



**ELON**  
UNIVERSITY

School of  
Communications

# Strength in Unity

Striving to support, educate and  
hear all of our community members

19/20

ANNUAL REPORT

# Letter from the Dean

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DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Embracing change and diversity can best sum up the 2019-20 academic year.

In June 2019, the School of Communications kicked off the academic year implementing our new organizational structure with five undergraduate department chairs and program directors for our media analytics major, our communications core and minor courses, assessment and the interactive media graduate program.

In August, the faculty accepted the challenge to consider how they could better incorporate lessons related to the business of our industries, analytics, diversity, equity and inclusion into their curriculum. Faculty began analyzing curricula to determine the gaps in what we offered and what the industry expected of us.

Then we incorporated some immediate changes to courses, including adding credits to our Creating Multimedia Content and Web and Mobile Communications courses. Additionally, sport management received approval to begin its self-study for the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA).

When students returned in the fall, we expanded and provided funding for three diversity-related student organizations: Unity in Communications, Women Influencers in Sport (WINS) and Women of Elon Entertainment Empire (WEEE). Each of these groups hosted events to mentor and support women and students identifying as Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian, Native American, multiracial or LGBTQIA.

In September, the school sponsored the National Reconciliation Day initiative, hosting a screening of the documentary "Walking While Black" and a community forum to discuss ways to improve relations between the Black and Latinx communities and local law enforcement. By May, as the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum, the school held a new set of screenings and discussions with community members to expand the conversation and advocate for improvements.

Change didn't stop there. During the spring semester, the coronavirus pandemic forced the university to pivot and host all classes remotely. Our faculty learned a lot about online instruction, advising and mentoring, and have worked tirelessly this summer to make improvements to how they approach engaged learning for the fall.

Our students have learned through these changes how to be more nimble, innovative and creative. Now we are focused on remaining ready and resilient as we enter the 2020-21 academic year and being the change agents the nation and world need.

Rochelle L. Ford, Ph.D., APR  
Dean

### On the cover:

Brianna Nobles '21 (center), a journalism major and Communications Fellow from Randleman, North Carolina, joins the conversation during the first Unity in Communications dinner in fall 2019. The on-campus initiative supports students interested in enhancing diversity and inclusion in the communications and sport management industries. With support from the dean's office, the student-run program organizes lectures, discussions and other special activities. Also pictured (left) is journalism major Alex Kaminer '21.





# Elon launches local news initiative

**N**orth Carolina residents' need for high-quality local news and information is obvious — particularly during the coronavirus pandemic and a reeling economy. To help address unreported stories and underrepresented communities, the North Carolina Local News Workshop was launched this spring to provide programming, resources and ongoing support for news organizations working to inform North Carolina residents about state and local issues.

Headquartered at Elon's School of Communications, the local news initiative was established in mid-May with support from a \$180,000 grant from the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund. The workshop is led by Melanie Sill, a journalism veteran and former news executive.

"This pooled funding from a host of community and national foundations, including the Democracy Fund, will be

dedicated to ensuring that North Carolinians have access to news and information so that they can participate in the democratic process," said Elon President Connie Ledoux Book.

Through partnerships and an inclusive, community-focused approach, the workshop aims to help North Carolina become a national model for fresh approaches to journalism as a public service. The workshop will also support Elon's students, faculty projects and school initiatives, and pursue partner projects and support a host of state and national entities working on research, innovation or support for local news.

This summer the workshop welcomed four student journalists as part of its inaugural Intern Corps, assisting state news outlets at no cost and covering important North Carolina stories, with a reporting emphasis on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The



PHOTO: JAVIK BLAKE '23

Riley Davis, who completed her master's degree in science journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Hussman School of Journalism and Media, handles a snake this summer while on assignment for the Intern Corps.

interns' work appeared in the Greensboro News & Record, INDY Week, Winston-Salem Journal, WRAL.com, La Noticia and other outlets. Susan Ladd, an Elon adjunct journalism instructor, directed the intern team.

The gift to launch and support the workshop is counted as part of the Elon LEADS Campaign. The partnership with the Local News Lab Fund has a goal of collectively raising funds to support the ongoing programs of the workshop. Elon LEADS is the largest campaign in the university's history and will provide new funding for scholarships, access to engaged learning opportunities such as the workshop, faculty and staff mentors, and development of the campus.

For more information about the workshop, visit [www.ncnewsworks.org](http://www.ncnewsworks.org).



PHOTO: GRACE TERRY '21

Elon alumnus Anton Delgado '20 was one of four members of the inaugural Intern Corps program. In addition to extensive COVID-19 coverage, Delgado regularly reported from Black Lives Matter protests including a Juneteenth protest in Charlotte, N.C. In August, Delgado began work as an environmental reporter for the Arizona Republic.

# Building on Momentum

**A**t the onset of the 2019-20 academic year, School of Communications faculty prepared and approved a list of 17 objectives that advance and strengthen the school and its communities. The first

professional goals in sport. Dabbs invited successful female professionals from across the industry to join the on-campus event in February and offer advice during classroom visits, afternoon panel and roundtable discussions, and a networking reception.

The daylong event was in recognition of National Girls & Women in Sports Day, an annual celebration in February to acknowledge the accomplishments of female athletes, recognize the influence of sports participation for women and girls, and honor the progress and continuing struggle for equality for women in sports.

"The vision of the day was to surround our students with strong industry leaders who could share their experiences, insights and advice. The motto, 'If you see it, you can be it,' drove the entire vision of the event," Dabbs said.

During the panel discussion in LaRose Student Commons, five female panelists were prompted with questions about their professional success, what qualities make them strong women in the workplace and what helped them gain confidence in their own abilities as professionals.

