional development for students, staff, faculty, alumni, and other participants in Elon's mentoring initiatives, to support the integration or deepening of mentoring relationships within a constellation framework.**

This recommendation represents a significant need identified by all members of our campus community in our research. The appendices document challenges and opportunities related to DEI, capacity, teaching agency, academic advising, development, and lack of assessment/metrics.

An implementation committee might explore strategies like the following to deepen existing mentoring relationships, extend capacity (particularly DEI) and recognize contributions to mentoring constellations:

- Develop robust opportunities for professional development that attend to mentors' and mentees' multiple identities and experiences.
- With over 1500 students working on campus, the student employment supervisor-student relationship provides an opportunity for mentoring. Create a structured system of training and development for supervisors to understand how their relationship could fit within the larger constellation of mentors and offer pathways to evolve relationships from supervisor to mentor.
- Work in close consultation with Alumni Engagement to explore the possibility of creating a structure for alumni to serve in the mentoring constellation for students.
- Recognize the role that community partners play in mentoring students through curricular and co-curricular community-based learning experiences.

4) **Develop a centralized infrastructure with significant resources to facilitate, support, and promote the University's curricular and co-curricular mentoring initiatives, basing the design, delivery, and assessment of specific programs on the mentoring relationships definition and the accompanying mentoring constellation model.**

An implementation committee might explore the development of a Center for Mentoring. Similar to other well-established centers and divisions on campus, such as the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (CATL) and the Division of Inclusive Excellence, a Center for Mentoring should support Elon's mission and strategic planning through facilitation and collaborative coordination. The Center could offer resources to develop and sustain the following: 1) mentoring initiatives within and across units and departments; 2) professional development for near-peer mentors, faculty, staff, and partners; 3) assessment of mentoring practices and models; and 4) scholarly research on mentoring. These efforts must include a significant focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Regardless of the model adopted, centralized support for mentoring should **not** be considered *the main place* where mentoring happens. In the same way that high-quality teaching is supported by campus-wide resources, including CATL, academic departments, schools, and Belk Library, among many others, mentoring must also be threaded throughout our campus and *be the work of all departments*. Similar to other centers, departments, and divisions on campus and supporting our educational model, centralized resources for mentoring should encourage innovative approaches that strengthen the linkages between knowledge and experience.

Working Groups Foci

Curriculum Working Group

Committee Co-facilitators: Amy Allocco (Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Multifaith Scholars Program) and Stephanie Baker (Associate Professor of Public Health Studies)

Committee Members: Steve DeLoach (Professor and Chair of Economics), Jen Hamel (Associate Professor of Biology and Japheth E. Rawls Professor), and Scott Morrison (Associate Professor of Education)

Purpose and Focus

The Curriculum Working Group was established as part of the ACE-supported Mentoring for Learner Success initiative to better understand mentoring practices, programs, and initiatives with curricular impacts. We sought out and analyzed information pertinent to a range of potential mentoring activities in progress at Elon, such as internships and Teaching & Learning Apprenticeships (TLAs), and we acted as liaisons between the ACE Learner Success Lab Committee and the campus to spread awareness about and investment in the self-study and planning process. Research interviews yielded information about individual faculty and staff members' mentoring practices and specific programs. To assess systemic factors that might affect mentoring practices, we also gathered data via surveys pertaining to department and program structures with a curricular component. In our evaluation of existing structures and practices related to mentoring and learner success in the curriculum, we paid special attention to quality and depth of these academic experiences as well as structural inequalities and other barriers to thriving and succeeding. We also intentionally included items and prompts that asked about the developmental nature of mentorship.

Questions that informed our surveys and interviews

- How do departmental cultures, expectations, or programs support or advance mentoring?
- Does much of Elon's mentoring strength currently lie within the curriculums of academic majors?
- How is mentoring linked to High Impact Practices (e.g., Engaged Learning Requirements [ELRs] in the Elon Core Curriculum) in different areas of the curriculum?
- Would more intentional structures across ELRs help to standardize and/or deepen mentoring in these experiences?
- What can we learn from students about what they value about mentoring at Elon and more generally, and what they might identify as missing?

- What are the opportunities related to peer mentoring in the curriculum?
- How well are faculty prepared to mentor students of diverse identities and in an equity-focused and inclusive manner?
- What resources do faculty say they need most critically to be better prepared to mentor in a diversity-focused and equity-minded manner?

Co-Curriculum Working Group

Committee Co-facilitators: Sylvia Muñoz (Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education, CREDE); and Shannon Lundeen (Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships and Associate Professor of Philosophy)

Committee Members: Vanessa Bravo (Associate Professor and Chair of Strategic Communications), Brandy Propst (Director of Elon 101 and Assistant Director of Academic Advising) and Evan Small (Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness for Experiential Learning and Outdoor Adventures and Instructor in Wellness)

Purpose and Focus

The Co-Curricular Working Group collected and analyzed information related to a range of co-curricular activities at Elon including, but not limited to: SMART Mentors, SPARKS peer educators, Resident Assistants, Peer Educators (Elon 1010), Orientation Leaders, Living-Learning Community (LLC) advisors and LLC student ambassadors, live-in faculty and staff, Coaches in Athletics, Fraternity and Student Life, and student orgs in general. In our evaluation of mentoring and learner success in co-curricular environments, we focused on ongoing training/education, consistency, staffing and funding structure, pathways for mentorship, and the degree to which mentoring was the primary or only focus of the experience/position/program. We conducted interviews when possible and collected information via a google form when connecting via phone or in person was not feasible.

Questions that informed our surveys and interviews

- What are the strongest mentoring initiatives in progress and where is there potential to build? Where is intentional mentoring happening?
- Where does co-curriculum end and curriculum begin?
- How are mentoring opportunities aligned with ELRs?
- Where are mentors getting their education and training from re: mentoring?

- Are there common experiences, expectations, and outcomes associated with current mentoring programs? If so, are there opportunities for collaboration across different programs that could strengthen mentoring experiences?

Partnerships Working Group Report

Committee Co-facilitators: Nancy Carpenter (Assistant Director of Career Services for Student Employment) and Bob Frigo (Assistant Dean of Campus Life and Director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement)

Committee Members: Marcus Elliot (Director of Odyssey Scholars Program), Sandra Reid (Lecturer in Human Service Studies), and Sean Walker (Media Services Lead)

Purpose and Focus

The Partnerships Working Group was formed to conduct an environmental scan, utilizing the strategic planning process created by the American Council on Education Learner Success Lab pilot, to assess the potential role(s) of Elon partnerships within the mentoring, in both the area of mentoring and partnering with communities to transform the future. Partnerships included the following: alumni, community partnerships, and student employment.

The process for conducting the scan included:
1. Interviewing an Alumni Engagement representative and community partners who serve as supervisors to student interns, federal work-study students, and graduate fellows.
2. Conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges analysis of program offerings and perceptions of what mentoring includes
3. Assessing roles alumni, community partners, and supervisors might play in a constellation of mentors
4. Making recommendations to steering committee of the role Alumni and community partners

In addition, the Partnerships Working Group was tasked to identify potential mentors for students beyond traditional Elon University faculty, staff, and students. While local community partners at nonprofit organizations who host students for employment, internships, academic service-learning courses, and volunteer opportunities were a strong contender for an additional potential mentor group, it was ultimately determined that there were capacity limitations for nonprofit organizations to take on additional students as mentees.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Throughout the self-study, a number of compelling questions and emergent tensions surfaced around topics such as academic and student life mentorship; formal and informal mentoring structures; the necessity of training and time/capacity/resources to undertake it; selective, programmatic mentoring and scaling up; students' need for mentors from marginalized identities; saturation, capacity, and overloading a few, highly sought and talented mentors. The mentoring initiatives developed from this self-study must be integrated with our work on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

A constellation model, in which students have multiple meaningful relationships, including mentoring relationships, with peers, staff, and faculty, among others who provide multifaceted support and guidance, acknowledges the complex realities of developmental relationships and the continuum along which mentoring occurs. In this model, mentoring relationships become one of many kinds of relationships that, together, provide a supportive context for learning and development. Mentoring relationships are sustained, developmental, and learner-centered. It is imperative that we scaffold opportunities for students to develop agency to build mentoring relationships throughout their time at Elon, through diverse pathways in the curriculum and co-curriculum. A mentoring constellation framework fits our institutional context and offers opportunities for mentors to connect with and support each other and their mentees.

The last steps in the ACE self-study include the following:

- Peer review virtual site visit by Brad Johnson, Professor at the U.S. Naval Academy and John Hopkins University; Dawn Whitehead, Vice President, Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community and Careers, AAC&U; and Lyssa Palu-ay, ACE Lab Advisor and Dean at MassArt (January 31, 2022)
- Submission of final report to ACE and Elon (February 2022)
- Communication of findings through social media, website, presentations, and publications (Spring 2022)

As indicated in President Book's charge to the committee, the findings from the ACE Mentoring for Learner Success self-study will inform the work of a future implementation team. We are eager to discuss our findings and the transition with them. We are interested in learning more about how system-wide approaches to mentoring are operationalized in other institutions. Our brief review of peer and aspirant institutions indicates that few institutions have comprehensive mentoring programs for all students (see Appendix I). We are also interested in validated assessment measures that can be used across a wide range of initiatives, and evidence-based professional development opportunities for near-peer, staff, and faculty mentors, among others who will support students in mentoring constellations.

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Appendices

A. Glossary
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Appendix A: Glossary of Terms for the ACE Mentoring for Learner Success Report

The following terms are defined specifically for the Elon context based on our data collection and literature reviews.

Meaningful moments – Within our relationship-rich campus community, we recognize the importance of meaningful conversations that influence students' behaviors and attitudes. Although these are sometimes referred to as "mentoring moments," they often occur outside of mentoring relationships. Thus, we utilize the term meaningful moments.

Meaningful relationships – In our campus community, students form relationships with faculty, staff, and near-peers, among others, who support their learning, development, and well-being. While some of these relationships can evolve to become mentoring relationships, they are not inherently mentoring. Examples include teaching, advising, supervising, and coaching. These relationships, sometimes referred to as "developmental relationships," have been defined in the scholarly literature. With mentoring relationships, they become part of students' mentoring constellations and are highly valued, critical forms of support. This is explained in detail in the report (see pages 41-44, **Mentoring Relationships and a Relationship-rich Environment).**

Mentoring constellations – In a constellation model, students have multiple meaningful relationships with near-peers, staff, and faculty, among others who provide multifaceted support and guidance. This model acknowledges the complex realities of meaningful relationships and the continuum along which mentoring occurs. In this model, mentoring relationships become one of many kinds of relationships that, together, provide a supportive context for learning and development.

Mentoring Functions - the types of support provided in mentoring relationships. From the literature, we identified the following primary mentoring functions:

- provide personal and/or emotional support
- advance academic learning
- support identity development
- support social networking
- develop cultural knowledge
- plan and prepare for life after college
- find purpose

Mentoring relationships – Mentoring relationships are fundamentally developmental and learner-centered. Within Elon's relationship-rich campus environment, mentoring relationships are distinct from other meaningful relationships in that they:

- promote academic, social, personal, cultural, and career-focused learning and development in intentional, sustained, and integrative ways;
- evolve over time becoming more reciprocal and mutually beneficial; and
- are individualized, attending to mentees' developing strengths and shifting needs, mentors' expertise, and all members' identities.

Although mentoring sometimes is conceptualized as a one-to-one hierarchical relationship, mentoring relationships function within a broader set of relationships known as a mentoring constellation. The number and nature of specific relationships within these mentoring constellations vary across individuals, time, and contexts, with different mentors and peer mentors offering varied forms of support and expertise. As a result, mentors play significant roles serving one or more mentoring functions, though few mentors will serve all mentoring functions.

American Council on Education (ACE) Learner Success Steering Committee
President Book's Charge to the Committee
November 5, 2020

Introduction

ACE's Learner Success Lab is an inclusive learning community that provides leadership for a systematic and collaborative approach to learner success at Elon University. Focusing on mentoring relationships as a critical foundation for learner success, members of the ACE Learner Success Steering Committee will work together to develop a strategy for comprehensive learner success at Elon, as well as a means to assess our achievements. The leadership team includes Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, Interim Associate Provost for Academic Excellence*, Professor of Psychology, and Director of the Center for Research on Global Engagement; Amy Allocco, Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Multifaith Scholars Program; Nancy Carpenter, Assistant Director of Career Services for Student Employment; and Sylvia Muñoz, Associate Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education (CREDE) and Diversity Education/Director of El Centro.

