



**ELON**  
UNIVERSITY

School of  
Communications

# Measuring Our Impact



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2020-21**

Despite a pandemic, ElonComm's commitment to educating, serving and developing students holds strong

# Letter from the Dean

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|      |  |
|------|--|
| CII  | Letter from the dean                         |
| 1    | Educating the next generation of journalists |
| 2    | Filming through a pandemic                   |
| 4    | In the heart of Hollywood                    |
| 7    | Colloquiums and symposiums                   |
| 8    | Special initiatives                          |
| 10   | The year in review                           |
| 14   | Faculty, staff and alumni news               |
| 16   | Where's the class of 2021?                   |
| CIII | National advisory board                      |



## MASTHEAD

### President

Connie Ledoux Book, Ph.D.

### Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Aswani Voley, Ph.D.

### Dean

Rochelle Ford, Ph.D., APR

### Associate Dean

Tony Weaver, Ph.D.

### Editor

Tommy Kopetskie

### Designer

Garry Graham

### Copy Editor

Alexa Boschini '10

*This report is published yearly for alumni, friends and partners of the Elon University School of Communications.*

*Published in September 2021*

Send inquiries to:

School of Communications

Elon University

2850 Campus Box

Elon, NC 27244

336.278.5658

tkopetskie@elon.edu

[www.elon.edu/communications](http://www.elon.edu/communications)

DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

The lyrics “I thought I told you that we won’t stop” from the song “Only You” by Bad Boy Records — featuring the famed trio Notorious B.I.G., Puff Daddy and Mase — pops into my head when I reflect on the 2020-21 academic year. The School of Communications persevered during unprecedented times to prove that the COVID-19 pandemic could not stop the progress and impact that our school makes educating, serving and developing talent for the communications industries.

This academic year was one of impact. We were a leader in continuing to produce award-winning content developed by students in journalism, film, video, audio, design and campaigns in our classrooms, studios, offices, labs and virtually.

We made an impact on the North Carolina local news and information ecosystem with the launch of the NC Local News Workshop that hosted programs

on topics from diversity, equity and inclusion to data journalism. The North Carolina Open Government Coalition supported citizens and news organizations in obtaining governmental information related to elections and public institutions like the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Faculty made a considerable impact through their research on disinformation, analytics and digital transformations in partnership with the Pew Research Center. ElonComm won a major Scripps Howard Foundation grant to make an impact on high school students who aspire to be journalists and professional communicators.

Students obtained virtual, on-campus and on-site internship placements — 287 total internships in the past year. In May, we re-opened the Elon in LA program, complete with new learning and housing facilities. We hosted the 46th annual AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, one of the country’s largest research symposia, featuring acclaimed journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones.

We hope this annual report demonstrates some of the impact we have made this year.

Your support advocating for Elon, investing in Elon and celebrating Elon made this impact possible. We are thankful for YOU — our community of alumni, donors, parents, students, partners, industry employers, faculty, staff and friends.

Sincerely,

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

## On the cover:

**IMPACTFUL COLLABORATION:** In October, Elon’s Department of Performing Arts hosted its first all-Black cabaret, with support from Elon in LA Program Director J McMerty ‘00 and students from the School of Communications’ undergraduate and graduate programs. The show’s 13 pieces included singing, dancing, scenes and monologues, centering Blackness in a traditionally White realm, according to Kamal Lado ‘21, the show’s artistic director. Lado and the project’s student directors enlisted McMerty as a faculty adviser to bring “The Moment” to life — no easy task during a pandemic. Pictured, McMerty works with Jordan Young ‘22 (center), a cinema and television arts major, and Lake Sims-Winfrey ‘21, a drama and theatre studies and music in liberal arts double major, during filming. Photo credit: Willem Butler ‘22



# Educating the Next Generation of Journalists



lodging, meals and instructional materials. This experience is specifically for students of diverse socioeconomic, racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Additionally, each student who completes the Immersion program will be assigned two mentors — an Elon communications student and a professional journalist — to help them identify, report and produce two multimedia stories.

Lastly, Immersion participants can attend a virtual media tour with companies from across the country. It will be organized by The LAGRANT Foundation, an EJP partner organization.