Panelists included Erinn Latta of Ecore; Monica McCoy, a sport industry consultant; Dana Seiden of Harris Blitzer Sports & Entertainment; Felicia Tittle of Duke University; and Theresa Wenzel, former president of the WNBA's Atlanta Dream organization.

Seiden recommended that audience members take more risks, particularly at a young age, and not be intimidated.

"Make the call, send the blind email, knock on doors and see if they will open. Never underestimate the power of networking," she said.

"I am so appreciative of the time of our panelists and their willingness to share their personal stories," Dabbs said. "Our students gained knowledge of the industry, advice on how to excel and made industry connections that can grow over time. Additionally, our male students learned from the panelists' experiences and the importance of male advocates for women in the industry."

In conjunction with the Sport Management Society, WINS offers regular programming to encourage the development and education of female students studying sport management. Through the initiative and its mentorship, female students gain the skills, knowledge, networks and confidence necessary to establish themselves in an overwhelmingly male-dominated industry.

## Breaking bread and coming together

What is dinner without good conversation? Over the past year, the Unity in Communications program has filled both minds and bodies, hosting three dinner discussions with prominent



During the Promise of Possibility panel discussion held on Feb. 14, female professionals in the sport industry discussed their careers and advice for aspiring professionals. Pictured (from left) are panelists Erinn Latta, Monica McCoy, Dana Seiden, Felicia Tittle and Theresa Wenzel.

objective called to formalize the Women Influencers in Sport (WINS), Women of Elon Entertainment Empire (WEEE) and Unity in Communications student groups as school initiatives to support diversity, equity and inclusion. Here's a look at these three fledgling initiatives and their successes over the past year.

## The Promise of Possibility

When planning for the spring 2020 Promise of Possibility event, Shaina Dabbs, assistant professor of sport management and director of WINS, set out to reach female, college-aged students and help empower them to pursue their



communication leaders and industry executives with diverse backgrounds.

In November, Kim Hunter, one of the PR industry's strongest advocates for diversity, shared insights from his career and his role leading a multicultural executive search firm, KLH & Associates. Additionally, Hunter serves as chairman of The LAGRANT Foundation, which has provided more than \$2 million and more than 400 scholarships to increase the number of ethnic minorities in the fields of advertising, marketing and public relations. In the last four years, the School of Communications has had seven LAGRANT Scholars, including a two-time winner.

Mike Fernandez, the first U.S.-born Latino to serve as the chief communications officer of a Fortune 500 company, kicked off the initiative's spring semester. During his February conversation with students, he discussed career preparation, landing a first job and trends in the public relations industry. Fernandez noted that he's worked with at least seven Elon alumni during his



WEEE welcomed prospective new members during an October meeting in Steers Pavilion.

distinguished career in strategic communications.

Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic pushed Cathy Renna's March visit online, but it didn't stop the nationally recognized media relations and communications expert from shedding light on her career and the LGBTQ community. The first national news director of GLAAD discussed her professional path in the communications industry and her start in LGBTQ media and activism.

"Through the 1990s, all those things that you saw

in the media that were high profile, whether it was Ellen [DeGeneres] coming out or the murder of Matthew Shepard, 'Don't Ask Don't Tell,' marriage equality, all those things I was kind of at the epicenter," Renna said.

## WEEE: Connecting alumni and students

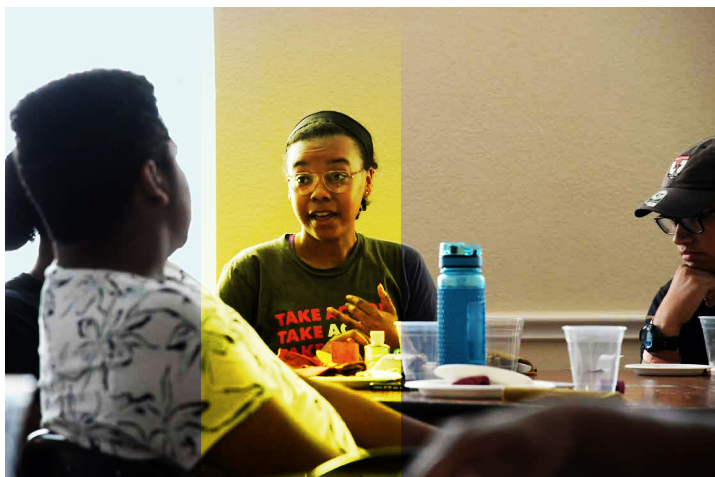
Elon University and the School of Communications are fortunate to have active, engaged alumni across the country. The Women of Elon Entertainment Empire is one such affinity group, serving as a key support and networking group for Elon alumnae working in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles and Elon undergraduate students interested in entertainment careers.

More widely known by the acronym WEEE, the initiative creates opportunities and programming where female students and alumni can gather and network, making connections across the university's different schools,

departments and majors. Originally started in Los Angeles, WEEE hosted its first on-campus event in spring 2019 and ramped up its gatherings during the past year, hosting regular meetings with guest speakers and workshops pertaining to the members' career interests.

In April, WEEE hosted a virtual conversation with President Connie Book, who stressed both the importance and power of creating meaningful relationships throughout one's career — an approach she has consistently taken throughout her own professional journey.

"Given the uncertainty of current circumstances, we felt that Dr. Book was someone who would provide comfort and wisdom to our Elon alums," said Joyce Choi '19, a WEEE board member who helped organize the online conversation. "It also reminds us that our Elon community is always there, no matter when you graduated."



Natalie Green '21, a double major in strategic communications and sociology, speaks to fellow attendees at the Unity in Communications dinner during the fall semester.





The School of Communications, in partnership with the CREDE, El Centro de Español and the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, hosted the inaugural National Day of Reconciliation event, a nationwide initiative to promote communication and healing between police and people of color. The Sept. 17 event included an on-campus screening of the award-winning film "Walking While Black" and a panel discussion with Alamance County community members and law enforcement leaders. Pictured (far right) is Cliff Parker, chief deputy with the Alamance County Sheriff's Office, addressing fellow panelists and audience members.