The Elon University mission statement describes a foundational belief in how our "academic community transforms mind, body, and spirit and encourages freedom of thought and liberty of conscience." Underpinning Elon's thriving and supportive learning community are close mentoring relationships occurring everywhere students learn—from classrooms to global study to on-campus employment to residence halls and student organizations—and with all members of our community, faculty, staff, advisers, supervisors, peers, and alumni.

The Boldly Elon strategic plan calls on our community to deepen these close mentoring relationships, as follows:

> *Through a groundbreaking mentoring model Boldly Elon will magnify the transformative power of student- and learning-centered relationships at the core of an Elon education. All students will learn to build developmental networks that include peers, staff, and faculty, as well as others beyond the university. . . . This lifelong constellation of mentors will emerge as a hallmark of an Elon education, guiding reflection to integrate learning*

across students' educational and professional trajectories and engaging all students in developing essential skills and fluencies to shape the future.

The ACE Learner Success Steering Committee will collaborate with ACE and consultants to develop a comprehensive strategy for mentoring relationships that support learner success and lifelong learning for *all* students. We will evaluate existing policies and practices related to mentoring and learner success and identify and work to address structural inequalities and other barriers to thriving and succeeding.

The work of the ACE Learner Success Steering Committee will be crucial in laying the foundation for a future task force charged with implementing Boldly Elon mentoring initiatives.

Charge

The charge of the Elon ACE Learner Success Lab Steering Committee is to:
- Serve as leaders by ensuring that Elon works together as a campus to develop an integrated learner success strategy;
- Complete foundational work on the mentoring initiatives in Boldly Elon, including analyzing the broad range of mentoring activities in progress at Elon; studying evidence-based practices for mentoring and mentoring networks; and developing definitions and identifying key factors needed to advance mentoring relationships at Elon;
- Provide oversight of the work of the ACE Learner Success Working Groups;
- Serve as the liaison between the Working Groups and the campus to maximize campus-wide ownership of the planning process;
- Create a culture of involvement and participation during the self-study and planning processes;
- Provide guidance in developing recommendations.

Steering Committee Members

Committee Members:
Stephanie Baker – Assistant Professor of Public Health Studies
Vanessa Bravo – Associate Professor and Chair of Strategic Communications
Steve DeLoach – Professor and Chair of Economics
Marcus Elliott – Director of Odyssey Scholars Program
Bob Frigo - Associate Director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement
Shannon Lundeen – Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships and Associate Professor of Philosophy
Jessie Moore - Director of Center for Engaged Learning and Professor of English
Scott Morrison – Associate Professor of Education

Tim Peeples – Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of English
Brandy Propst - Director of Elon 101 and Assistant Director of Academic Advising
Sandra Reid - Lecturer in Human Service Studies
Joan Ruelle – Dean of the Library and Associate Professor
Evan Small - Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness for Experiential
        Learning and Outdoor Adventures and Instructor in Wellness
Sean Walker – Media Services Lead

Role of the American Council on Education

ACE will assist Elon in the following activities:

- Review current institutional activities related to learner success;
- Identify challenges and obstacles;
- Develop an action plan and desired student learning outcomes;
- Recommend learner success goals and strategies;
- Define key issues, facilitate dialogue, promote collective thinking; and
- Build support for comprehensive learner success across campus.

* Note: Titles and roles reflect circumstances in Fall 2020. Some changes in positions as of the 2021-22 academic year are reflected in the committee membership listed on page 16.

Appendix C: Detailed Timeline for the Mentoring for Learner Success Self-Study 2020-2022

May-July 2020
- Application process for the Learner Success Lab, focused on "Mentoring for Learner Success"
- Elon selected as one of ten institutions for the pilot cohort
- Leadership team selected

August-October 2020
- Invitations to committee members
- First ACE LSL meetings

November–December 2020
- President Book charged the committee on November 5
- Development of four working groups based on ACE model
  - Four Working Groups: Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Partnerships (student employment, alumni, and community partners); Research
- Site visit planning

January 2021
Virtual Site Visit with ACE Consultant Lyssa Palu-ay, Dean of Justice, Equity and Transformation at MassArt - Three days of meetings with 67 people from across campus

February-May 2021
- Monthly meeting with ACE program directors, cohort leaders, and advisors
- Presentations of site visit themes and progress to the Steering Committee, the Provost's Advisory Council, and Senior Staff
- Working groups reviewed and collected data that informs their SWOC analyses
  - Interviews, Surveys, Focus Groups
- Research working group
  - Definition - Literature review, short definition, Relationship-rich map and explanation
  - Interviews - Interviews conducted with undergraduates in April, May and June
  - Surveys - Distribution of surveys to first and fourth-year students to benchmark mentoring constellations
- CEL blogs on Mentoring for Learner Success (Conceptualizing Constellations and Bridging Known and New)

Summer 2021
- Research working group
  - Defining mentoring, identifying key models and practices, refining model and tools
  - Data collection, coding and analyses:
    - Interviews (data collection ongoing): 62 undergraduate interviews; 4 graduate student interviews; 50 staff/admin/faculty interviews; 2 community partner interviews
    - Coding in Dedoose; Development of composite cases and mentoring constellation models
    - Survey data: Alumni Survey

August–October 2021
- Monthly meetings with ACE program directors, cohort leaders, and advisors
- Steering committee and working group meetings: Analyses and development of recommendations
- Research working group
  - Coding, analyses, and results
  - Developing composite cases to align with Relationship-rich Mentoring Map
  - Building physical tools of the Relationship-rich Mentoring Map
  - Obtaining feedback on definition and model (individual meetings)
  - CEL blogs on Mentoring for Learner Success (Developmental Mentoring Relationships)

November-December 2021
- Steering Committee Meetings
  - Feedback on recommendations ("red, yellow, and green light" process of voting)
  - Discussion of final report
- Working group meetings
  - Refinement of recommendations
  - Final reports
- Research working group
  - Additional survey sent to half of the 2nd year students by IR (to augment numbers for benchmarking)
  - Conference presentations at University of New Mexico Mentoring Conference
- Campus-wide conversation
  - Brief presentation and discussion of selected recommendations
- Draft final report and obtain co-leader and committee feedback
- Plan peer review site visit

February 2022
- Peer review virtual site visit
- Revise and Submit final report

Continuing work in Spring 2022:
- Transition to Implementation Team
- Work with campus partners to develop related tools (e.g., constellation mapping)
- Website development
- Social media campaign
- Invite scholarly experts to interview
- Present and publish research

Appendix D: January Site Visit Itinerary

American Council on Education (ACE) Learner Success Lab (LSL)
Mentoring for Learner Success
Virtual site visit with Lyssa Palu-ay, Lab Advisor for Elon University and Dean of Justice,
Equity and Transformation at Massachusetts College of Art and Design
January 19, 21 and 22, 2021

Tuesday, January 19

9 to 9:30 am	Meeting about Inclusive Excellence and Mentoring for Learner Success
	Damion Blake, *Faculty Fellow for the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education, and Assistant Professor of Political Science and Policy Studies*
	Randy Williams, *Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence and Associate Professor of Education*
9:30 to 10:00 am	Meeting with Provost
	Aswani Volety, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Biology*
10:30 – 11:30 am	Meeting with Senior Staff (Patrick will host this meeting; link sent via email)
	Haya Ajjan, *Associate Professor MIS, Gordon Professor in Entrepreneurship, Director Center for Organizational Analytics and Faculty Admin Fellow*
	Dan Anderson, *Vice President of University Communications*
	Dave Blank, *Director of Athletics*
	Connie Book, *President*
	Jon Dooley, *Vice President of Student Life and Associate Professor of Education*
	Steven House, *Executive Vice President and Professor of Biology*
	Benita Jones, *General Counsel*
	Susan Kirkland, *Associate Vice President for Business and Finance*
	Patrick Noltemeyer, *Chief of Staff and Secretary to the Board of Trustees*
	Tim Peeples, *Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of English*
	Jim Piatt, *Vice President for University Advancement*

Jean Rattigan-Rohr, *Vice President for Access and Success and Professor of Education*
Gabie Smith, *Dean of Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences, Professor of Psychology*
Jeff Stein, *Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Assistant Professor of English*
Aswani Volety, *Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Professor of Biology*
Randy Williams, *Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence and Associate Professor of Education*
Greg Zaiser, *Vice President for Enrollment*

12:00 to 1:00 pm   Meeting with stakeholders representing the Experiential Learning Requirements (ELRs) – Undergraduate Research, Internships, Service-Learning, Study Away, and Leadership
Melanie Bullock, *Director of the Center for Leadership*
Cindy Fair, *Watts/Thompson Professor of Public Health Studies and Human Service Studies, Chair of the Dept. of Public Health Studies*
Eric Hall, *Professor of Exercise Science and Faculty Athletics Representative*
Jen Hamel, *Interim Associate Director of UR and Associate Professor of Biology*
Amy Johnson*, Executive Director of the Elon Core Curriculum and Associate Professor of History*
Laurie Judge, *Senior Associate Director of Career Services for Elon College, The College of Arts and Sciences*
Paul Miller, *Assistant Provost for Academic Operations and Communications and Professor of Exercise Science*
Jessie Moore, *Director of the Center for Engaged Learning and Professor of English*
Phillip Motley, *Associate Professor of Communication Design and Faculty Fellow for Civic Engagement*
Srikant Vallabhajosula, *Associate Professor of Physical Therapy*

Thursday, January 21

9:00 to 9:45 am   Meeting with Stakeholders Concerning Peer and Informal Mentoring
Kristen Aquilino. *Director of International Student Services*
Allison Pelyhes, *Multifaith Coordinator*

Becca Bishopric Patterson, *Assistant Director of Gender and LGBTQIA Center*
Colin Donohue, *Director of School of Communications Student Engagement and Alumni Affairs and Instructor in Journalism*
Janelle Ellis-Holloway, *Assistant Director of Academic Advising and Coordinator of KLC Peer Mentoring Initiatives*
James Holsinger*, Director of Learning Assistance, Koenigsberger Learning Center*
Tina Kissell, *Assistant Director of Disabilities Resources*
Sarah Krech, *Associate Director of National and International Fellowships*
Oscar Miranda, *Assistant Director, Access and Support*
Dan Reis, *Senior Instructional Technologist*
John Robinson-Miller IV, *Assistant Director of CREDE and Coordinator of SMART mentoring program*

9:45 to 10:30 am   <u>Meeting about Mentoring and Partnerships Within and Beyond the Institution</u>
MarQuita Barker, *Director of Residence Life*
Anne Bryan, *Executive Director of the Koenigsberger Learning Center and Director of Academic Advising*
Nancy Carpenter, *Assistant Director of Career Services for Student Employment*
Paula DiBiasio*, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy Education*
Larry Mellinger, *Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness*
Mary Morrison, *Assistant Dean of Campus Life, Director of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life*
Deidra Smith, *Director of Alumni Engagement*

11:00 to 12:00 pm   <u>Meeting with Directors of Fellows and Scholars Programs</u>
Ann Cahill, *Director of National and International Fellowships and Professor of Philosophy*
Jeffrey Carpenter, *Director of Teaching Fellows Program and Professor of Education*
Tina Das, *Director of Business Fellows and Lincoln Financial Professor of Economics*
Kim Epting, *Director of the Elon College Fellows Program and Professor of Psychology*
Kenn Gaither, *Associate Dean of the School of Communications and Professor of Strategic Communications*

Lynn Huber, *Director of the Honors Program and Maude Sharpe Powell Professor of Religious Studies*

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm   Meeting with students
JoyceLyn Bentley, *Odyssey Scholar, Multifaith Scholars Program, Cinema & Television Arts major*
Srija Dutta, *Multifaith Scholars Program, Public Health major*
Valentina Echavarria, *International student, first year*
Nick Hom, *Religious Studies major*
Maria Mendoza- *Honors Fellow*
Jovani Mendez-Sandoval, *Odyssey scholar, Economics major*
Sophia Robinson, *second year*

Friday, January 22

11 to 11:30 am   Meeting with President
Connie Ledoux Book, *President*

11:30 – 12:00 pm   Meeting with authors of *Relationship-Rich Education (2020)*
Peter Felten, *Assistant Provost, Executive Director of the Center for Engaged Learning and Professor of History*
Leo Lambert, *President Emeritus and Professor of Education*

12:00 to 1:30   Meeting with the ACE Learner Success Steering Committee
Stephanie Baker, *Assistant Professor of Public Health Studies*
Vanessa Bravo, *Associate Professor and Chair of Strategic Communications*
Steve DeLoach, *Martha and Spencer Love Term Professor, Professor of Economics, and Chair of the Department of Economics*
Marcus Elliott, *Director of Odyssey Scholars Program*
Bob Frigo, *Associate Director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement*
Shannon Lundeen, *Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships and Associate Professor of Philosophy*
Jessie Moore, *Director of Center for Engaged Learning and Professor of English*
Scott Morrison, *Associate Professor of Education*
Tim Peeples, *Senior Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs and Professor of English*

Brandy Propst, *Director of Elon 101 and Assistant Director of Academic Advising*
Sandra Reid, *Instructor in Human Service Studies*
Joan Ruelle, *Dean of the Library and Associate Professor*
Evan Small, *Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness for Experiential Learning and Outdoor Adventures and Instructor in Wellness*
Sean Walker, *Media Services Lead*

2 to 3 pm   Meeting with ACE LSL Leadership Team
Amy Allocco, *Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Multifaith Scholars Program*
Nancy Carpenter, *Assistant Director of Career Services for Student Employment*
Sylvia Muñoz, *Associate Director of Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education (CREDE)*
Maureen Vandermaas-Peeler, *Interim Associate Provost of Academic Excellence, Director of the Center for Research on Global Engagement (CRGE), and Professor of Psychology*

Appendix E: Thematic Analysis of the January Site Visit

Discussion prompts

What does mentoring success look like in your area? What are the challenges or possible roadblocks? What would mentoring success look like in 10 years?