Journalism Lecturer Kelly Furnas, who oversees the Elon program's curriculum, said he looks forward to helping students gain a solid understanding of reporting, writing, law, ethics and multimedia production while also developing leadership, team-building and entrepreneurial skills.

"There are so many talented storytellers, and would-be storytellers, enrolled in high school right now," Furnas said. "I'm excited to provide this opportunity for them to explore what pursuing their craft in college and beyond could look like."

Instructor in Journalism Colin Donohue '05 serves as the initiative's program director and oversees travel, housing and logistics.

*For more information about the Emerging Journalists Program, visit [www.elon.edu/ejp](http://www.elon.edu/ejp).*

**W**ith a three-year financial commitment totaling \$300,000 from the Scripps Howard Foundation, Elon's School of Communications is establishing a free educational initiative — set to launch this fall — to inspire high school students to embark on journalism careers. The Scripps Howard Emerging Journalists Program at Elon (EJP) was officially announced in March and continues Scripps Howard and Elon's collective commitment to advancing equity, diversity and inclusion in the communications industries.

The Elon initiative will engage high school students from North Carolina and surrounding areas, providing hands-on journalism experience virtually and in person.

Through the program's virtual

Lecturer in Journalism Kelly Furnas (far left) oversees the curriculum of the new Scripps Howard Emerging Journalists Program at Elon. Pictured, Furnas teaches his Web and Mobile Communications course in August 2020 in a hybrid model, with some students working in person and others remotely.

Exposure component, students will participate in six interactive learning sessions and build foundational journalism skills. The sessions begin in September.

All participants are invited to attend a virtual college fair in spring 2022 featuring communications programs from around the country.

High school juniors who complete the Exposure component can apply for a summer on-campus residential learning workshop. This Immersion program is designed for 15 to 20 students and runs from June 20 to July 1, 2022. EJP pays for students' travel,



SCRIPPS  
HOWARD  
FOUNDATION

**EJP**  
EMERGING JOURNALISTS PROGRAM  
AT ELON UNIVERSITY

# Filming Through a Pandemic

Students in the school's largest BFA class ever reflect on their extraordinary experiences

BY KYRA O'CONNOR '23

**T**he seven students who enrolled in the BFA cinema and television arts program during the 2020-21 academic year sought out the experience for many reasons. But they didn't factor



Jesse Newman '21 (center) was one of seven students in this year's BFA cinema and television arts program. His 10-minute film, "Commuters," examines the challenge of work-life balance and the power of human connection.

in the added challenge of creating a thesis project during a pandemic.

Despite the many hurdles brought on by COVID-19, the student filmmakers walked away from their experience with new skills, relationships and a feature film worth celebrating.

The seven students in this year's cohort were part of the program's largest class ever. Next year, the BFA film class is projected to grow in size, and for the first time will feature students working on both BFA thesis projects and Honors Fellows thesis projects.

"It's just a testimony to the type of students that typically

want to be in the BFA program, who are highly motivated, and we got to see that in action this year," said Vic Costello, associate professor of cinema and television arts.

## Starting Over

In the beginning, Tate Becherer '21 and Riley Bradford '21 planned to produce their own solo BFA projects. But as the COVID-19 pandemic stretched on, the pair decided to join forces and collaborate. While the pandemic presented numerous obstacles, Becherer said that in a way, it also inspired their film, "The Life, Death and Resurrection of Fred Irving."

"We wanted to make a film about somebody who was being told by everyone in his life — by the world, essentially — that he couldn't do the thing that he felt like he was destined to do," Becherer said.

One issue the students faced was identifying filming locations while also ensuring the safety of everyone involved in the production. The pandemic made it difficult to manage the film set, but Becherer did identify one unexpected benefit — the COVID protocols made his production team stay better organized.

"It's great that Elon gave us the opportunity this year to actually film, because a lot of film schools did not give their students that chance," Becherer said.

The virtual environment

posed challenges during the film's creation, and it impacted how the cast and crew cultivated relationships.

"Meeting virtually and meeting in-person are just not the same," Bradford said. "We worked really hard to make sure there was still that level of bonding with a team — even if it was virtual."

## Changing for the Better

Once Cameron Wolfslayer '21 decided to major in cinema and television arts, she committed herself to completing the BFA program, which requires studying in Los Angeles for a semester and completing a long-form project. She and Mallory Siegenthaler '21 originally started the brainstorming process for their film during their semester together in Los Angeles, but they fleshed out their characters during quarantine.