# Conversation starters

## ElonComm hosts film screenings, forums to encourage community dialogue

Since fall 2019, the School of Communications has convened five sessions of community leaders, law enforcement, students, faculty and staff to view the documentary "Walking While

Black: L.O.V.E. is the Answer" and engage in meaningful conversation. The discussions have centered on improving and healing the relationship between local law enforcement and the Black and Brown communities in Alamance County. In the aftermath of the death of George Floyd and subsequent Black Lives Matter protests, these conversations became even more critical to lead as a community partner that specializes in communications.

More than 100 people have participated in the forums and made recommendations for action that should not only improve relationships with local law enforcement, but also enhance the economic development, quality of life

With Dean Rochelle Ford looking on, James Wilkes, senior pastor of Elon First Baptist Church, participates in a community forum June 11 to discuss improving communication and understanding in Alamance County's diverse communities, while also building relationships with law enforcement.

and democratic processes in our communities. Recommendations have ranged from implementing community policing initiatives to opening public records related to police misconduct.

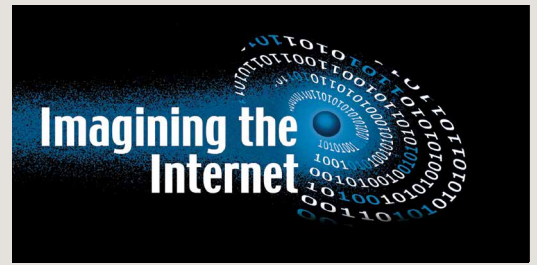
School of Communications Dean Rochelle Ford addressed the dire need for such dialogue and action in a July 2, 2020, column published in the Burlington Times-News. "Other strategies to reduce racism exist and are important to this conversation, but improving police and community relations must stay at the forefront," she wrote. "We need all hands on deck to become aware of the challenges of 'Walking While Black' in Alamance County and work together to make our community safer for all."

The conversation continued through the summer with the dean's office seeking and receiving permission to conduct private online screenings of the documentary for community and campus members.



# 20 YEARS STRONG

The Imagining the Internet Center enters its third decade with an evolution of its own



In fall 2019, the Imagining the Internet Center celebrated a significant milestone, completing its 20th year of work chronicling the evolution of digital communications networks at the dawn of the 21st century. Here's a look back at the past year for the center, as well as what lies ahead.

## 'Future of Digital Life' series continues

During the 2019-20 academic year, the center partnered with Lee Rainie, director of internet and technology research for the Pew Research Center, to produce three reports tied to the center's "Future of Digital Life" series.

Assistant Professor Kathleen Stansberry served as the first-draft writer of "The Next 50 Years of Digital Life," which was co-authored by Professor Janna Anderson and Rainie. In celebration of the Oct. 29, 2019, 50th anniversary of the first computer-to-computer connection of the internet's precursor, the ARPANET, 530 experts responded to a series of questions about how individuals' lives might be affected by the evolution of the internet over the next 50 years. The respondents were largely optimistic — provided people embrace reforms allowing better cooperation, security, basic rights and economic fairness.

Anderson was lead author



and Rainie co-author of "The Future of Democracy in the Digital Age," with nearly half of the report's experts predicting that humans' use of technology will weaken core aspects of democracy and democratic representation between now and 2030. The report was published in February.

Lastly, Anderson and Rainie teamed with Emily Vogels of Pew's Internet and Technology Project to produce a report published in June titled "The Future of Social and Civic Innovation." The third report explored how experts expect organizations and individuals to address the "techlash" — emerging concerns about the ways in which digital technologies are being used to the detriment of society.

The center's ethnographic documentary work at Global IGF 2019 in Berlin was conducted by (pictured, from left) Paloma Camacho '22, Maggie Brown '20, Cameron Wolfslayer '21, Jack Haley '21, Jared Mayerson '20, Assistant Professor Alex Luchsinger, Brian Rea '21, Oliver Fischer '19, Maria Ramirez '20 and Julia Walter '20.

## Student teams travel to Costa Rica, Germany

Assistant Professor Alex Luchsinger led two student video teams to international events to document experts and world leaders. In September, four Elon undergraduate students participated in the official video coverage of the Internet Society's 2019 Internet Hall of Fame induction in San José, Costa Rica. Two months later, a student team

Elon students Maria Ramirez '20 and Brian Rea '21 conduct an interview at the U.N.-facilitated Global Internet Governance Forum in Berlin in November.

of nine attended the 2019 Internet Governance Forum, held in Berlin with Elon undergraduates interviewing more than 100 experts from more than 50 nation-states. This is the 10th year the center has conducted interviews at the yearly forum.

## A reimagined focus

The university's new strategic plan, Boldly Elon, calls for the enhancement and evolution of the Imagining the Internet Center into a broader interdisciplinary research center on the future of digital life that will include faculty and students from across Elon's campus and operate out of the Provost's Office. Provost Aswani Voley has appointed an advisory group to begin to outline possibilities for the center.





# Familiar faces, new roles

## Derek Lackaff begins tenure as iMedia director



**W**hen Associate Professor Derek Lackaff joined the School of Communications a decade ago, assigned to teach in the school's then year-old Interactive Media graduate program, he immediately saw the potential of the 10-month, full-time program that prepares graduates to think strategically across media platforms.

"I joined the iMedia faculty in 2010 because it was the

most interesting and dynamic academic program I'd ever heard of, and I still feel that way today," Lackaff said. "We have this remarkable opportunity to rapidly innovate to keep pace with the industry while at the same time being guided by an enduring core of humanistic and intellectual values."

On June 1, Lackaff officially became director of the Interactive Media program, succeeding David Copeland, A.J. Fletcher Professor and iMedia's founding director, who announced his resignation in December. Copeland will remain on faculty in the school.