Main themes, questions and comments across the meetings

Theme 1: Create an institutional culture that supports and enhances opportunities for mentoring for learner success.

Some key questions:
- How will we create an ecosystem that enhances the opportunity for mentoring relationships?
- How will we create the conditions possible for deep mentoring relationships?
- How will we support equity, diversity, and inclusion?

A sample of comments and questions from the site visit participants:
- Diversity is crucial in an ecosystem.
- We must address inequities across identities, roles, programs.
- Our most talented, sought after mentors (particularly faculty and staff of color) would be in everyone's constellation – how do we promote equity?
- How do we overcome the primary challenges of lack of time and capacity?
- Mentor saturation issue, particularly in some areas and departments - must hire faculty and staff to augment capacity
- Identify and support multiple models of mentoring
- Challenge ourselves to consider other models, break down structures that disenfranchise some members of our community
- Need more tools and training for faculty and staff to work within and across cultural identities.
- We need to stop creating false binaries.
    - One size does not fit all.
- Everyone must see themselves in this work. We need inclusive structures and opportunities.
    - How do we move mentoring to the center?
    - How do we evaluate, reward, incentivize?
- Support excellent mentoring with appropriate professional development and training opportunities for faculty, staff and peer mentors.

Theme 2. Develop a shared understanding of high-quality mentoring relationships and constellations.

Some key questions:
- What makes mentoring matter? What's the evidence?
- How will our definitions of mentoring and mentoring constellations make clear what mentoring is and is not?
- How will we accommodate the developmental, dynamic nature of mentoring into the constellation?
- How will we differentiate developmental relationships such as advising and coaching from mentoring?

A sample of comments and questions from the site visit participants:
- Identify characteristics of excellent mentoring within and across contexts
- What are the essential characteristics of mentoring?
- What elements are present, but not sufficient (e.g., kindness, empathy)?
- Mentoring the whole person
- What does mentoring look like across roles and identities?
- Meaningful relationships are the key to the HIPs.
- Develop a common language
- Build toolkits – what should be in it, where will it reside and who will use it?
- When we have deep mentoring – e.g., UR, as a frame - we have to find a balance to ensure we are not diluting it and we are not piling too much on
    - What does an undergraduate mentoring constellation look like?
- Is there a primary mentor?
- How can the constellation support the whole person and reduce pressure on one mentor to be all things to all people?
- Whom do students consider to be mentors? Does everyone know and agree that they are (or are not) in this role?
- How can we involve the whole campus?
- We need conversations across mentoring, mentoring of mentors within and across constellations.

Theme 3. Promote students' access and agency.

Some key questions:
- How do we facilitate students' agency to find mentors, and especially for first-generation, HURMs, LGBTQIA, international and transfer students?
- How do we mentor for thriving and not just surviving?

- How do we encourage students to make time for mentoring relationships given all their other commitments?

A sample of comments and questions from the site visit participants:
- Students' personal characteristics interact with the social context (PWI)
- Our HURM students bring great cultural capital, but have additional challenges – cultural tax, mentoring peers for survival (not thriving); fewer of them, greater responsibility
- How to involve students who may not know they need a mentor – need structures in place, early
- Where will we teach students who might be in their constellation?
- What will be the accountability structure?
- What are the benchmarks?
- How will we scaffold continuing opportunities for reflection over four years?
- Make mentoring a priority; for peer mentors, compensate accordingly, across campus jobs
- Students who are the most transformed from their UR experiences often didn't know about research opportunities – don't miss them
- Foster belonging
- Fight imposter syndrome
- Foster outcomes related to learner success (life design; persistence; career readiness – ACE model)
  - Transferable, applicable skills
  - Problem-solving, making good decisions
  - Lifelong mentorship/relationships that are dynamic and developmental

Theme 4. Build bridges and mentoring partnerships.

Some key questions:
- Where are opportunities to create and deepen connections within and across mentoring relationships?
- How can we develop and sustain mentoring partnerships within and beyond the university?

A sample of comments and questions from the site visit participants:

Possible tensions and opportunities for bridging:
- Curriculum and co-curriculum
- Formal and informal mentoring
- Academic and student affairs

- On and off campus (local-global)
- Undergraduate and graduate
- CURE and UR
- The need for training and the time/capacity/resources to do it
- Selective, programmatic mentoring and scaling up
- The need for mentors from HURMs and saturation
- Everyone will do it and the overload of a few, highly sought and talented mentors

Partnerships:
- Lifelong connections – which relationships will carry forward?
- What is a "natural ending" to some mentorships?
- How do we sustain relationships after graduation?
- How do we involve alumni and community partners?
- Who else can be our partners in this work?

Theme 5: Study mentoring in multiple ways over time.

Some key questions:
- How will we measure success?
- How will we measure mentoring across contexts and time?

A sample of comments and questions from the site visit participants:

Research, Assessment, Evaluation
- We need multiple measures, along the mentoring continuum and across time.
- Include mentees *and* mentors in assessments
- *Who* is identified as a mentor?
- Examine the ACE "learner success" outcomes – persistence, life design, career readiness
- Students need a toolkit to become an engaged citizen of the world
- Productive alumni engaged in reflective practice and problem-solving
- What is happening in higher education that should inform our work?

Appendix F: Student, Faculty, and Staff Composite Cases
Developed from Interview and Survey Data

Composite of Undergraduate Student Jordan
(Student of color, she/her/hers, 3rd year)

Jordan began her career at Elon as a member of a Fellows and a Scholars program, and the directors of both programs become mentors for academic and personal development. Jordan was assigned a peer mentor in her first year, and although she appreciated the social support at Fellows events, there was no meaningful connection. She works in Residence Life and her supervisor provides career-focused and personal support, but Jordan does not consider her a mentor. Jordan develops a strong connection with her research mentor and a professor in the major. She has not found an identity-linked mentor at Elon, an important relationship that is missing from her constellation of mentors.

From the alumni survey

- Alumni were three times as likely to indicate their mentoring relationship developed informally over time than to indicate that their mentor was assigned to them.
- Alumni indicated that peer mentors who were assigned were most likely to support making social connections (65%), provide emotional support (53%), and support identity development (47%).
- "Assigned mentorships can be beneficial at the beginning."
- "I was scared to reach out so it helped when my professors reached out first."
- "Create subsets of the program that will help Black/African-American & Hispanic/LatinX students connect with a mentor who is committed to help share their cultural identity & sense of belonging at Elon."

From interview data

Assigned peer is not a mentor
UG 49: It wasn't very natural. It was more so you are assigned this person and because it felt like an obligation, I think they felt pressure for it to be a very structured interaction. And as a result, it kind of felt like they had to talk to me or support me. And so, it eventually just fizzled out because neither of us really knew how to interact, because we didn't know each other very well, so. We tried.

Is there anyone you think you have a strong relationship with that you wouldn't define as mentoring?

UG45: Probably … my boss for Res life. I wouldn't necessarily say she's my mentor, but she definitely does have a support relationship to me. So, if I need something in terms of RA stuff or personally, she's very personable, she's very kind. If you ever need anything, you can definitely just stroll into her office and ask for it. She's gracious. She just has all the qualities of a mentor, and probably a lot of students would call her their mentor, it's just for me, [she isn't identified as a mentor]
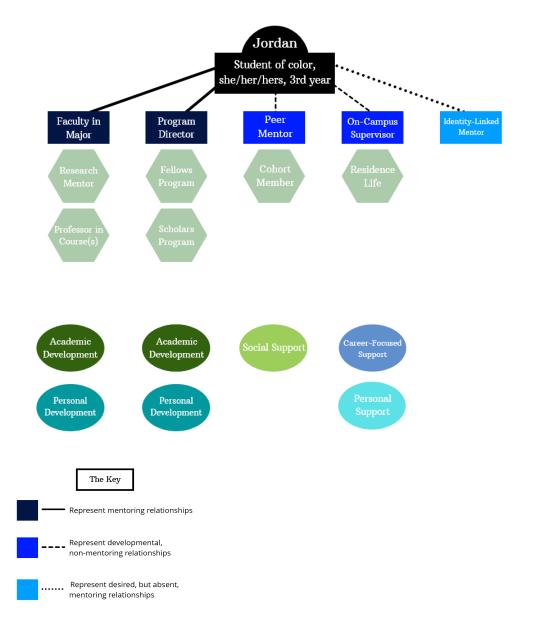
Meaningful connections to faculty research mentor
UG1: [name], she's just been great, and I don't know where I'd be without her. (laughing) She's my first mentor in college and my first mentor in life, actually. So I didn't know I really needed one until I had her. Even outside of my honors thesis, I think that she's just been very helpful and like easing my anxieties about post-grad life, because it is kind of scary. She always reminds me that she was once 22 and an undergrad, and she turned out fine (laughing), she has a whole PhD now, and so I think, being able to like … She does use her experience as an undergrad and like, how she figured out what she wanted to do with her life, to guide me and help me figure out some things that I'm working on right now, so I think that's been like the most meaningful connection I've made in college.

Desire for an identity-linked mentor
UG1: I wish I had more black mentors Elon. I don't have any here. … I think that would be nice, just to have like someone to debrief the black experience at Elon with, like as a professional. And so I see a lot of people in the African, African American studies department or the (major) department, they have those connections, but there are no black professors in my major or minor and so I'm kind of just like … I was thinking about actually picking up an African /African American studies minor, even though I didn't want to, just so I could talk to the professors. So I think sometimes I long for that.

UG 62: There's like parts of Elon where there are people who are like me, but a big chunk of it's not. I know people are always like, "You should be willing to work with people who are not like you, so you can learn about other people." And I do do that, but it is so nice to sit down and just, I don't want to say relate, but just to just have someone that you can talk about the same issues with. And because I come from a totally different background, I'm an Odyssey Scholar. I just grew up in a different setting compared to a lot of the Elon population.

Jordan
Student of color, she/her/hers, 3rd year

Faculty in Major	Program Director	Peer Mentor	On-Campus Supervisor	Identity-Linked Mentor
Research Mentor	Fellows Program	Cohort Member	Residence Life	
Professor in Course(s)	Scholars Program			

Academic Development	Academic Development	Social Support	Career-Focused Support	
Personal Development	Personal Development		Personal Support	

The Key

■ ——— Represent mentoring relationships

■ - - - - Represent developmental, non-mentoring relationships

■ ······· Represent desired, but absent, mentoring relationships

Although the first year was a struggle for Luis, they develop a constellation of meaningful mentoring relationships over the four years at Elon. A professor connects them with an alumnus who provides personal support during their transition. Luis and the professor also establish an emotionally supportive relationship. Luis identifies peer and staff mentors by joining a campus organization and obtaining a job on campus. These mentors foster personal, social, and cultural development throughout Luis's time at Elon. Luis feels lost in a large major on campus and decides to change to one where they experience more personal attention. In the new major, they develop mentoring relationships with their faculty advisor and another faculty member who offer significant support for Luis's academic and personal development.