"Choosing to work with a partner during the BFA program was the best possible choice I could've made," Wolfslayer said. "It teaches you so much about creative collaboration. No matter what it says next to your name when the credits roll, in the BFA program you both carry equal responsibility for the way the film turns out."

Wolfslayer's and Siegenthaler's film, "To the Roof," undertook two major cuts due to COVID-19 protocols: the number of characters in the movie and



the number of people on set. Despite altering the film's original vision, *Wolfslayer* said the changes benefitted the project overall.

"People wore multiple hats, but it felt as if our crew was more committed to the story we were building for our characters that way," *Wolfslayer* said.

## A First Time for Everything

In a year of many firsts, Jesse Newman '21 has the distinction of being the first student to study abroad in Prague and fulfill the experiential learning requirement of the BFA program. Previously, students were required to study a semester in Los Angeles. The BFA program's decision to count Prague toward the requirement allowed Newman, a California native, to study in Europe instead.

"I had been wanting to do the BFA for the majority of my time at Elon, and then I had come to terms with not doing it,"



Members of the 2021 BFA cohort gather to celebrate before their projects screened at Young Commons on May 3. Pictured (from left) are Associate Professor Doug Kass, Luke Valdes-Rodriguez, Tate Becherer, Riley Bradford, Tyler Chavez, Mallory Siegenthaler, Jesse Newman and Cameron *Wolfslayer*. (Below right) A behind-the-scenes look at "To the Roof," Mallory Siegenthaler's and Cameron *Wolfslayer*'s project exploring a longtime friendship tested by a disagreement.

Newman said. "Going forward, studying in Prague is going to be accepted, which is an incredible experience."

Newman's film, "Commuters," highlights a female lead character whose car breaks down, so she carpools with a co-worker. Because of the pandemic, he rewrote the script to keep his film outdoors. All scenes, except those shot inside a vehicle, were held outside to ensure the safety and comfortability of the cast and crew.

## Choosing the Right Collaborators

Collaboration is a hallmark

of the BFA experience, which teaches students valuable skills that translate to the entertainment industry. Costello said the BFA program affords students the opportunity to take a deep dive into filmmaking, but it is not a program to be taken on lightly.

"It gives them the opportunity to learn how to work within more diverse teams, learning how to bring people on board that can help to strengthen a project, and represent greater diversity within the projects that are being done," Costello said.

At the end of his project, an actor told Bradford the process reminded him of an old Breton fisherman's prayer: "O God, thy sea is so great and my boat is so small."

"The greatest advice I can give is, whatever time you're making a film, the sea is big. Funding is hard. Writing is hard. Making it is hard. Post-production is hard. Everything is going to be hard; that's part of work," Bradford said. "You just need to make sure that you have the right people in your boat, so that you know when the seas get rough, it's going to be OK."



## THE 2021 BFA PROJECTS

"Commuters"

Creator: Jesse Newman

"Please Fill in All Required Fields"

Creator: Tyler Chavez

"Lookout"

Creator: Luke Valdes-Rodriguez

"To the Roof"

Creators: Mallory Siegenthaler and Cameron *Wolfslayer*

"The Life, Death and Resurrection of Fred Irving"

Creators: Tate Becherer and Riley Bradford

Watch the films at  
[bit.ly/ElonBFA2021](http://bit.ly/ElonBFA2021)



Jesse Newman '21 rewrote the script of his film, "Commuters," to keep the majority of shooting outdoors because of the pandemic.





J McMerty (left), director of the Elon in LA program, leads a class discussion in early June in the university's new workspace at Second Home in Hollywood.

# In the heart of **HOLLYWOOD**

With a brand-new collaborative workspace and a record number of student participants, the Elon in LA program is stronger than ever after the pandemic.

BY KYRA O'CONNOR '23

**A**fter a year of physical distancing, closed storefronts and masks, Los Angeles is beginning to open its doors again, and Elon University students have wasted no time heading back to the entertainment capital of the world.

With 60 students studying in Los Angeles in summer 2021 and a brand-new collaborative workspace, "Elon in LA 2.0" — as Program Director J McMerty '00 branded it — got off to a great start.