"The iMedia program has been undoubtedly fortunate to have great, forward-thinking leadership from Dr. Copeland the past 11 years, building a diverse student body with the majority of students being African-American in recent years. And we are excited about what Derek Lackaff, a wonderful teacher, scholar and mentor, will bring to the program," School of Communications Dean Rochelle Ford said. "The program's future is bright

because of this continued excellence in leadership and the willingness of our faculty to adjust to our changing industries and prepare our graduate students for their future careers."

## Bravo, Lucia named department chairs

Associate Professors Vanessa Bravo and Cara Lucia have been appointed to the top leadership positions of the Strategic Communications Department and Sport Management Department, respectively.

The new chairs began June 1.



During their respective Elon tenures, the two faculty members have been active teachers, mentors and researchers, publishing, presenting and volunteering regularly in their academic pursuits while also participating in campus and community initiatives.

Bravo, who came to Elon in 2011, oversees the school's largest academic program —

and one of the largest programs on campus — with more



than 500 majors and 17 full-time professors.

An Elon alumna, Lucia returned

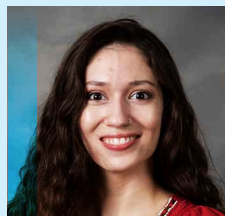
to campus in 2012 and is tasked with leading the Sport Management Department through its final stages to obtain accreditation from the Commission on Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA).

"Our two new chairs bring a unique blend of teaching and professional experience to their respective departments," Ford said. "They are both leaders in their fields and industries, and capable of developing engaging and progressive elements to our curriculum to ensure our students' academic and professional success. Additionally, and it can't be overemphasized how proud we are to have two strong female leaders taking on these top roles. Their perspectives and leadership will only help strengthen the school."

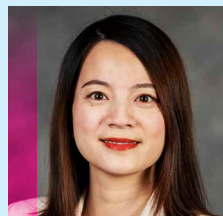
## New full-time faculty & staff



**Genevieve Barnes**  
Program Assistant,  
School of  
Communications



**Abby Iggoe**  
Assistant Director of  
Multimedia Projects



**Jenny Jiang**  
Assistant Professor of  
Communication Design



**Amber Moser**  
Director of Internships,  
School of Communications



**Melanie Sill**  
Executive Director,  
North Carolina Local  
News Workshop



**Shannon Zenner**  
Assistant Professor of  
Communication Design



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

## JULY/AUGUST

Assistant Professor **Carolyn Desalu** was one of 15 faculty members from colleges and universities nationwide to participate in the Scripps Howard Journalism Entrepreneurship Institute, held at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University.

Senior Lecturer **Randy Piland** served as the lead of a volunteer staff of 28 photographers and videographers at the World Scout Jamboree, chronicling the 12-day international event in West Virginia. More than 45,000 Scouts from 150 countries attended.

Associate Professor **Vanessa Bravo** participated in AEJMC's yearlong Institute for Diverse Leadership training program, which is dedicated to increasing the number of people of color and women who serve in leadership positions in journalism and communication education. Bravo was one of nine awardees selected from across the country.

Lecturer **Hal Vincent** was appointed to the head leadership position for AEJMC's Advertising Division. The election and announcement were made at AEJMC's August conference in Toronto, where Vincent co-led a daylong teaching workshop.

## SEPTEMBER

The school hosted its **Careers in Public Relations: Diversity & Inclusion Panel Discussion** on Sept. 16, featuring strategic communications professionals and human resources executives from G&S Business Communications, W2O Group, Taylor Strategy, Mower, and Charlotte Pipe and Foundry.



Emily Thomas '22 listens as Jordan Kaye of W2O Group talks at the Careers in Public Relations reception.



The elondocs program, directed by Associate Professor Nicole Triche (top right), reaches a milestone, celebrating 10 years.

Instructor and Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Affairs **Colin Donohue** organized a dinner conversation with the university community and local Muslims on Sept. 11 at the Burlington Masjid. The discussion included how the media cover Islam, the impact of 9/11, the role of the Masjid in the community, the five pillars of Islam and more.

**elondocs**, a yearlong program for students passionate about documentary film production, celebrated its 10th cohort this fall, welcoming eight new members.

## OCTOBER

Thirty-one students completed the **Sport Management Department's 400-hour internship** requirement in summer 2019. The department offered a look at how its students spent their summers at the Sport Management Internship Forum.

Lecturer **Kelly Furnas** traveled to Shanghai to serve as the lead judge for the 2019 Youth Observation Contest, a student competition organized by the Journalism Education Association of China.

Associate Professor **Vanessa Bravo** served as the keynote speaker at the Diaspora Studies series on Oct. 10, presenting her research examining state-diaspora relations in the governments of El Salvador, Costa Rica and Colombia.



Derrick Redwine '20 highlights his internship with the New York Red Bulls.

Associate Professor **David Bockino** traveled to India during fall break to lecture at the Global Institute of Sports Business, India's first and only industry-designed and internationally certified sports management program. Bockino previously spent time in India while working for ESPNcricinfo.

In recognition of her contributions to teaching and mentoring students and supporting PRSSA, **Dean Rochelle Ford** was presented with the Public Relations Society of America's 2019 Outstanding Educator Award at the PRSA 2019 International Conference in San Diego.

As part of the school's **W2O Group Health Day**, Elon alumnae **Nicole Friend '15** and **Brooke Muller '19** met with three classes and Live Oak Communications students and hosted-

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW



First-year Communications Fellows pose outside CNN's offices after an October tour.

an interactive workshop and informational session on Oct. 29. Twelve Elon alumni work for W2O Group, a leading provider of market-ing services for the healthcare industry.