From interview data

Most students who are not in a cohort-based program identify peer, staff, and faculty mentors through on-campus employment, campus organizations, and their major(s).

Finding mentors through campus organizations
UG46: My freshman year was really rough. I came from a small high school, so I was kind of a big fish in a small pond. And then coming to Elon … being away from home, not getting straight A's, it was just a lot of things at once. I also had a crazy living situation and Hillel was a turning point in my college career. [Staff mentor] was a huge part of that. She kind of became my second mother, someone that I could go to, to cry on, or just talk to, or just have by my side. … we text all of the time. She makes sure that I'm doing well with all my schoolwork ... Just typical things like that.

Finding mentors through on-campus employment
UG41: One of the first people that comes to mind is [Staff mentor] who is my boss at the Kernodle Center. And she has been someone who, as you're talking about different forms of mentorship, I think that she's been a mentor through an academic lens, a professional lens, and also like an interpersonal relationship lens and is really someone that I can go to with any sort of issue that I'm dealing with and I know that I can depend on her. And she also sets a very good example in the office as someone who's compassionate and also willing to push me to be the best version of myself.
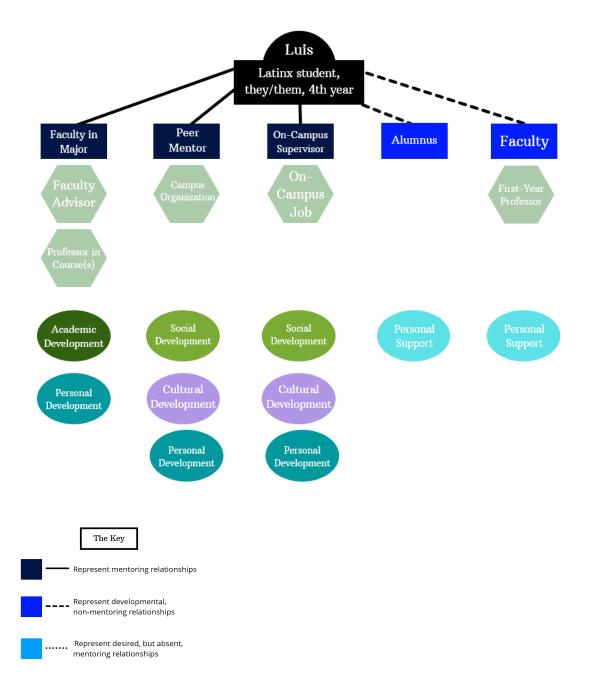
UG12: My other [Near Peer] mentor is a graduate apprentice here, who actually works as a co-advisor .... She was in the same major and started out in the same career path that I'm actually trying to go into post-grad. So, she's been such an awesome support system … she's someone I go to when I have questions about life, friends, things like that.

Finding mentors in courses and in the major

UG21: And [Faculty name] not only wrote me handwritten letters multiple times when I was home, he got the class to organize a gift basket … and a handwritten note from everybody signed. And he was the reason I felt able to come back to Elon knowing I had faculty support in that really genuine constant care kind of way. And even still, he's the first one to email me or call me when I do something big. I recently got an internship. He called me and was like, "Hey, I'm so proud of you. Good work!"

UG47: So one of them is actually my advisor … I initially came in as a [major] … then once I met [Faculty mentor], I dropped the [major] because I just loved the environment and her relationship helped me a lot with academic stuff. And just also a figure to kind of lean on and talk to in terms of personal issues in my life. Because I come from an area where I don't have a lot of adult figures in my life that I saw as mentors growing up. So it was really cool to start having those in college.

UG 45: He's one of the reasons I'm at Elon today still. He's like my dad ... He gives me advice, he's frank with me. He calms me down. I'm a perfectionist, and I also have a lot of anxiety, so I'll email him and be like, "[Faculty mentor], I really need to meet with you and talk about this, because I'm really stressed." And he'll help put the situation in perspective and tell me, "Here's the options we have" … or whatever the case may be. So I definitely think that my relationship with [Faculty mentor] is one that I really am grateful for because of the stability it gives me at Elon, where I feel like I have somebody who I can run to if I need help, or if I'm having a mental breakdown or whatever it is. He always writes my recommendations for me. He just has been an amazing support system.

Luis
Latinx student, they/them, 4th year

Faculty in Major
Peer Mentor
On-Campus Supervisor
Alumnus
Faculty

Faculty Advisor
Campus Organization
On-Campus Job
First-Year Professor

Professor in Course(s)

Academic Development
Social Development
Social Development
Personal Support
Personal Support

Personal Development
Cultural Development
Cultural Development

Personal Development
Personal Development

The Key

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Composite of Undergraduate Student Molly
(White student, she/her/hers, 4ᵗʰ year)

Molly has a large constellation of mentors for academic, personal, career-focused, cultural, and social development. She recognizes the power of mentoring and successfully seeks it out. In the first two years, she identifies a staff mentor through her on-campus employment at the Truitt Center and a peer mentor in Greek Life. In her second year, Molly was accepted into a Scholars Program cohort, structured to incorporate mentoring from an undergraduate research mentor as well as the program director, peers, alumni, and local and global community partners. She also identifies a professor and her academic advisor as mentors in the major.

From survey data

- "Elon is like a safety net, which happens to be full of people who want to help you succeed and once you feel comfortable dropping the independent act."
- "Having professors talk about their research fields more, specifically in intro classes when they aren't as specific, [would help students feel prepared to develop mentoring relationships]."
- "College Fellows provided me a reason to find and select a mentor, and also gave us a shared purpose for the start of our relationship. Many students will not have mentorship built into their Elon experience, so I think it is important that they are encouraged to seek out mentors but also given a reason. I think it is easier to find and approach a mentor if there is a project or question as a jumping off point."

From interview data

Lateral entry into Scholars Program offers opportunity for undergraduate research (UR) and multiple mentors
UG54: I recognize how much I've learned and how much I've grown through having mentors like my direct academic mentor, but also (program director) and peer mentors and how much that's influenced my college experience and development as an Elon student, and as a researcher. And especially as somebody who wasn't so confident in doing research in the first place, I wanted to be that person, that mentor for other students and help them to realize their potential.

Community partners as mentors
UG58: The Burlington Masjid has served as a community partner mentor because it's not one specific person within the Masjid … the community serves as a mentor as a whole because of how much they have shaped me and guided me in terms of my research and just my personal learning about my research topic and growth in terms of acceptance and cultural learning and cultural experiences, too.
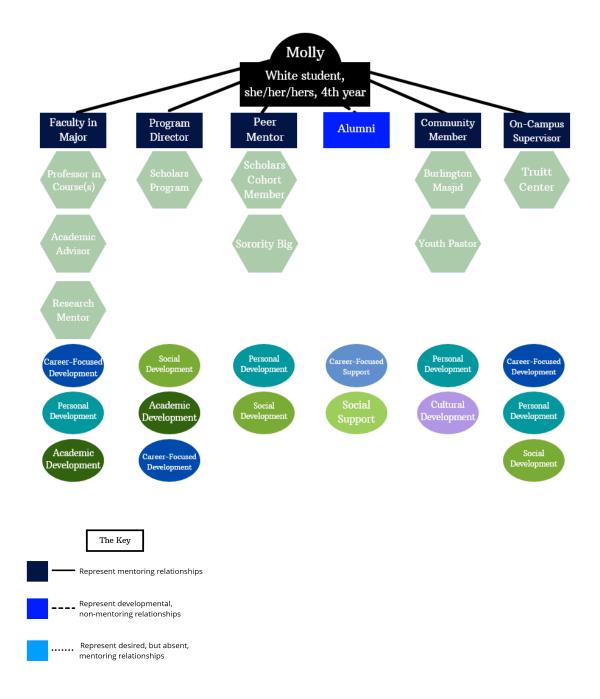
UG 62: And then I also see my youth pastor back at home. He's a great person to talk to. I don't have to go to him for my spiritual issues or emotional issues, he's there to understand what's going on with my work life or school and what I'm moving forward. And he's a great person that I text all the time.

What are the benefits of having multiple mentors?
UG16: I definitely can trust some of my mentors with really, really personal things. And some of them, I censor myself a little bit, I would say. Some of my relationships are way more academically focused, more career oriented, and then some of mine are way more like mental health based. So we might talk... The conversations kind of merge into each other … but have different roles that are really supportive of each other.

How can we help all students develop agency to build meaningful mentoring constellations?
UG58: I think letting them know that it just doesn't have to be a professor. And I think that's also something that I didn't know until probably junior year when I was so engaged with (scholars program), that mentors aren't just professors, that there are a whole bunch of people, your peers, staff, community partners… And I feel like Elon does a really good job with pushing our ELRs and internship opportunities, that I think they could form something about mentorship relationships and a program designed to help students who want that, to be able to find it.

Molly
White student, she/her/hers, 4th year

Faculty in Major
- Professor in Course(s)
- Academic Advisor
- Research Mentor
- Career-Focused Development
- Personal Development
- Academic Development

Program Director
- Scholars Program
- Social Development
- Academic Development
- Career-Focused Development

Peer Mentor
- Scholars Cohort Member
- Sorority Big
- Personal Development
- Social Development

Alumni
- Career-Focused Support
- Social Support

Community Member
- Burlington Masjid
- Youth Pastor
- Personal Development
- Cultural Development

On-Campus Supervisor
- Truitt Center
- Career-Focused Development
- Personal Development
- Social Development

The Key

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- - - - Represent developmental, non-mentoring relationships

.... Represent desired, but absent, mentoring relationships

90

Dan highly values Elon's teacher-scholar model and connects the roles of teacher and scholar through mentoring. He participates in professional development opportunities on campus and sees the benefits of mentoring undergraduates on his own career. His undergraduate research mentees are often identified through Fellows and Scholars programs, but he also identifies students in courses and through informal interactions that develop into sustained mentoring relationships. Dan is an advisor for a student organization and views this work as supportive along a mentoring continuum, but more transactional than his mentoring relationships with students. He identifies this as an area for future professional growth.

Mentoring undergraduate research supports the teacher-Scholar model
F19: I've had experiences where students are part of a fellows program and through that [matching] process have identified students that I have worked with. I've also had informal experiences … I had an advisee several years ago who stopped in my office or she wasn't even an advisee yet. … And we just started talking and we really connected well …And from that moment that just organically developed into a really wonderful relationship. She went on to be a Lumen scholar, and that was totally happenstance. That was not formal. And I have to say, I think sometimes students who stumble upon undergraduate research are those who are most transformed, more than those who come in already knowing this is something they're going to have to do.

F21: For me to be a mentor is to connect the teaching, the scholarship, and then the meaningful relationship of mentoring an undergraduate student … so that the students get to know what you do. … when I'm teaching in the classroom, I am more intentional in introducing to the students, not only to the subject matters that I am teaching, but how that subject matter is related to my own scholarship, and then my own scholarship is also connected to the application of the knowledge in understanding the real world and the work that I'm doing also engages diverse communities. … Before a person becomes tenured, they might be thinking, "How does my teaching, my own scholarship fit with my mentoring role?" And what the Community of Practice showed me, for example, is that you can connect your teaching, your scholarship, your mentoring, and Elon is an institution that supports you. … I benefited in the quality of my teaching, and in the quality of my own publications as well.

F22: I think students as partners work is a great way to really deepen mentoring structures and to become better teachers … because Elon does have a strong emphasis on teaching. And because we have experts on our campus who are doing work in students-as-partners research, and that can serve the faculty member's research agenda in terms of SoTL … and [the student] becomes a better learner for having had that experience. And that's a great place for all kinds of mentoring, including research, to occur.

Mentoring along a continuum

F20: In my service roles, I advise students who are interested in [topic]. This has been less continual mentoring than I hoped it would be. It's more of a limited term mentoring. It feels perhaps slightly more transactional in the continuum of what mentoring can look like. But that's an area I really want to grow, where I can stay in more constant contact with these students throughout their four years. It hasn't developed that space, but that's something that I'm looking forward to developing more. I'm thinking about career preparation and career mentoring. I'm really focusing very closely on the professional pursuits. Again, a little bit outside of my discipline, perhaps, but just thinking about professional skill building in an area that I'm passionate about.