## **Settling into Second Home**

Elon in LA now has a permanent space, fulfilling a longstanding dream for McMerty. During the past year, the Study USA program relocated to Second Home, an elaborate coworking space in Hollywood that provides Elon students, alumni, faculty and friends access to a flexible work area

*“I’ve always dreamed of having a space where alumni and students can engage in an informal way.”* – J McMerty

with private and communal spaces, a restaurant and plenty of room outdoors to enjoy the Southern California weather.

For McMerty, it’s not just the new digs and the energy of LA opening back up that he is excited for. Instead, it is the resources that students and alumni alike have access to now, a welcome sight after a difficult and uncertain year in the entertainment industry. The Elon in LA program did not host students in summer 2020 due to the pandemic.

“I’ve always dreamed of having a space where alumni and students can engage in an informal way,” McMerty said. “It’s going to accelerate everything we do.”

McMerty’s vision became a

reality in summer 2021, with students utilizing the Second Home space while studying and conducting remote internships. At other times, students used the collaborative space to socialize or connect with visiting alumni and working professionals.

The facility has meeting rooms, study rooms and communal spaces, perfect for making industry connections or working on new projects. Students can also rent equipment, similar to the Gear Room on campus.

“It helps us build community,” McMerty said. “Sometimes it’s really difficult 2,500 miles from campus.”

Rachel Raimist, academic director of the Elon in LA

program, travels around the country as an episodic television director, but she loves that LA is her home base. Raimist stepped into her role in December (see sidebar) and has enjoyed instructing and mentoring students in LA, and allowing them to tag along with her, virtually, to set.

Because many TV sets and industry jobs do not have physical office spaces, Raimist said Second Home is a place for students to build community and forge relationships while having access to a productive work environment, high-speed internet and a robust network of creative individuals.

## Interning in Los Angeles

Interning in Los Angeles in summer 2021 was not initially in Connor Thomas’ plan. The rising junior originally wanted to spend the spring semester in the program, but just before the deadline, Thomas changed course, and he’s glad he did.

The cinema and television arts major landed an internship in product marketing at Aputure, a cinema lighting company. In his role, Thomas spent four days a week working in person on creative projects, such as taking product photography or developing marketing campaigns and commercials. Thomas said he has used Aputure lights in his own work, which drew him to

Sam Porozok '22, a cinema and television arts major, enjoys an outdoor space at Second Home during summer 2021.



## Elon in LA welcomes Rachel Raimist

An award-winning filmmaker and professor, Rachel Raimist was named the academic director of the Elon in Los Angeles program in December. In the new position, Raimist coordinates the academic offerings in the Los Angeles program and provides oversight on LA-based internships in partnership with J McMerty, who directs the program.

Raimist is widely known for “Nobody Knows My Name,” the first documentary about women in hip-hop distributed by Women Make Movies. Additionally, she was tapped by renowned filmmaker Ava DuVernay to direct “Queen Sugar” for the Oprah Winfrey Network. Since then, she has served in director roles for “Nancy Drew” and “Roswell, New Mexico” for The CW. Raimist also serves on the leadership team of the Latino Committee and the Women’s Steering Committee of the Directors Guild of America.

Raimist has previously collaborated with WEEE (Women of the Elon Entertainment Empire) and will help facilitate a new program for under-represented communities in entertainment.

“Our program is a bridge between campus and the entertainment industry, from the center of it all in Hollywood,” she said. “We’ve expanded our footprint and have many ideas to grow the program.”





*“Having a program where students can get to know themselves, get to know the industry better, where they can see industry professionals, talk to them in one-on-one and small-group conversations, and really get a sense of they have the job that maybe I want in the future, is really incredible.” – Rachel Raimist*



With the Elon in LA program interrupted last year by the COVID-19 pandemic, 60 Elon students headed west to study and intern this summer.

apply for the internship.

“The best part about this internship is that ... I’m helping people learn about lighting, and at the same time I’m learning as well,” Thomas said.

Expanding her knowledge base was one of Jordan Young’s favorite aspects of her internship experience in LA. The rising senior interned with CBS and the Television Academy’s prestigious “Star Trek” Command Training Program, a nationwide

initiative that champions the core values of inclusion, access and opportunity.

The focus of the program aligns with Young’s Honors Fellow research, a process she was excited to dive into during her time in Los Angeles. Young is conducting a critical analysis of racial representation in children’s television programming and said that “Star Trek” interested her because it is a science fiction program that works to depict

both racial representation and various species unique to its universe.