During the last weekend of October, 36 first-year **Communications Fellows** traveled to Atlanta to tour media outlets and network with communications professionals. Students visited CNN, InterContinental Hotels Group and Mercedes-Benz Stadium, splitting into groups based on their major of interest. Students interacted with Elon alumni at all three stops.

## NOVEMBER

**Elon News Network** won a national News-paper Pacemaker, an Online Pacemaker and a 4-Year TV Station Pinnacle Award at the Associated Collegiate Press/College Media Association National College Media Convention in Washington, D.C. The Pacemaker is the highest honor awarded by ACP for excellence in student journalism. Communications Man-ager **Tommy Kopetskie**, staff adviser to Phi Psi Cli, Elon's yearbook, won the 2019 Honor Roll Four-Year Yearbook Adviser Award, given to a CMA member with fewer than five years of advising experience.

A dozen African and Caribbean journalists discussed U.S. democracy, freedom of speech, new technology and the media industry

during a faculty-led panel Nov. 5. The visit was part of the International Visitor Leadership Program's **Edward R. Murrow Program for Journalists**, which annually brings more than 100 emerging international journalists to examine journalistic practices in the U.S.

The Elon softball team participated in a study abroad program during Thanksgiving break that featured a class led by Associate Profes-sor **Dan Haygood**, "Cellphones and Samurai: The Cultural Clash of Japan's Traditional Culture and Modern Digital Commu-nications Society."

A team of four sport management majors attended the 2019 **Sport Marketing Associa-tion Conference** in Chicago, advancing to the finals of the three-day event's undergraduate



Journalism majors Grace Morris '20 (left) and Maeve Ashbrook '22 speak with John Fritz Moreau, director of a digital news agency in Haiti.

case study competition. This was the team's second straight year as a finalist.

ElonComm and Pitney Bowes hosted a **Diversity and Inclusion in News Coverage luncheon** at the 2019 National High School Journalism Conference in Washington, D.C. Panelists included **Al Drago '15**, a freelance photographer; Craig Herndon, a retired Wash-ington Post photojournalist; and Cheriss May, president of the Women Photojournalists of Washington. Dean Ford moderated the panel.

In November, ElonComm faculty and students learned how to use the **Bloomberg termi-nals** located in the Love School of Business' William Garrard Reed Finance Center to gather real-time data, news, research and analytics. Bloomberg Market Specialist Alex Wisch led the sessions.

## DECEMBER

Associate Dean **Don Grady** edited a book, "The Golden Age of Data: Media Analytics in Study & Practice," that was published by Routledge. It examines the current state of legacy media analysis and social media ana-lytics, including research and contributions from several ElonComm faculty and alumni.

## JANUARY

Lecturer **Kelly Furnas** was named to the Student Press Law Center's board of direc-tors, one of four new appointees joining the 15-person board. Directors oversee the Wash-ington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization that defends, supports and promotes the First Amendment rights of student journalists.

Associate Professor **Rich Landesberg** and Di-rector for Global Educational Initiatives **Mark Dalhouse** led 28 students to Des Moines ahead of the Iowa Democratic caucuses. As part of their **Iowa: The Trail Starts Here** Winter Term course, students interacted with news outlets and presidential campaigns and developed a better understanding of Iowa's political culture during the election season.

Twenty-one students enrolled in **The Sun-dance Experience** Winter Term class traveled to the 2020 Sundance Film Festival in Utah, where they attended screenings, interacted with alumni and gained an up-close view of the nation's largest independent film festival. **J McMerty '00**, director of the Elon in Los An-geles program, and **Maggie Mullikin**, man-ager of graduate and global programs, led the course. Two alumni, **Katrina Taylor '04** and **Alex Hadden '13**, were credited as editors on





The Diversity and Inclusion in News Coverage luncheon was held at the National Museum of African American History and Culture.



Faculty members Nagatha Tonkins, William Moner and Brian Walsh gain insights into Bloomberg terminals.

films that premiered at this year's festival.

Associate Professor **David Bockino** and 14 Elon students visited ESPN's Bristol, Conn., campus in January as part of the **Through the Lens of ESPN** course, where they met with "SportsCenter" anchor Sage Steele and Norby Williamson, executive vice president for production and member of the school's National Advisory Board. The class also visited FOX Sports, Bleacher Report and the NHL, among others, and spent a week in Argentina.

## FEBRUARY

**Elon News Network** and **WSOE 89.3 FM** collaborated on Feb. 5 to livestream the Alamance County Commissioners forum, which was hosted by Elon University. The forum took place in McKinnon Hall and featured the 12 Democratic and Republican candidates running for county commissioner ahead of the primary election in March.

Led by Associate Professor **Amanda Sturgill**, two ElonComm students and two Elon alumni provided media coverage at the International Collegiate Programming Contest's North America Championship in Atlanta. The event featured top computer programming students from the United States and Canada.

**The Pendulum**, the newspaper of Elon News Network, and **Phi Psi Cli** yearbook won Best of Show awards from the North Carolina College Media Association during the organi-

zation's annual gathering held at East Carolina University. Nearly two dozen students were also honored in the individual categories.

Associate Professor **Doug Kass** produced a public service announcement, titled "Data," for the United Nations AIDS outreach program, building awareness of the more than 37 million people around the world with HIV. The project won the best PSA TV advertisement categories at the L'Age D'Or International Film Festival (Kolkata, India) and the Druk International Film Festival (Paro, Bhutan).

Several members from **Live Oak Communications** attended AIGA Raleigh's two-day creative conference, THRIVE 2020, which included workshops and lectures from creative professionals from across the graphic design and strategic communications industries.

## MARCH

In separate articles for SB Nation, Deadspin and Front Office Sports, Professor **Tony Weaver** offered insights on schools'

immediate loss of revenue from the cancellation of the NCAA basketball tournament and the future of college athletics following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Associate Professor **Amanda Sturgill** served as editor of "Mind the Gap: Global Learning at Home and Abroad," which was published by Stylus in March. The book expands the context of global learning, examining its antecedents and impacts as a part of the larger higher education experience.