Ellen often mentors students in undergraduate research. She also engages in informal mentoring, drawing on her own experiences with her mentors. Her identities are salient in building relationships with her mentees. Ellen finds that her mentoring relationships are mutually beneficial and professionally satisfying. However, she is over-committed in her work at Elon and concerned about capacity to develop and sustain new mentoring relationships.

Importance of Identities

F25: My identity has shaped all of my research interests, and then of course, anybody who I'm getting to mentor with research is typically interested in the same thing I'm interested in. I will say that all of my mentees right now... going into the fall, I don't know how this happened, probably because I need to be better about saying no. But I currently have five students I'm going to be mentoring. Definitely over-committed. They're all women, and they're all women of color.

F2: I think that [women] gravitate towards my lab, although I don't only mentor women … I have a reputation with my students in our department that if people want to talk about life and careers, then come sit in my chairs. And again, I don't know that that's always mentoring, but it has some of those characteristics. … I really enjoy that developmental conversation that comes with mentoring. I don't think that has to be part of my research, I just think there's more opportunity to do it with my research students. [And] I'm learning a lot more about different cultures and identities if I step back and listen to them, and so really talking through that and not assuming … that their background is similar to mine.

Own experience with mentors was valuable

F22: And he continued to mentor me throughout both as my major advisor, but also later in life …I never thought going into college that this would be my path, but I am a hundred percent certain now that I'm on the right one. And he was a big reason I always wanted to be a teacher … because I wanted to be able to have that kind of relationship with students.

F26: I think going back to that relationship I had with my doctoral advisor … that clear and sometimes direct and sometimes messy, but constant communication around what are our roles and what are our expectations of each other from day to day? What do we want out of this course today? What do we want out of this research meeting today? What are you expecting? Are you expecting more of a nurturing role, like a just stop and reflect and check-in? Or are you expecting someone to hold your feet to the fire today? And being clear about that.

Mentoring relationships are mutually beneficial and reciprocal

F24: Emphatically they're mutually beneficial. So, my greatest professional satisfaction comes from these relationships. I mean, I'm in very regular touch with people that I taught when I was a brand new assistant professor 25 or more years ago. Some of this probably has to do with the fact that my own teachers, that's how they approached their professional work. And my relationships with them were meaningful, and I think mutually beneficial.

F17: For me, it's completely fulfilling and enriching. … I mean, first of all, just on an intellectual level, I love talking with students about their research and I always gain new insights and new ways of thinking about the topics that they're researching, which are usually very close to what I'm interested in. So, I have found benefits to my own research and writing and work. It's just enjoyable and fun to experience that excitement and curiosity about a new research project. … But even beyond that, I hope that I'm also preparing students too for future careers, for future study, supporting them in their professional and personal development, and really throughout that process becoming more and more of a peer. So we're working together. We're co-producing knowledge. I think that's the broad overview of what I see my mentoring doing.

Ray employs a broad definition of mentoring and identifies informal mentoring opportunities with students who are struggling academically or feel they do not belong. Their courses are often an avenue for mentoring relationships to develop and they spend significant time in one-to-one relationships outside of the classroom as well.

Broad definition of mentoring and identification of informal mentoring opportunities
F11: There's no formula for mentoring, at least in my opinion. It's so individualized that if I am working with a student and really paying attention, I feel like I can discover enough about them to then adequately mentor them. So, it's listening, it's being responsive, it's sharing my experiences. Also, a lot of times, it's me learning more about something alongside a student.

F16: I feel like it is about helping somebody find their bearings in the world … A lot of people think about research as mentorship. .. but, for me, research is often not a part of it at all. I've had students I've kept up with since their first year and my first year here, who, really, they're ... in some cases ... B or C students. They're not there for the research. But because we clicked, because they respect me and I like them, this relationship sort of formed where I can keep up and check in on them, see how they're doing, offer feedback on things they may be thinking about. And so it's also part of what I think of as a mentorship relationship, there's sort of that two-way street.

F12: I think one of the reasons why it's so important for me to mentor is because I didn't have that relationship and to show students early on ... to start early with them, being a presence for them, being somebody that they can turn to for academic questions, for personal questions, for career questions.

I love teaching them their first semester or first year, because it means I have that whole time. One of the experiences I don't often have is to teach a student more than once. So that's, for most of them, my one shot and I just want to take full advantage of it because I've just seen, over the years, the difference that it can make, the blossoming.

Mentoring relationships develop through courses
F7: For almost all the time that I've been at Elon, I've taught the capstone course, which is their research project. So, because I've done that and it's really morphed over 20 years, how we've done that course. But I spent a tremendous amount of time, even though that's their course assignment, the way it works … we become 15 or 16 individual research projects. And so while we had the class time to do things, there was always out of class. And in that situation, probably every semester, there's going to be three, four or five students that really, really want to delve deeper. And they want to spend a lot of time with you.

F20: I view new opportunities to mentor as being throughout the different roles within being a professor. I feel like there are students that I mentor because we've had a class together and we've connected … besides the class, there was not necessarily a formal structure that brought us together, but it was a very fulfilling mentoring relationship. … I feel like mentoring emerges through my classes and I've tried to do as much of that as possible.

Mary supervises student employees and develops mentoring relationships with some of them over time. She helps them build personal and professional confidence and skills. Mary is an active participant in professional development opportunities through the Employee Resource Group (ERG).

From survey data

On-campus student employment was the fifth most commonly identified experience at Elon that fourth-year students identified as preparing them to connect with potential mentors.

From interview data

Mentoring relationships with student employees require experience and time

S16: To me, being a mentor is being someone who has additional experience that the person you're mentoring may not have, and being able to provide some insight or just a person that you bounce ideas off of … Or if you're talking about career advancement or … student involvement, whenever I can provide insight and resources, that's the type of mentor I want to be. And that's sort of the type of mentor I aspire to work with when I'm being mentored myself, someone who has that additional experience, who can bring something to the table that maybe I had not thought about.

S7: And we start with working together. That's the basis of our relationship, is that we are working together, and our work is really important and it's complex. There's a fair amount of coaching and support and mentoring that goes into work. I usually have … a portfolio of students that I work with. I have one-on-one meetings. We start with the work, but then those relationships tend to grow into more mentoring relationships.

S1: For me, for the mentoring role [with student workers], it is helping them to do several things. One is to become more confident in themselves …. helping them to learn to be confident and to balance everything … And so we develop a relationship that is sort of all-encompassing. And there's a fine line there because I'm their supervisor. But at the same time, by the time they leave and I watched them grow over those four years, we developed such a bond that some of them have referred to me almost as a second mother, and then some of them as a friend, and I always get feedback from them, which is so touching to me when they leave. And they say, "I've learned so much from you." So I'm hoping that what they learned from me is that you can balance all those things, that you can think independently, that not everyone has the same strengths and that's okay, and that it's okay to have weaknesses, but that you need to continue to work on those even after you leave here.

Professional development opportunities

S2: We're looking at how to make student employment more of a high impact practice. And I definitely think that mentoring is not just sitting down having a conversation, shooting the breeze, it's also important … I think this is a great springboard and it can help you think as a supervisor in terms of what takeaways can you get from this, from Iowa Grow, to make it then Elon Grow … And I think the main thing is based on preparing students for their future life and what skills they need to have for these competencies.

S7: Well, I've been part of the Elon GROW. We're working with supervisors of student employees … there's four reflective questions that we ask them to ask three or four times a year. It's a small step toward really acknowledging those supervisors as mentors. I think that's low hanging fruit. … We have students that supervise other students and we can use Elon GROW. … I think that requires some training and some preparation and some evaluation.

S12: We definitely should start thinking about how do we ensure mentors are equipped to really serve as mentors, meaning, what type of training opportunities are we providing to those mentors to really be able to be effective in their work with students around mentorship? … I think it's great that we want staff and faculty to be a mentor, but I think we also need to give the tools to be able to actually do it.

Henry works in student life. He supervises student employees, and his mentorship focuses on preparing them for life after Elon. Aspects of his own identity are highly salient in his mentoring relationships. Henry is deeply committed to mentoring students but worries about his own and others' workload and capacity as mentoring initiatives ramp up.

Helping students plan and prepare for life after college
S16: We had student employees in the office, and so we were frequently trying to provide them with opportunities that would be consistent with what they would be getting in the work world, and … making meaning of the situations that they were experiencing.

S15: Well, to me, it's this relationship that you coauthor and experience with a student. That you challenge, you support, you learn with and from another student, but it's this idea that it is a deep relationship that is formed over a course of time. And through that time, the hope is that … the student grows and develops and thinks about how they look at their specific role in which the mentoring is taking place, but also then how that folds into the work that they do outside of it, their life, what their purpose is and in the world … and start to pull different pieces of that together in how they're able to think about what their life will look like after college.

The importance of identities for mentoring relationships
S12: I think my identity definitely allows me, positions me to sometimes have conversations with students or get through to students that some other folks cannot. Not only do I try and be that for the students, but I try and make sure other staff and faculty, they are aware of that. If they ever need some support in specific students, I don't see that as a burden, but an opportunity, right? An opportunity to retain one more student, an opportunity to help one more student slowly get out of whatever their situation is at home. I do my best to really position the identities that I carry for that.

S8: If somebody is a mentor to me, I need somebody who understands my multiple identities and who does not have to necessarily live them, but understand. I also really value not having to filter.

S18: I think that people had different mentors for different needs … For example, as a black man, I quite literally cannot go to a white person to talk about and feel truly supported about my experiences as a black person. Because that's just not an experience that they are able to speak to. I think they can empathize, they can learn and try their best to support. But there's something about having that shared experience where I feel more connected.

Concerns about workload and capacity
S11: When I think about individuals who currently serve as mentors, what does capacity look like for the folks on our campus? I don't know if there is a magic number for what is saturation and what is the sweet spot, in terms of a number of students that can be mentored. I think there are also some challenges where there are some people that do mentoring exceptionally well. And so just because you do it exceptionally well, it doesn't mean you can take on another 10 students. And so I think it's maintaining that balance of number and quality. I think those things are really important.

S18: As we are rolling this [strategic plan] out and trying to [implement] this constellation of mentors, I think it's also super important to ensure that the folks that are serving as mentors are okay. I think Elon is a place where we do a lot. I think generally most of us are really excited about the work that we do, but I think that sometimes it can be very easy to over-task folks.

Jane teaches Elon 1010 and enjoys her role as an academic advisor to first-year students. She believes that these opportunities can become pathways to mentoring, but also that they are distinctive. Jane sees herself as a connector who helps students form constellations of mentors. Her relationships with students are the main reason she chooses to work in higher education.

From interview data

Advising and mentoring
S10: In the advising component, when I'm in that role, I really am just helping a student progress through the academic program or the degree, giving them some guidance and resources, helping them matriculate to complete their degree, and giving them some academic support. But where that begins to turn to mentoring is when they have questions and want guidance around the personal growth, their professional or pre-professional growth … they want more well-rounded, holistic guidance, and they seek my wisdom and feedback. They want some positive feedback or want my perspective or my intuition of what I think is happening, and I'm asking them to be reflective. And I'm asking them about their development and ways in which they want to develop, and ways in which they grow. So it really becomes more action-based for the student. And then, I think from there, it begins to turn into a mentoring relationship.

In my Elon 101 class, I taught that maybe three semesters, and there's always a student who comes out of that class that I end up holding on and keeping. This year there's three students who I think I'll continue to develop a strong relationship with that were in my particular class. Yeah. But they all have been students seeking a need and then just finding that we share a lot of commonalities, and it just is a conversation that continues to get deeper and deeper and deeper.

Building meaningful mentoring constellations
S5: I want students to have a vast network … of people they can rely on. And maybe some of those people aren't mentors, but they're definitely people who can help serve a purpose. That might be a little bit more transactional and transformational, but there definitely may be someone there who can do something for them or that they can do for that person also. But then I think you want to maybe narrow the network of true transformational mentors. Who are the two or three people (or whatever that number is) that I can rely on? Because if you [connect with] 15 people, I also then wonder how deep is any relationship? If you're relying on 15 mentors, I don't know how deep you are with any of them.