“It’s interesting to see how we as storytellers, as filmmakers, have evolved, and how we interpret things now versus how we wanted to interpret things then,” Young said. “To see how we address diversity and representation in storytelling is so interesting.”

## Only in LA

In addition to internships and taking classes with Elon faculty, students regularly participate in weekend excursions and opportunities only available in LA, such as networking with Netflix executives or taking in a Dodgers game. Raimist coordinated a studio visit for acting majors and the students learned about English dubbing — when English-speaking actors conduct voicework for films in another language. It is these experiential learning opportunities that make an Elon in LA experience so valuable.

“Second Home is right in the heart of Hollywood, which provides so many opportunities for our students and alumni,” Raimist said.

The benefit of students networking and building authentic relationships with alumni can’t be overstated. In an industry where employers look for more than just hard skills, Raimist said connecting with Elon graduates allows students to learn about the industry and themselves. This will set Elon students apart when applying for jobs.

“Having a program where students can get to know themselves, get to know the industry better, where they can see industry professionals, talk to them in one-on-one and small-group conversations, and really get a sense of they have the job that maybe I want in the future, is really incredible,” Raimist said. “That’s what I’m excited about — educating students who are excited and ready for industry.”



The Second Home facility has meeting rooms, study rooms and communal spaces.



# ElonComm hosts AEJMC Southeast Colloquium

The School of Communications hosted the 2021 AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, a three-day virtual event in March featuring roundtable discussions, research panels and papers and presentations. This year's colloquium theme centered on mentorship.

The conference kicked off with Nikole Hannah-Jones, founder of The 1619 Project, Pulitzer Prize winner and New York Times Magazine reporter. In a discussion moderated by Dean Rochelle Ford, Interactive Media graduate student Dion Cummings G'21 and undergraduate journalism student Maeve Ashbrook '21, Hannah-Jones spoke about the importance of mentorship and her journalistic career covering race through a variety of topics.

"I would not be where I am without mentors and coaches," Hannah-Jones said. "I try to live my life understanding that people opened doors for me and it's my obligation to do the same."

The oldest and most successful regional mass communication meeting, the Southeast Colloquium often gives students their first crack at presenting their scholarly



New York Times Magazine staff writer Nikole Hannah-Jones (bottom left) took questions on March 18 at the 2021 AEJMC Southeast Colloquium from Dion Cummings G'21 (top left), Maeve Ashbrook '21 (top right) and Communications Dean Rochelle Ford.

research at an academic conference. The colloquium featured more than a half-dozen Elon presentations, including Interactive Media student Meg Boericke '20 G'21. Her research on Twitch investigates how to combine the video-sharing platform's interactivity with streaming norms established by the site's community to improve streamers' practices.

Associate Dean Kenn Gaither served as the colloquium's director and was supported by Program Assistant Genevieve Barnes and Samantha Haseley '21.

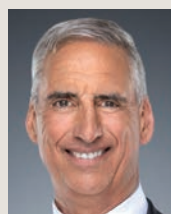
## CREATIVITY ON DISPLAY

As part of the colloquium, Elon students captured 12 awards — and \$275 in cash prizes — in the event's Creative Contest, a competition with entries from across the country. Among the student winners were Steph Brendel '20, Rachel Cifarelli '21 and Catherine Nester '22, earning second-place finishes for their respective entries. Kaitlyn Merritt '22 snagged a third-place award, and Nester also collected three honorable mentions. Associate Professor Ben Hannam earned three awards in the faculty competition, including first place in the Publication and Editorial Design category.

# Symposium addresses college athletics' recent power shift



Headlined by a one-on-one conversation with former top NCAA executive and West Virginia Athletic Director Oliver Luck, April's Sport Management Symposium examined the ongoing power shift in college athletics.



Considering the changes to the sports landscape — such as the NCAA's new one-time transfer rule and student-athletes now allowed to sell their name, image and likeness (NIL) rights — the annual symposium adopted the theme of "Perspectives at Play in College Athletics," inviting prominent individuals in collegiate sports to discuss today's most pressing matters.