At the school's **"Media and the Culture of Shame"** panel discussion on March 4, participants explored the perils of social media and information overload, the increasing demand to unpublish news, and the need for media members and consumers to be more empathetic. **Brooks Fuller**, director of the North Carolina Open Government Coalition and assistant professor of journalism, moderated the event. Panelists included Frank LoMonte, director of the Brechner Center for Freedom of Information at the University of Florida; Deborah Dwyer, a UNC doctoral student; Ryan Tuck, a media consultant; and Christal Carmichael, a psychology instructor at North Carolina Central University.

## APRIL

ElonComm collected a series of awards in the 2020 BEA Festival of Media Arts, including first-place finishes in the television sports story feature (long form) and mobile apps categories. Assistant Professor **Alex Luchsinger** won an Award of Excellence in the competitive faculty documentary category for his film



Students received an all-access visit at ESPN thanks to Norby Williamson and alumna Amanda Braunlich '09.



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Frank LoMonte addresses his fellow panelists at the “Media and the Culture of Shame” panel.

“First Chances,” about a man’s entrepreneurial journey after spending nine years in some of California’s most notorious prisons.

Associate Professor **Phillip Motley** was named Elon’s next Faculty Fellow for Academic Service-Learning and Community Engagement. He will work with the Kernodle Center for Civic Life staff to promote the value of and deepen the learning that emerges from service-learning and community engagement.

## MAY

Two students were named national winners in two categories of the Society of Professional Journalists **Mark of Excellence Awards** competition. **Abby Gibbs ’21** was honored in

General News Reporting for her story about Elon’s decision to join the Common Application. **Clare Grant ’23** won for Feature Photography for a photo of two dancers performing at the Gaspard and Dancers show “Lesprit,” which came to Elon in September.

**Gayatri Chopra ’23** earned one of the 49 inaugural scholarships created to honor the 49 people who lost their lives in the PULSE nightclub shooting in Orlando in June 2016. The 49 Legacy Scholarships initiative was created by the onePULSE Foundation, a nonprofit organization established to memorialize the victims and their lives.

Communications Fellow **Javik Blake ’23** was recognized by the Sportscasters Talent Agen-

cy of America as the 10th ranked collegiate sports broadcaster in its Jim Nantz Award competition. Blake is the highest ranked first-year student in the award’s history, and the only freshman to place in this year’s top 20.

**Rachel Cifarelli ’21** earned a gold medal in the Innovation Center for Design Excellence’s 2020 Environmental Graphic Design Competition for her poster series emphasizing going plant-based, reusable and thrifting.

## JUNE

As part of his Pulitzer Center Reporting Fellowship, **Anton Delgado ’20** traveled to the state of Pará in northern Brazil to report on the spike in leprosy cases that has gone underreported internationally. In June, the center published Delgado’s in-depth story, “Shorthanded Specialists Struggle to Address the Resurgence of Leprosy in Brazil,” and five field notes compiled during his investigation.

**Ashlyn DeLoughy ’21** was awarded a summer grant and a scholarship for the fall 2020 semester through the Scripps Howard Foundation. DeLoughy spent her summer with RadicalMedia, a global media company with offices in New York, Los Angeles and abroad, as part of the production remote program team for the “PBS American Portrait” series.



The Daily Tar Heel received the inaugural Frank Barrows Award for Excellence in Student Journalism at the 2020 Sunshine Day event in Greensboro for its coverage of the “Silent Sam” controversy in Chapel Hill, exposing a settlement between the UNC Board of Governors and the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

## Expansion and Remembrance

The North Carolina Open Government Coalition focused on expanding its presence and reach in the state during the past year, with an emphasis on improving the racial, gender and institutional diversity of its board of directors.

In fall 2019, the board welcomed two new members: Ju-Don Marshall, chief content officer of WFAE radio station in Charlotte, and Rick Mercier, public information officer for the town of Garner. These members bring diverse experiences to the coalition’s leadership core and contribute to the coalition’s diversity efforts.

The NCOGC also focused on fundraising efforts to promote citizen outreach and recognizing successes in government transparency and reporting. During the 2019-20 year, the coalition raised approximately \$5,000, which exceeded the previous three fiscal years combined. With these funds, it developed resources for members of the public interested in open government matters and established the Frank Barrows Award for Excellence in Student Journalism. The award honors the memory of Frank C. Barrows, the former managing editor of the Charlotte Observer, a founding member of the NCOGC and its first president.

The Sunshine Center held its annual Sunshine Day event on March 9 at North Carolina A&T State University with programming addressing transparency issues in the 2020 presidential election and the North Carolina police body cam law, among other topics.





PAUL PARSONS



GEORGE PADGETT



NAGATHA TONKINS

# Faculty & Alumni News

## FOND FAREWELLS

Three of ElonComm's most recognizable faces resigned during the past year with Professor Paul Parsons, Associate Professor George Padgett and Nagatha Tonkins announcing their departures.

Parsons, who came to Elon in 2001 as a professor and founding dean, concluded his service as dean at the end of the 2017-18 academic year. At that time, his 17 years in the school's top leadership position made Parsons the nation's longest-serving dean of a single communications school or journalism college. Following a sabbatical, Parsons returned to teach full time

in the school, fulfilling a pledge he made to himself to return to a professorial role.

Associate Dean Don Grady, who served on the search committee that hired Parsons nearly two decades ago, commended the former dean's many accomplishments, growing the school's faculty size, facilities and national profile.

"Looking back, it seems clear that Paul figured out the expectations (at Elon) quickly and over the next 17 years he transformed a well-established department into the nationally recognized school of communications that it is today," Grady said.