S8: I know that there are students who come to me for something and maybe go to [staff name] for something else and go to a professor for something else. I think that for some students if you ask them though, because the way the academy has talked about mentorship, they may not mention [staff]. Right? They would be like, "Oh yeah, I have a mentor in the math department." But if you kept asking, "Well, then who do you see for this, that and the third?" They'll be like, "Oh, I go to [staff name]. Oh, I go to so-and-so." And you'd be like, "Okay. So why aren't they mentors for you?" But it's the language. So I think that we all work in tandem. I joke that I co-parent. … And I do still think that's part of the constellation, because I can't, none of us can be 100% for anyone.

Mentoring matters

S3: I like to think that I am here for these relationships. So that is truly why I'm here. I think that I am working in this place because of these students. They are the best part of the job. So for me, I just am glad to be around them, their energy, if there's any way for me to be supportive of them. I also feel like they are the future, right? I want them to be healthy. I want them to figure out how to take good care of themselves, and the world, and engage in it and make it better.

Appendix G: Working Group Foci and SWOC Analyses

Curriculum Working Group

Committee Co-facilitators: Amy Allocco (Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Director of the Multifaith Scholars Program) and Stephanie Baker (Associate Professor of Public Health Studies)

Committee Members: Steve DeLoach (Professor and Chair of Economics), Jen Hamel (Associate Professor of Biology and Japheth E. Rawls Professor), and Scott Morrison (Associate Professor of Education)

Purpose and Focus

The Curriculum Working Group was established as part of the ACE-supported Mentoring for Learner Success initiative to better understand mentoring practices, programs, and initiatives with curricular impacts. We sought out and analyzed information pertinent to a range of potential mentoring activities in progress at Elon, such as internships and Teaching & Learning Apprenticeships (TLAs), and we acted as liaisons between the ACE Learner Success Lab Committee and the campus to spread awareness about and investment in the self-study and planning process. Research interviews yielded information about individual faculty and staff members' mentoring practices and specific programs. To assess systemic factors that might affect mentoring practices, we also gathered data via surveys pertaining to department and program structures with a curricular component. In our evaluation of existing structures and practices related to mentoring and learner success in the curriculum, we paid special attention to quality and depth of these academic experiences as well as structural inequalities and other barriers to thriving and succeeding. We also intentionally included items and prompts that asked about the developmental nature of mentorship.

Questions that informed our surveys and interviews

- How do departmental cultures, expectations, or programs support or advance mentoring?
- Does much of Elon's mentoring strength currently lie within the curriculums of academic majors?
- How is mentoring linked to High Impact Practices (e.g., Engaged Learning Requirements [ELRs] in the Elon Core Curriculum) in different areas of the curriculum?
- Would more intentional structures across ELRs help to standardize and/or deepen mentoring in these experiences?
- What can we learn from students about what they value about mentoring at Elon and more generally, and what they might identify as missing?
- What are the opportunities related to peer mentoring in the curriculum?

- How well are faculty prepared to mentor students of diverse identities and in an equity-focused and inclusive manner?
- What resources do faculty say they need most critically to be better prepared to mentor in a diversity-focused and equity-minded manner?

Investigation and Findings

We found that the most consistent, systematic, and in-depth mentorship happens within structured programs (e.g., Elon College Fellows) and that the most challenging barriers to improving mentoring is faculty capacity and the lack of a unified definition of mentoring, including how it might be assessed and how one improves and develops as a mentor.

1. Program directors and faculty lack a shared understanding of mentoring. We anticipate that the forthcoming definition from the Research Working Group, the upcoming Campus Conversation and the work of our broader committee, and the future implementation team related to mentoring will be important in this regard.
2. Directors of fellows and other cohorted programs are more likely to report peer mentoring initiatives (e.g., nearly all cohort programs incorporate peer mentoring) than departments, and smaller cohorted programs appear to have more robust models.
3. With few exceptions, academic departments are more focused on UR mentoring (e.g., one-on-one models, research labs).
4. In academic programs that specifically mention professional development (e.g., Odyssey Scholars), staff members tend to be primarily responsible for mentoring (e.g., one-to-many models)
5. Larger programs (e.g., majors in the School of Communication) are more likely than smaller, cohorted programs to focus on transactional needs (e.g., course selection, advising, personal training, tutoring, etc.).
6. The course-embedded and small-group models are not aligned with our current 1:1 compensation model.
7. Programs with existing mentoring initiatives report their efforts are "limited," and few report spending any time on training or professional development to support mentors
8. While there is much interest in thinking about mentorship through a DEI lens, most departments need support for how to do this.
9. Because of the number and diversity of mentors and mentees involved in larger programs, additional professional development opportunities and programming are needed to provide/strengthen/support/assess mentoring.
10. Mentoring of internships is inconsistently staffed across programs. While some programs have developed systems where staff and faculty collaborate to manage advising and mentoring of professional experiences, other programs have not successfully incorporated academic development into their goals.

11. There is currently no training of internships mentors, and the quality and depth varies significantly within and across programs.
12. Compensation for mentoring internships is not consistent with other initiatives (e.g., UR).
13. No departments evaluate mentorship in a structured and consistent manner (beyond standard SPoTs, which cannot offer anonymity); there is potential to collaborate with the UR program in this regard.
14. As it currently stands, the College's TLA experience is not in widespread use (i.e., in the last 6 years, 65 TLA experiences were registered, involving 16 departments and 37 different faculty members).

Further Information Needed

1. We must determine what we mean by "agency" in terms of students having the agency to develop a constellation of mentors. Do we teach agency? Instill it? How will we cultivate students' self-efficacy and agency to create a mentoring constellation? And how do we distinguish between agency and opportunity (concepts which my overlap but which are not identical)?
2. How might Elon foreground and enfranchise the developmental nature of mentoring?
3. With what metrics could Elon measure mentoring quality and efficacy (e.g., outcomes, opportunities, developmental gains by students)?
4. How do we track success in mentoring equity?
5. What barriers exist to additional faculty engaging in TLA experiences with students? Might mentoring practices be intentionally integrated into these experiences?
6. A more formal mapping of what mentoring looks like across the curriculum might be worthwhile since the *n* on our department/program survey is relatively low.
7. A clearer distinction between individual mentor characteristics and programmatic/departmental structural mentor characteristics may be useful.
8. We plan to look out at peer and aspirant institutions and will consider engaging people to talk to at these universities.

Recommendations

The Curriculum Working Group looks forward to working toward an integrated set of final recommendations in collaboration with members of the other working groups. (See the steering committee's primary recommendations, p. 52.) Here we will conclude by articulating two final points. First, we would like a future implementation team to read through all of the recommendations that we developed *and* to consider the thoughtful cautions we received. Although we also received supportive feedback, the concerns seem most salient to include here for a future committee's consideration. Second, we feel strongly that these four areas deserve special attention and emphasis as we develop mentoring at Elon:

- **The first-year experience** (e.g., Orientation, Elon 1010, COR 1100, and Advising)
- **Integration across the four years**—high-quality mentoring demands multiple touchpoints and opportunities for reflection thread across the Elon experience, from the first year through advanced and culminating experiences, such as signature work
- **Peer mentoring** (e.g., through the TLA program and Elon 101, among other areas)
- **Course-embedded research experiences**—these are highly promising not only due to the promise they hold to expand/deepen faculty mentoring but also for their potential vis-à-vis peer mentoring

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

We conducted an iterative SWOC analysis in the early stages of our collaboration to determine what works well and what needs improvement with respect to mentoring in the curricular context. To perform the analysis, we conducted interviews, hosted a focus group with members of the Elon community who coordinate or advise internships, fielded Qualtrics surveys of faculty members and program directors, and gathered data on the Teaching & Learning Apprentice experience. At every stage, working group members engaged in the SWOC analysis shared their diverse vantage points and perspectives to plan assessments and analyze the data we collected.

Strengths: What's working well?

1. Mentoring is recognized and valued at Elon, and there are existing faculty incentives (e.g., inclusion of mentoring in Teacher-Scholar statement; campus awards; significance for P&T).
2. Key campus structures support significant mentoring relationships, such as in UR. Faculty compensation for 499/498 is relatively rare among universities and at Elon we currently engage > 500 students and > 54% of undergraduate faculty (from 100% of departments) per year in UR.
3. Mentoring relationships where we leverage our disciplinary expertise strike us as particularly powerful.
4. Mentoring activities are clearly defined, consistent, and sometimes assessed in areas of the campus where academic structural supports are provided, including programs with mentoring activities clearly articulated in the curriculum. Examples include the College Fellows, Honors, Multifaith Scholars, and Lumen Prize programs. Mentoring is also a defined part of the curriculum for internships in the Business, Communications, and Education schools. Mentoring is sometimes reported as a strength in Core Capstone courses, however there is great variation across courses/departments. Mentoring is also reported as a strength in contexts (e.g., UR) where individual faculty who have particular investments in high-quality mentoring are involved.
5. Contexts where peer mentoring is built into the research process (e.g., across multiple sections of Senior Seminar in one department or, as one possible fruitful extension, in sections across departments) can hold significant rewards for students.

Weaknesses: What's not working as well and why?

1. There currently is no common understanding of mentoring across the institution, resulting in differentiated quality and efficacy across existing initiatives. (We do recognize, of course, that this need is being addressed by our colleagues' working group.)

2. The presence, structure, and consistency of mentoring initiatives across the university varies widely. Mentoring programs are also inconsistently administered, resulting in significant gaps in students' ability to access mentors and mentoring (e.g., UR includes only some students, cohort programs are competitive for entry, some programs' requirement that students' UR be in their major creates differential loads in programs with large numbers of majors versus smaller numbers, and so on).

3. In part because of #2 but also for other reasons, students vary in their recognition of needing mentors: those in programs that include mentoring (e.g., fellows) learn this during programming; those not in cohorted programs may never encounter this message or think that it does not apply to them.

4. Student preparedness to actively engage in mentoring relationships also varies widely. Students who may be less familiar with strategies to nurture relationships and/or complete projects may not be successful.

5. We discussed whether the GPA requirement for UR can be a barrier to mentorship and systematically exclude groups of students who might benefit from this experience. If we were to reconsider this policy, an extra layer of programmatic support may contribute to the success of students initially below the GPA minimum.

6. Durations of the mentoring relationships vary. For example, with lateral entry fellows programs or engagement in UR outside of these programs, such experiences may not be as deep or high-impact as those in Fellows programs, because the experiences have short durations and more limited development opportunity?

7. Faculty capacity: many faculty members at Elon are overcommitted and find it difficult to find time and space to devote to mentor growth and development, as well as to provide high-quality individual (1:1) mentoring to more than one/two/a few students at one time. There is also significant and persistent concern that BIPOC faculty are often called to mentor in formal and informal ways, beyond typical requirements, that are not adequately represented or accounted for in overall workload.

8. The TLA model holds promise as a signature mentoring opportunity but is neither compensated nor widely utilized / well-known among faculty members.

9. Professional development around mentoring is currently insufficient. This need is especially significant with respect to best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

10. In terms of mentoring toward career readiness, faculty are frequently ill prepared to mentor students for professional pathways and trajectories with which they are themselves less familiar.

Opportunities

1. We regard this Mentoring for Learner Success initiative as a signal opportunity, particularly as it intersects with extant scholarship on mentorship and mentoring practices, maps our existing campus context related to mentoring efforts, and seeks to develop an operational definition of mentoring that is calibrated to our institutional context.

2. Deep mentoring rarely happens within the curricular context in the absence of formalized or cohorted programs. Therefore, intentionally connecting mentorship to the curriculum and anchoring it in specific, identifiable curricular components should be a priority. Integrating mentoring into curricular initiatives may increase access to high-quality mentorship for students who may not otherwise have this opportunity.

3. Given the growth of the University, it may not be feasible for all students to have an in-depth one-on-one mentorship experience. Group mentoring through course-embedded research may be a viable opportunity, however. Therefore, this model necessitates study and exploration in order to develop and support evidence-informed practices related to implementing, sustaining, and evaluating group mentoring.

4. Peer mentoring has significant potential both for student development and for scaling mentoring relationships. For example, the TLA program could achieve greater visibility and be further resourced to make it more robust, expand its reach, and deepen its impact. In the last six years 65 TLA experiences were registered and the extent to which those TLAs were faculty-mentored or involved peer mentoring is unknown. Existing successful models (e.g., the Biology lab model, senior-junior Honors pairs, and Multifaith Scholars) could be engaged and studied.