Luck addressed these topics during his

conversation with Assistant Professor Bill Squadron and provided historical perspective on what the adjustments mean for universities, coaches and players. The symposium also featured panel discussions addressing the NIL debate and the discrepancies between men's and women's athletics.

Four current student-athletes shared their perspectives and opinions during the closing panel, and the group agreed that mental health is a topic that deserves greater attention. The student panelists, including Elon volleyball player and sport management major Natalie Cummins '21, largely commended their respective universities for promoting mental health initiatives, including access to sports psychologists, but stressed that more should be done.

To watch the full symposium, visit [bit.ly/2021ElonSymposium](https://bit.ly/2021ElonSymposium).

Assistant Professor Bill Squadron (top) and Oliver Luck, former top NCAA executive and West Virginia athletic director, kicked off the April 28 Sport Management Symposium.

# Special Initiatives

## Supporting local news

**T**he NC Local News Workshop's first year concluded with the appointment of Shannan Bowen as the initiative's new executive director in June. Previously the director of product engagement at McClatchy, Bowen leads the workshop's objectives to better inform North Carolina residents on public affairs and civic issues, while supporting and connecting the state's news organizations.

Elon alumnus Anton L. Delgado '20 was part of the workshop's inaugural cohort and covered Black Lives Matter protests and Juneteenth celebrations in several cities.



Shannan Bowen

Bowen arrives well versed in North Carolina's media landscape, having started her professional career as a reporter at the Wilmington StarNews, in addition to her recent work for

McClatchy. She succeeds the workshop's founding executive director, Melanie Sill, who has led the initiative since its June 2020 launch. Bowen said Sill's leadership and vision during the workshop's first year laid the groundwork for the organization's future success.

"I believe that local news is vital for community development, and I envision a North Carolina where communities have the news and information they need to become active participants in shaping the future of our state," Bowen said. "And to achieve this, that means helping our existing and future news organizations forge deeper connections to their communities and create transformative approaches to serving them."

Having participated in the workshop's inaugural year of programming, Bowen has a firm understanding of the initiatives' objectives and the challenges North Carolina news outlets face. Bowen said those experiences — particularly the workshop's virtual NC Local News Summit — left her energized and optimistic about future collaborations. Titled "The Power of Many," the January summit convened more than 150 news innovators from across the state.

Funded by the NC Local News Lab Fund at the NC Community Foundation, the statewide initiative is housed at Elon University's School of Communications. To learn more, visit [ncnewsworks.org](https://ncnewsworks.org).

### THE WORKSHOP'S IMPACT

- The workshop established the NC Media Equity Project in partnership with six predominantly White media organizations, creating a learning cohort and support network to advance equity for Black, indigenous and people of color, LGBTQ+ groups and other people who have been marginalized in newsrooms and in media coverage.
- The workshop's NC Local News Intern Corps launched as a capacity-builder for local community information in summer 2020, with 30 North Carolina newsrooms picking up coverage from the four-reporter pool and its professional editor.
- The workshop's NC Local weekly email newsletter, produced by veteran journalist Eric Frederick, reaches a highly engaged and steadily growing audience of 700-plus stakeholders, most in North Carolina. Now in its fourth year, NC Local connects readers to the local news discussion on a regional and national scale.

## Promoting the freedom of information

**T**he North Carolina Open Government Coalition focused on enhancing citizen outreach and community impact during 2020-21, building relationships with North Carolina journalists and government officials who are often at odds on freedom of information issues.

The coalition continued its tradition of high-impact, community-focused





The North Carolina Open Government Coalition awarded the 2021 Sunshine Award for Journalism to Lucille Sherman, a politics reporter for the Raleigh News & Observer, for her reporting on a provision buried in a 17-page bill that could have made many death investigation records confidential in North Carolina.

work by supporting the Code for America's Open Raleigh Brigade on the development of a new campaign finance data tool and training program to track political spending in North Carolina elections. It has already helped peel back the curtain on political spending in the state.

The coalition welcomed more than 150 journalists, lawyers, students and engaged citizens to participate in N.C. Sunshine Week 2021. Three virtual events highlighted the week, starting with a project presentation on obtaining records of deaths in police custody. A panel discussion followed on the best practices for equitable and inclusive open meetings and public records practice by government officials. Lastly, Frank LoMonte, a freedom of information expert from the University of Florida, led a workshop on freedom of information and public accountability in higher education.