Padgett came to Elon University in 1991 and quickly took on

a leadership role serving as chair of the Department of Communications from 1992 to 2000. His research and writing interests focused on media ethics and diversity in media, and he regularly taught the school's Media Law and Ethics course.

Prior to arriving at Elon, Padgett worked professionally as a newspaper reporter and editor in South Carolina and Illinois and as director of publications at a specialty publisher in Indiana. Additionally, he taught a variety of courses at Mississippi State University and Illinois State University.

After 11-plus years as the school's internship director, helping shepherd hundreds

of students and alumni through the internship process, Tonkins concluded her tenure in mid-December.

The former television broadcast journalist turned educator had a remarkable impact on the school, the university and Elon students during her tenure, Parsons said.

"Nagatha Tonkins has created an enormous awareness of the value of internships," Parsons said. "She talks to our COM 100 classes. She has workshops for students. She's out there spreading the word and the value of internships. I've been thrilled with how our internship program has grown both in quantity and, most importantly, quality."

## PROMOTIONS AND TENURE

In March, the board of trustees announced the promotions, tenure and continuance of School of Communications faculty members:

- **David Bockino**, tenure and promoted to associate professor
- **Kelly Furnas**, continued as a lecturer
- **Ben Hannam**, tenured as an associate professor
- **Sana Haq**, continued as an assistant professor
- **Denise Hill**, tenure and promoted to associate professor
- **Doug Kass**, continued and promoted to associate professor
- **Julie Lellis**, promoted to professor
- **Jessalynn Strauss**, tenure and promoted to associate professor
- **Tony Weaver**, promoted to professor
- **Ryan Witt**, continued as a lecturer

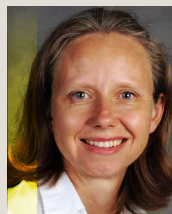


## OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS AWARD

The School of Communications got an early start with its Homecoming & Reunion Weekend celebration, presenting Brad Holloman '09 with its Outstanding Alumnus Award during a Nov. 1 alumni networking event. The corporate partnership account manager for the NBA's Orlando Magic was recognized for both his work as an undergraduate as well as his continued excellence as a professional in the sport industry. During the award presentation, Holloman was lauded for maintaining a close relationship with his alma mater, welcoming Communications Fellows to his Orlando Magic offices and returning to campus in 2017 as the keynote speaker of the Sport Management Department's senior banquet.

## SCHOOL AWARDS

Faculty and staff members were honored during the School of Communications virtual awards program on May 14.



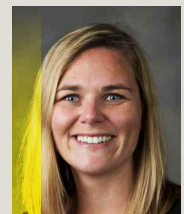
Associate Professor Amanda Sturgill received the Excellence in Teaching Award



Assistant Professor Kathleen Stansberry received the Excellence in Scholarship Award



Assistant Professor Shaina Dabbs received the Excellence in Leadership Award



Program Assistant Alyssa Donohue received the Outstanding Staff Member Award

# BY THE NUMBERS

## Class of 2020

Here is a sampling of 78 recent Elon graduates who were surveyed by the School of Communications and the Student Professional Development Center about their post-graduation plans.

**53** Full-time employment

**14** Post-graduate fellowship/internship

**10** Part-time employment

**1** Volunteer service



*Liam Collins, a journalism and political science double major, started his career in local news in May serving as the Jacksonville bureau chief and multimedia journalist at WITN News, covering three counties in eastern North Carolina. Collins spent four years on campus reporting for Elon News Network, and he covered the Iowa Democratic caucuses in January as part of the Winter Term course Iowa: The Trail Starts Here.*

*"Elon's real-world experiences pushed me to the point where I could begin a career in broadcast news right out of college, during a pandemic no less, without missing a beat," Collins said.*