5. Elon alumni should also be considered as a rich resource for students' mentoring constellations and could more intentionally be integrated into classes to facilitate more sustained relationship-building.

6. Robust, evidence-based professional development opportunities must be created to support high-quality mentoring. In addition to offering CATL-style workshops from experts, other possibilities include providing relatively less experienced faculty the opportunity to be mentored by more experienced faculty mentors and requiring training for department chairs to ensure they are supportive of mentoring initiatives among their faculty. These opportunities must include special attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion practices related to mentorship and mentoring relationships.

7. Students, too, will need professional development to teach them how to actively seek, strategically select, and effectively sustain mentoring relationships.

8. Evaluate and strengthen the faculty development incentives and programming related to mentoring and consider additional language regarding faculty expectations.
   a. Ask what incentives or benefits encourage faculty to invest in "weaker" students? If the student does not have the capacity to produce a presentation or manuscript, there may be less tangible evidence of success.

     b. Consider whether new Handbook language is warranted that separates teaching from mentoring (e.g., a Teacher-Scholar-Mentor statement) and outlines the markers of high-quality mentoring (much like the indicators of effective teaching).

     c. Consider whether departments should develop mentoring statements similar to their scholarship statements.

     d. Consider whether any P&T expectations might need to be recalibrated re: mentoring.

     e. Relatedly, consider whether changes are needed in how mentoring is handled in Unit Is.

9. Consider re-envisioning the role of academic advising within the broader context of extended mentoring relationships. Academic advising is a requirement for most faculty members and may be a structure within which the value of extended mentoring relationships could be supported. (Attention to differential advising loads will, of course, be essential here.)

10. Great potential exists to grow internships in A&S so that they are more like places in the university where they are required and enjoy a robust infrastructure.

11. Explore the feasibility of a one-credit-per year life design course (i.e., four s.h. over four years) that includes mentoring as its centerpiece and creates a linkage between career readiness / professional development learning and the curriculum.

12. Highlight and celebrate all kinds of mentors (not just UR mentors) in diverse ways. In addition to extending recognition to other kinds of mentors, consider how new forms of mentoring might move us away from "pedestal culture" and create new opportunities to recognize and reward a wider range of our students.

13. Assessment is an opportunity area: meaningful and regular data collection to assess mentoring initiatives must be evaluated on a regular basis and assessed by both mentors and mentees for their impact and value.

14. Explore the use of technology to support mentoring, whether an app, virtual mentoring connections, software platforms, or modules.

15. Because some of the weaknesses we identified above have to do with existing variation, an accessible campus structure or program to provide much-needed professional development and clear, consistent messaging about mentoring would be an asset.

Challenges

1. Scalability, especially related to faculty load and capacity, but also related to our "culture of busyness." This challenge surfaced repeatedly, and its significance cannot be overstated, especially as it intersects with the considerable burdens on BIPOC faculty, minoritized faculty, and faculty with diverse and/or historically excluded backgrounds.

2. Mentoring training is not taught in most graduate programs or explicitly offered by most disciplinary associations, and on-campus professional development opportunities in this

area are currently limited. While faculty express an interest in best practices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, structured opportunities to engage with evidence-based strategies are needed.

3. Compensation exists for UR but should be considered for other potential mentoring activities (e.g., TLA experience, independent study, heavy advising loads, long-term mentoring of alumni). As compensation expands, we would necessarily need to explore limits.

4. Reconsider the "rich get richer" model—too frequently the same members of the campus community are repeatedly rewarded/supported.

Co-Curriculum Working Group

Committee Co-facilitators: Sylvia Muñoz (Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education, CREDE); and Shannon Lundeen (Director of Academic-Residential Partnerships and Associate Professor of Philosophy)

Committee Members: Vanessa Bravo (Associate Professor and Chair of Strategic Communications), Brandy Propst (Director of Elon 101 and Assistant Director of Academic Advising) and Evan Small (Assistant Director of Campus Recreation and Wellness for Experiential Learning and Outdoor Adventures and Instructor in Wellness)

Purpose and Focus

The Co-Curricular Working Group collected and analyzed information related to a range of co-curricular activities at Elon including, but not limited to: SMART Mentors, SPARKS peer educators, Resident Assistants, Peer Educators (Elon 1010), Orientation Leaders, Living-Learning Community (LLC) advisors and LLC student ambassadors, live-in faculty and staff, Coaches in Athletics, Fraternity and Student Life, and student orgs in general. In our evaluation of mentoring and learner success in co-curricular environments, we focused on ongoing training/education, consistency, staffing and funding structure, pathways for mentorship, and the degree to which mentoring was the primary or only focus of the experience/position/program. We conducted interviews when possible and collected information via a google form when connecting via phone or in person was not feasible.

Questions that informed our surveys and interviews
- What are the strongest mentoring initiatives in progress and where is there potential to build? Where is intentional mentoring happening?
- Where does co-curriculum end and curriculum begin?
- How are mentoring opportunities aligned with ELRs?
- Where are mentors getting their education and training from re: mentoring?
- Are there common experiences, expectations, and outcomes associated with current mentoring programs? If so, are there opportunities for collaboration across different programs that could strengthen mentoring experiences?

Investigation and Findings
- There is no clear or shared definition of mentoring in any co-curricular programs that claim to include mentoring. Yet, we need to resist the urge to see mentoring in every relationship at Elon--as one staff member observed, "not everything can be mentoring."

- There is significant desire and support for articulating a shared vision/description of mentoring across the university.
- There is little to no systematic assessment of mentors (whether they are students, staff, or faculty).
- Training and education vary from one program to another; not only is there no shared training (except for disabilities resources peer mentors and learning assistance tutors who both go through CRLA level one training), but the amount of time, ongoing support and development opportunities, and the methods by which any education is provided varies widely from one unit to the next.
- The incentives and compensation vary widely for peer mentor roles. Some programs offer no incentives and no compensation; others incentivize their programs through leadership opportunities, and some offer the opportunity to get the leadership ELR *and* get paid in the form of a monthly or per-semester stipend.

Further Information Needed

We should look to peer and aspirant institutions and engage in informational interviews of colleagues at those institutions we identify promising mentoring programs.

Recommendations

1. Common training/education and ongoing training/professional development re: mentorship for all mentor positions.
2. Common description of mentorship that differentiates it from student staff positions, from faculty/staff job descriptions and from personal, meaningful relationships. Forming a consensus about what constitutes a mentoring relationship (time/duration of relationship, purpose, intention vs. outcome, etc.?)
3. Explore the creation of a Center for Mentoring that serves as a hub for resources, training initiatives and research on mentoring best practices. This Center would centralize and support all the University's curricular and co-curricular initiatives around mentoring. It should be sufficiently staffed and funded and should also play a leading role in aligning faculty and staff mentoring experiences/opportunities with criteria for professional advancement.
4. Explore peer to peer mentoring opportunities as part of the First Year and Sophomore experiences as a way to help students develop self-awareness, grow deeper peer connections, seek out professional development opportunities, and build connections with faculty and staff. An example of this is leveraging the 2-year requirement as part of our residential campus to create a residentially-based peer mentoring program in the rich, co-curricular environment of our residential neighborhoods.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

Strengths: What's working well?
- Elon offers students a variety of co-curricular peer mentoring opportunities. Examples include: orientation leaders, SPARKS mentors, SMART mentors, LLC Ambassadors, RAs, EV/Service Learning mentors, and Elon Outdoors trip leaders. Other examples that include both curricular and co-curricular mentoring opportunities for students include Elon 101 Peer Educators, Elon Academy mentors, and Odyssey mentors.
- Elon also offers co-curricular mentoring opportunities to students from faculty and staff living in our residential campus, faculty and staff who serve as LLC advisors, and faculty and staff who serve as student organization advisors. (The same can be said for student employment but we know that's an area that Nancy and Bob are heading up.)
- Identity spaces as a way to support and mentor students, faculty and staff with minoritized identities

Weaknesses: What's not working as well and why?
- The mentoring opportunities described above lack cohesion.
- No uniformity as to how and whether students are compensated for serving as mentors.
- No common training/education for peer mentors (or for faculty/staff mentors)
- Lack of capacity in terms of human resources (and financial) to provide management, oversight, and coordination of mentoring opportunities for students
- No definitive or concrete way to evaluate the quality of mentoring from one program to the next and from one student's experience to another's.
- The emotional and physical toll on faculty, staff and students with minoritized identities (mentoring to survive and not to thrive)

Opportunities
- Conduct benchmarking with the co-curricular mentoring programs and opportunities available to students at our peer and aspirant institutions
- Develop a common training for mentors
- If/when the mentorship opportunity is paid, there is usually staff to support that mentoring program. Is there room to integrate some of our existing co-curricular mentoring programs both in terms of financial and human resources?
- Develop a description of what mentoring is and how it differs from other forms of student-student interactions and faculty/staff to student-interactions.
- Gather data from our students regarding the motivations for serving as a mentor and for being mentored in a co-curricular environment. What are their intrinsic

motivations? Extrinsic motivations? How is their motivation tied to their academic/career path? How is it tied into a commitment to/affinity for the university?

- Similarly, we should be gathering the same data from our faculty and staff who have served as co-curricular mentors.
- Draw on external resources and experts to develop and conduct a thorough assessment of the co-curricular (and other) mentoring programs we currently offer at Elon
- Is there an opportunity for peer educator and leader positions to offer training in peer mentorship and opportunities to mentor their peers as a way of deepening their experience as educators and leaders?

Challenges

- Without a common description (if not a definition) of mentoring, we run into challenges identifying which program or experience offers mentoring/mentorship and which ones offer something else.
- Along the same lines, it would be helpful to delineate the difference between friend, educator, leader, and mentor when examining the mentoring opportunities offered to students.
- What is the difference between a social mentor and a co-curricular mentor (in practice)?
- (This could also be listed as an opportunity) Need to determine appropriate metrics of co-curricular mentoring in terms of quantity (length/duration of relationship and frequency of interactions) and quality of co-curricular mentoring relationships in order to adequately assess what we currently have and figure out what we need to develop in order to improve the mentoring opportunities available to Elon students in a co-curricular context.
- Reiterating a weakness from above b/c if we don't increase our staffing and funding capacity for mentorship oversight, this will be both a weakness and an ongoing challenge: Elon lacks the capacity in terms of human and financial resources to provide management, oversight, support, and coordination of mentoring opportunities for students.
- There is always the challenge of emotional exhaustion from faculty and staff who support students with minoritized identities

Partnerships Working Group

Committee Co-facilitators: Nancy Carpenter (Assistant Director of Career Services for Student Employment) and Bob Frigo (Assistant Dean of Campus Life and Director of the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement)

Committee Members: Marcus Elliot (Director of Odyssey Scholars Program), Sandra Reid (Lecturer in Human Service Studies), and Sean Walker (Media Services Lead)

Purpose and Focus

The Partnerships Working Group was formed to conduct an environmental scan, utilizing the strategic planning process created by the American Council on Education Learner Success Lab pilot, to assess the potential role(s) of Elon partnerships within the mentoring, in both the area of mentoring and partnering with communities to transform the future. Partnerships included the following: alumni, community partnerships, and student employment.

The process for conducting the scan included:
1. Interviewing an Alumni Engagement representative and community partners who serve as supervisors to student interns, federal work-study students, and graduate fellows.
2. Conducting a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges analysis of program offerings and perceptions of what mentoring includes
3. Assessing roles alumni, community partners and supervisors might play in a constellation of mentors
4. Making recommendations to steering committee of the role Alumni and community partners

In addition, the purpose of the Partnerships Working Group was tasked to identify potential mentors for students beyond traditional Elon University faculty, staff, and students. While local community partners at nonprofit organizations who host students for employment, internships, academic service-learning courses, and volunteer opportunities were a strong contender for an additional potential mentor group, it was ultimately determined that there were capacity limitations for nonprofit organizations to take on additional students as mentees.

Investigation and Findings

The Partnerships Working Group interviewed a range of leaders and staff at local nonprofit organizations who have hosted students as interns, employees, and volunteers to gain insight into whether there is capacity for additional students to be mentored by community partners. Additionally, the group interviewed a staff member from the Office of Alumni Engagement to explore the possibility of involving alumni in mentoring relationships.