In June 2021, NCOGC partnered with a coalition of journalists, professors and nonprofits on a public records project focused on improving the public understanding of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's mishandling of acclaimed journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones' hiring as the Knight Chair in Race and Investigative Reporting at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. The project will use the public information site MuckRock to engage higher education reporters and citizens

in collaborative public records requests and reporting on issues of university governance at the state's flagship university.

During the past year, the Sunshine Center fielded more than 110 inquiries from citizens and journalists dealing with public records and open meetings issues. Coalition representatives gave more than 20 on-the-record interviews about open government issues and continued to provide guidance on transparency issues related to COVID-19 and the disclosure of police body camera recordings.

In the fall, the coalition welcomed Cherie Speller (adviser, The East Carolinian, East Carolina University), Ashley Talley (enterprise executive producer, WRAL) and Amanda Martin (partner, Stevens Martin Vaughn & Tadych) to the board. The new board members will serve a three-year, renewable term.

## Canvassing tech experts on the future of AI and the internet

**D**uring the 2020-21 academic year, the Imagining the Internet Center published a series of projects analyzing the evolution of digital communications.

In late December, the center unveiled its "Digital Life 2020" report exploring past predictions from experts about the evolution of networked technology and suggesting what may lie ahead.

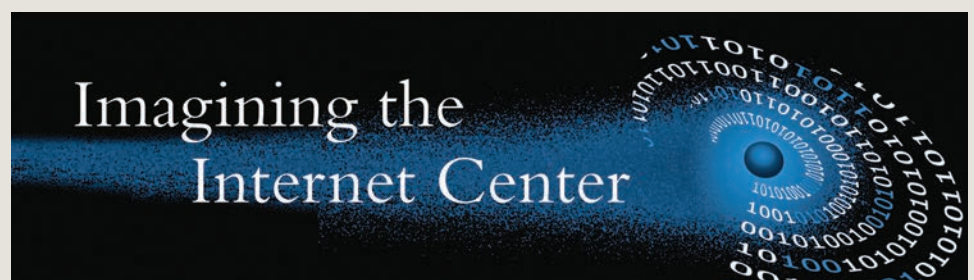
Researchers examined 12 "Future of the Internet" canvassings of leading technology experts by Imagining the Internet and the Pew Research Center between 2005 and 2011.

A new report titled "The New Normal in 2025" published two months later featured a plurality of experts predicting that sweeping societal change will make life mostly worse for most people. Experts were pessimistic and assumed that greater inequality, rising authoritarianism and rampant misinformation will take greater hold in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

A third report titled "The Future of Ethical AI Design" was released in June and addressed concerns about artificial intelligence. A majority of technology experts worry that the evolution of artificial intelligence by 2030 will continue to be primarily focused on optimizing profits and social control.

All three reports were coauthored by Professor Janna Anderson, director of the Imagining the Internet Center, and Lee Rainie, director of internet and technology research at Pew. Emily A. Vogels, a research associate at Pew, was also a co-author on the "Digital Life 2020" report.

Lastly, 2020 Areté Medallion honoree Jimmy Wales delivered the university's 2021 Baird Lecture virtually on April 8. A leading technology futurist, Wales helped build Wikipedia to become the fifth-most popular website worldwide and was named one of TIME's "100 Most Influential People." The center's Areté Medallion was established to recognize innovators, change agents and thought leaders who have dedicated their lives to initiating and sustaining significant contributions for global good.



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

## JULY

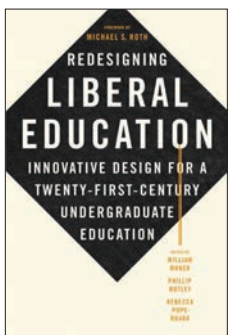
**Grace Terry '21**, a communication design and international business double major, was honored with the Best Designer in the South Award in the Society of Professional Journalists' Green Eyeshade Awards competition.

**Lumiere Rostick '20** spent three summers as a Fellow for the Emma Bowen Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a more diverse media and tech industry. The Communications Fellow was named the foundation's Outstanding Student of the Year, in a cohort of 84 college seniors.

ElonComm hosted two diversity, equity and inclusion town halls for alumni and students on July 29 and 30. **Dean Rochelle Ford** led a discussion about the school's recent diversity assessment and diversity and inclusion report and hosted an open forum to listen to ideas, questions and concerns.