## Where's the Class of 2020?

**Zoe Ashburn**  
Communications intern, Reingold Inc.

**Elisabeth Bachmann**  
Public relations coordinator, COM 616

**Abigail Barcus**  
Property manager, Long & Foster

**Maria Benton**  
Marketing specialist, American Telemedicine Association

**Josh Blank**  
Junior rotational program, National Football League

**Maggie Brown**  
Multiplatform producer, WRAL

**Kaitlin Brozek**  
Graduate student, Trinity College Dublin

**Hailey Burkett**  
Graphic designer, DPL Financial Partners

**Madison Burrress**  
Public relations intern, French/West/Vaughan

**Kristen Chase**  
Marketing analyst, Accenture

**Laura Clarkson**  
Web UX research intern, Red Hat

**Courtney Close**  
Associate, AlphaSights

**Reid Cobb**  
Analyst for data and analytics, Digitas

**Darby Cochran**  
Client relations associate, Vanguard

**Rory Coleman**  
Marketing communications intern, Carolina Ballet

**Liam Collins**  
Jacksonville (N.C.) bureau chief and multimedia journalist, WITN-TV

**Ryan Cranston**  
Assistant manager, Winstare

**Annie Cuoco**  
Design and sales intern, Morgan Harrison Home, LLC

**Lyndsay Dalimonte**  
B2B sales development program, AT&T

**Alison Danahy**  
Social media and marketing manager, E & L by Design

**Samantha Defina**  
Intern, Jenna Schulman College Consulting, LLC

**Anton Delgado**  
Environmental reporter, Arizona Republic

**Gwyneth Donahue**  
Recruiter, Insight Global

**Brendan Duff**  
Field organizer, Montana Democratic Party

**Oliver Fischer**  
Graduate student, North Carolina State University

**Kate Fowler**  
Resident teacher, Zeta Charter School

**Leah Graf**  
NBC News public relations coordinator, NBCUniversal

**Zoie Griffin**  
Studio operator, WGHP Fox 8 News

**Claire Grisolano**  
Marketing intern, Ropari Beauty

**Astrid Gross-Hutton**  
Social media manager, Sleepy Bee Cafe

**Kaitlyn Heit**  
Graduate student, Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University

**Joseph Henry-Penrose**  
Assistant media planner, McKinney

**Isaiah Hill**  
Sales associate, William Kuchta

**Lenna Iskenderian**  
Graduate student, Boston University

**Renee Janis**  
Graphic designer, Margaux NY

**Benjamin Johnson**  
Social media manager, Cornelius Muller Productions

**Raleigh Jones**  
Fellow, IRTS Foundation

**Annie Kane**  
Junior account executive, G&S Business Communications

**Emma Kanell**  
Graphic design and product strategy associate, Pawsitivity

**Richie Kasper**  
Account intern, Taylor

**Kellie Kaufman**  
Sales associate, Nauti Paws Pet Boutique & Dog Bakery

**Chloe Kennedy**  
Marketing intern, Needham Bank

**Maddie Kenny**  
Junior associate, Sard Verbinen & Co.

**Paige King**  
Educational tour consultant, EF Education First

**Kristen Koch**  
Client representative, Acquire

**Emma Kopkowski**  
Associate story producer, Discovery Studios

**Michael Kuchinski**  
Customer experience associate, DraftKings

**Hannah Lacey**  
Associate account executive, imre

**Sarah Little**  
Project manager, INNOCEAN USA

**Ginger Looney**  
Communications intern, Reingold

**Logan Marcus**  
Analyst, MediaLink

**Carter Martin**  
Gameday intern, Aberdeen Ironbirds

**Hogan May**  
Championships & tournaments intern, Mass Golf

**Jared Mayerson**  
Editor, Gunpowder & Sky; graduate student, University of Southern California

**Christina Mazziotta**  
Graduate student, Boston University

**Grace McGuirk**  
Financial product analytics and sales, Bloomberg

**Grace McMeekin**  
Content marketing fellow, Solstice

**Crosby Melendi**  
Social content writer, Flagship

**Consuelo Mendoza Bruno**  
Account associate, W2O Group

**Anna Messalles**  
Graduate student, ESADE Business School

**Grace Morris**  
Multimedia journalist, KLBK

**Collin Murray**  
Sales executive, Miami Marlins

**Livi Murray**  
Assistant account manager intern, Leo Burnett

**Daniela Nasser**  
Digital investments associate, Havas Media

**Sam Newman**  
Associate video specialist, OpenExchange

**Felipe Osses-Konig**  
Head tennis professional, Saw Mill Tennis Club

**Julia Paneyko**  
Commercial banking analyst, Citi Bank

**Sam Parlato**  
People operations & strategy assistant, Wayfair

**Ben Piatt**  
Digimax

**Kat Recio**  
Digital marketing and content associate, Health Recovery Solutions

**Lumiere Rostick**  
Communications fellow, Democracy North Carolina

**John Sadler**  
Business banking development program, PNC Financial Services Group Inc.

**Josh Schwaner**  
Media tech associate, NBC

**Nicole Seay**  
E-commerce rotational associate, Wayfair

**Anna Shine**  
Junior designer, Syneos Health

**Lauren Shur**  
Intern, Charles Aris Executive Search

**Wes Smith**  
Video producer, Shallico

**Sadie Stuart**  
Marketing associate, SHHHOWERCAP

**Rachel Sword**  
Social media intern, March Communications

**Sophia Tasselmyer**  
Marketing coordinator, The Sea Pines Resort

**Sophia Theriault**  
Corporate communications intern, Hertz Corporation

**Victoria Traxler**  
News21 Reporting Fellow, Arizona State University

**Kelly Valerio**  
Corporate communications coordinator, Hilton

**Sonya Walker**  
Graduate student, University of Montana Law School

**Gavrielle Weiss**  
Graduate student, Istituto Marangoni

**Natalie Zagorski**  
Intern, Greensboro Grasshoppers



# National Advisory Board

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New York

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Chief Marketing Officer, Roku,  
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Green Bay, Wis.

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**Hugh Stevens**

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**Norby Williamson**

Executive Vice President, Production,  
ESPN, Bristol, Conn.

## REMEMBERING LONGTIME BOARD MEMBER KEN WHITE

**K**en White, a longtime broadcast television news director and member of the School of Communications National Advisory Board for nearly two decades, died on Oct. 11, 2019.

Most recently, White served as news director at WVVA-TV, an NBC-affiliated television station in Bluefield, West Virginia. During three-plus decades in the news industry, White also worked in television markets in Alabama, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and New York.

White's participation on the school's advisory board dates back almost as long as the existence of the school itself. A search of the school's archives provides numerous examples of White's interactions with students, including a 2003 seminar to guide students in landing their first job — and in a better market than they might expect.

Former Communications Dean Paul Parsons called White a “phenomenal advisory board member” who was devoted to developing the next wave of professional journalists.

“In the nearly two decades he was associated with the School of Communications, he spoke about the broadcast world in dozens of classes,



built relationships with our faculty, opened doors for students through internships and jobs, and even became an Elon parent himself,” Parsons said. “Ken believed in our school becoming the best in the nation at preparing students for careers and life, and he had an immeasurable impact on the school we are today.”

In an email to Elon colleagues following White's passing, Associate Professor Rich Landesberg noted the immense impact of White's contributions throughout the years. “He was a good friend and a great mentor to our students,” Landesberg said.

White's son, Mack, graduated from Elon in 2016 with a degree in media arts and entertainment.

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*In January, 32 ElonComm students participated in The Fellows Experience, a Winter Term course that leads first-year Communications Fellows on a tour of media companies in Florida, meeting with professionals in their industries and learning about future job opportunities. While in Tampa and Orlando, the Fellows toured 11 companies during the two-week trip, including stops at Diamond View Studios (pictured), Poynter Institute and the Pulse nightclub memorial.*