The questions of interest regarding alumni mentoring included:
1. Share existing alumni mentoring programs.
2. How do/could students search for potential alumni mentors?
3. What data currently exists involving alumni and mentors?
4. How could we find out whom alumni considered mentors and how did they connect with them?

Interviews were conducted with community partners to address the following questions:
1. Describe your experience working with Elon students. Please share successes and challenges.
2. What is the relationship between Elon students and community members served through your organization?
3. Is there an opportunity for Elon students to have deeper mentored relationships with the staff at your organization?
4. What are some things we should be thinking about in community leaders and members possibly serving as mentors to Elon students?

Findings from these investigations and discussions included the following:
1. With additional staffing and infrastructure support, there is a significant opportunity for Elon alumni to serve as mentors to current students
2. While there is certainly mentoring taking place for students currently engaged with community partners, local nonprofit organizations do not have the capacity to take on additional students. Resources created through this work may be helpful to current community partner mentors and mentoring-readiness training may be helpful to those interested.
3. Community partners noted that preparing students to be mentored by those partners is essential. It was noted that Human Service Studies are especially well prepared to engage with partners in these relationships.
4. Supervisory relationships already exist for over 1600 student employees on and off campus. These relationships have the potential to be transformed into mentoring relationships, to go beyond career readiness toward academic, social, and personal integration
5. Many positive examples of mentoring are currently taking place on campus, but it is uncertain who is serving as mentors and who is being mentored
6. Tools, resources, and training are needed to develop or enhance effective mentoring relationships
7. A central office is needed to provide leadership for a university-wide mentoring initiative

Further Information Needed
1. Further discussion may be needed to explore what readiness looks like for mentees (and even mentors) with differences influenced by contexts
2. Investigate Human Services Studies preparation protocol for mentee readiness

Recommendations

Ultimately, the working group recommends the following:
1. Elon alumni may have the potential capacity to serve as mentors. However, this would require significant additional staffing support from the Office of Alumni Engagement to support such an initiative.
2. Over 1600 students are employed on and off campus by staff, faculty, and community partners. There is an opportunity to evolve some of these supervisory relationships to mentoring relationships.
3. Elon works with a range of community partners in Alamance County who host students for internships, employment, and curricular and co-curricular community-based learning experiences. Given that the vast majority these community partners have minimal staffing, there is limited capacity to add additional students as mentees. Continued dialogue with partners to determine if there may be opportunities to diminish capacity concerns with training and support.
4. A training program should be developed to support, train, and resource mentors who emerge from student employment, alumni engagement, and community partner contexts.
5. Our research suggests that training mentors to engage in identity development support for students is imperative.
6. Staff are currently serving as mentors to students but are often not formally recognized in this capacity.
7. Student mentee-readiness should be researched to help prepare students for mentoring experiences.
8. A central office to coordinate mentoring across the institution will provide faculty and staff, in addition to alumni, community partners, and supervisors, with a clear resource for training, development, and assessment of mentoring practices.
9. In the interest of equity, the possibility of compensation for mentors needs to be explored considering the current landscape of compensation for undergraduate research and internships.
10. A system or database for tracking past and present mentor / mentee relationships should be established.
11. An evaluation system to ensure alignment with definition and to support a clear understanding of the model will be helpful.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) Analysis

Strengths: What's working well?

Alumni

1. With over 35,000 alumni, there are a significant number of Elon alumni who could be considered an untapped resource as potential mentors
2. Alumni potentially have capacity for mentorship and may have capacity in ways that Elon faculty, staff, and community partners currently do not
3. Alumni models such as the Elon Black Alumni Network (EBAN) have successful existing mentoring programs in place with current students

Community Partnerships

1. Elon works with a range of community partners in Alamance County who host students for internships, employment, and curricular and co-curricular community-based learning experiences
2. A host of Elon staff, faculty, and students serve as liaisons with community partners in Alamance County
3. Consistent performance feedback and evaluations are part of the contexts for community-based internship and practicum experiences
4. Community partnerships provide real-word experience for students, often with marginalized groups

Student Employment

1. Over 1600 student employees are currently employed by Elon University
2. Over 300 staff/faculty members are in a supervisory role at Elon University
3. Forums exist for implementation of mentor training and development within the supervisor population
4. Feedback and competency development are currently a part of some student employment experiences

Weaknesses: What's not working as well and why?

Alumni

1. There is not currently infrastructure in place to be able to provide a mentoring program between Elon alumni and all students
2. Alumni Engagement lacks the necessary staffing to support an initiative involving alumni as mentors

Community Partnerships: Given that most community partners have minimal staffing, there is limited capacity to add additional students as mentees

Student Employment
1. Lack of a holistic student employment structure with creates barriers for moving to a more comprehensive mentoring model
2. Multiple definitions of mentoring are embraced
3. There is no formal training or program in place to support mentors
4. Performance evaluation processes for student interns and student employees are not consistent nor are desired competencies defined

Opportunities

Alumni
1. A mentoring program would allow Alumni Engagement to extend relationships across campus more broadly
2. A mentoring initiative involving alumni may lead to an increase in alumni giving

Community Partners
1. A formal mentoring program could provide professional development resources for community partner staff and leaders
2. A mentoring program could enhance Elon's image and reputation in the community
3. Community partners may raise opportunities for mentoring for identity-development support
4. Opportunity may increase student participation in community and civic engagement

Student Employment
1. Mentoring programs may increase student retention, alumni engagement, and post-graduate opportunities for the over 1600 students who work on campus and through federal work-study programs
2. Mentoring within student employment may engage students in essential skills and fluencies
3. A holistic student employment structure/system that incorporates mentoring as a tenant is possible with changes to current structure and systems

Challenges

Alumni: The Office of Alumni Engagement would need additional staffing to support an initiative involving alumni as mentors

Community Partners: Local nonprofit organizations have minimal staffing and do not have the capacity to take on additional students as mentees

Student Employment
1. Supervisors will desire and perhaps need support through training to effectively manage the additional supervisory responsibilities. Required training is most helpful and should be part of the workday, not a voluntary lunch period.
2. Current programs utilizing mentoring in language may not correlate with University definition

Appendix H: Summary of Feedback from Campus Conversation

To facilitate campus-wide conversation and feedback, the ACE LSL Steering Committee led the Campus Conversation (a monthly meeting preceding the full faculty meeting) on November 5, 2021. We shared a subset of recommendations, guided by ACE Lab Advisor Lyssa Palu-ay's site visit report and the working groups' analyses, and approved by the Steering Committee. There were approximately 75 people in attendance at the meeting. After a brief presentation, conversation was facilitated by Steering Committee members who each reported that faculty and staff at their tables engaged in lively, robust, and constructive conversations. Although the nature of the conversations differed by table, the facilitators' notes and observations concurred on the following points.

1) Adopt a campus-wide definition of mentoring within Elon's relationship-rich educational context.

There is nearly universal agreement that a campus-wide definition and framework is needed, and our definition fits the Elon context and sets the stage for Boldly Elon initiatives. The definition has now been tested and revised extensively with feedback from faculty, staff, and students.

- A few representative comments include:
    - "Importance of common language across campus - helps to recognize, elevate and show we value this"
    - "I see myself in relationships I have that meet the definition"
    - "Appreciate the breadth of research put into the mentoring definition"
    - "Is there a student-facing version?"

2) Embed scaffolded curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to develop agency and build a constellation of mentors across their time at Elon that includes rigorous reflection.

Interview and survey data strongly supports a mentoring constellation framework, with the majority of students reporting they do have mentoring constellations identified through diverse pathways. (Interview composite cases offer examples and models.)

- A few representative comments include:
    - "This seems to be the most salient issue. How do we make students realize that they HAVE a constellation of mentors? How do we talk to students about the *why* here? Need consistent, frequent communication with students."
    - "Important to recognize that we have models like Odyssey, CREDE, Multifaith Scholars that are working very effectively. We need to highlight what is currently working on campus and lift up as best practices."

o "Students need someone to ask them the right questions to cause them to reflect and integrate, to tell their story. So, I wonder: where would this mentoring initiative live? Where would we (fac and staff) have the time to ask these 'right' questions?"

3) **Develop context-specific professional development for students, staff, faculty, alumni, community partners, and other participants in Elon's mentoring initiatives to support the integration or deepening of mentoring relationships within a constellation framework**.
The need for professional development is universally recognized as a key priority.

- A few comments include:

  o "If mentoring is going to be a hallmark of an Elon education, will this also be a hallmark of Elon in our recruiting and in what we promise faculty and staff we will help them be good at? This might help with retention if we offer this kind of mentoring to our faculty and staff."
  o "We need more resources for faculty and staff training and development re: identity safety cues, and the ways in which learning how to display these can convey to students who may not have the faculty member's background that those faculty are people students can trust (there is recent research that demonstrates the importance of this)."
  o "Don't we need a constellation of mentors for the mentors (i.e., for faculty and staff serving as mentors to students) – esp. when thinking about how that can support student success?"
  o "For years my mentoring has been mostly 'try to include as many students as possible in a project' but now I am thinking about working/collaborating with other mentors and adults (in the mentoring constellation) more –I like that reframing."

4) **There are challenges that were raised often during the site visit and Campus Conversation, focused primarily on capacity, time, and cultural taxation for those with minoritized identities.**
- A few comments include:
  o "How are we allocating our resources, human or otherwise, to meet all this? It feels we are adding and adding and adding to these big ambitions and I feel at capacity."
  o "If mentoring students of color disproportionately falls on the shoulders of faculty and staff of color, we will have a lot of concern. This should not be seen as something that people 'choose' to do and thus the extra time shouldn't be recognized – cultural taxation is a serious concern (and already an issue) at Elon."
  o "Operationalization of this should not be in opposition to the Thrive focus in Boldly Elon."

5) **In summary, it was a productive event that facilitated feedback on a set of core findings from the ACE self-study.** The definition was derived from the literature, tailored to fit the Elon context, and situated within Elon's relationship-rich educational model. We sought and received extensive feedback and revised accordingly. We recognize the importance of scaffolding opportunities for students to develop agency to build mentoring relationships throughout their time at Elon, through diverse pathways in the curriculum and co-curriculum. We must pay particular attention to members of our community with minoritized identities. A mentoring constellation framework fits our context and offers new opportunities for mentors to connect and support each other and their mentees.

Appendix I: Overview of Mentoring in Peer and Aspirant Institutions

In the spring of 2021, our student partners reviewed the websites of Elon's current list of peer and aspirant institutions. Although all institutions have special mentoring programs, few offer the promise of comprehensive mentoring for all students. Through the ACE external peer review site visit, we hope to learn more about inclusive models of mentorship at other institutions.

Peer and Aspirant Institutions

The current list of peer institutions includes: Bucknell, Butler, College of Charleston, Creighton, Davidson, Furman, Ithaca, JMU, Lehigh, Loyala Maryland, Richmond, Rollins, Santa Clara, Villanova, and William & Mary.

The current list of aspirant institutions includes: Boston College, Emory University, Georgetown University, Rice University, Vanderbilt University, and Wake Forest University.

Examples of Undergraduate Mentoring Programs

Comprehensive Mentoring Resources

Furman University centers mentoring through "the Furman Advantage," promising that students are supported by "a team of mentors and advisors" and that mentoring is "woven into the fabric of Furman's culture." The website connects students and alumni with mentoring opportunities.

Rollins College has a website dedicated to mentoring ("Mentorship, Mastered") and mentoring for all students: "Our unique mentorship model provides every student an entire community of mentors at every step of their journey." This seems to be achieved through a faculty advisor "from orientation through commencement" and coursework.

Wake Forest University has a "Mentoring Resource Center," in the Office of Personal and Career Development. The Center supports professional development and shares resources through a newsletter and programs. However, there is not a mentoring model inclusive of all students.

Mentoring for Students with Minoritized Identities and First-Generation Students

Peer Mentoring at Davidson College, such as Students Together Reaching for Individual Development and Education (STRIDE) for first-year and transfer students of color and the Queer Mentorship Program

GenFirst!@Bucknell Mentoring Program

Undergraduate Research Mentoring and Honors and Cohorted Programmatic Mentoring
  Found in every institution

Alumni and Career-focused Mentoring
  Student Alumni Associates Program at the College of Charleston