**Amanda Willingham '21**, a strategic communications and international and global studies double major, earned one of 20 coveted spots in the 2020 American Advertising Federation's Vance and Betty Lee Stickell Student Internship Program.

Assistant Professor **Alex Luchsinger's** film, "First Chances," was selected for the 2020 Harlem International Film Festival. The 25-minute documentary highlights a California man's entrepreneurial journey after spending nearly nine years in some of the state's most notorious prisons. Additionally, the film captured an Award of Excellence at the 2020 BEA Festival of Media Arts.



"Redesigning Liberal Education: Innovative Design for a Twenty-First-Century Undergraduate Education," a book edited by Associate Professor **Phillip Motley**, Assistant Professor **William Moner** and collab-

orator **Rebecca Pope-Ruark**, provides case studies of innovation at several institutions, with notable contributions from Elon faculty, staff and administrators.

## AUGUST

Thirteen ElonComm faculty members participated in the national convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC), held virtually in August. A team of Interactive Media students, led by Associate Professor **Amanda Sturgill**, won first place in the convention's Best of Digital Competition, Category III — Website (Small School) for a multi-language website they created following a visit to the village of Longo Mai in Costa Rica.

Lecturer **Ryan Witt** served as director of photography on Vox's project highlighting water pollution in the Tar Heel state. The 12-minute video project, titled "How 'forever chemicals' polluted America's water," focused on the Cape Fear River Basin, a massive water system from 29 different counties that provides drinking water for millions before eventually emptying into the Atlantic Ocean near Wilmington.



Communication design major **Mikayla Ford '22** was named a recipient of a 2020 LAGRANT Foundation scholarship, which supports ethnic minority communications students. She is the School of Communications' seventh LAGRANT scholar in the past four years.

As part of her 2020 Carnegie-Knight News21 Fellowship, **Victoria Traxler '20** reported on racial disparities, facility conditions and lack of data in the juvenile justice system. The journalism and international and global studies double major contributed two co-reported articles to the fellowship's final multimedia project, "Kids Imprisoned."

Twenty-one ElonComm students and alumni completed the **PR Council's Agency-Ready Certificate Program**, a pilot program created in summer 2020 to help college students and recent graduates prepare to enter the industry.



Published by Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Associate Professor **Amanda Sturgill's** book, "Detecting Deception: Tools to Fight Fake News," seeks to equip journalism students and members of the public with the tools

to spot the broad range of ways newsmakers may mislead, distract or outright manipulate audiences.

Journalism majors **Payton Byrnes '21** and **Julianne Quinn '22** secured paid internships at the Burlington Times-News with funding from the Google News Initiative's Journalism Emergency Relief Fund (JERF) and the estate of longtime Times-News editor Don Bolden. Elon News Network was one of more than 1,600 U.S. publishers to receive funding from JERF, which supports production of original journalism in local communities amid COVID-19.

## SEPTEMBER

Nearly 50 students, alumnae and faculty joined the **Women of the Elon Entertainment Empire's** virtual event "Breaking the Ice," a discussion exploring ways that the Elon community can help women of color overcome biases in the entertainment industry, as well as how to practice authentic allyship.





WEEE's "Breaking the Ice" discussion

A few days before FreshTV's weekly meeting in late September, Assistant Professor **J McMerty '00** put out a call on social media for program alumni to attend the initiative's next gathering. Seven alumni joined the Zoom meeting to engage with the first-year students, and three other Elon graduates provided short, pre-recorded videos that were shared with attendees.



Published by Kendall Hunt, Professor **Anthony Hatcher's** book, "Media Writing in the Digital Age," is tailor-made for the school's Media Writing course and similar introductory media writing classes. The book was a collaborative effort with his ElonComm colleagues, with chapters by Professor **Julie C. Lellis**, Associate Professor **Doug Kass** and Assistant Professor **Brooks Fuller**.

## OCTOBER

Several faculty, staff and alumni led sessions and helped organize the North Carolina Scholastic Media Association's fall regional high school journalism workshop, held virtually on Oct. 15 and attended by more than 150 high school students and advisers from across the state. Director of Student Engagement and Alumni Affairs **Colin Donohue '05**, Lecturer **Kelly Furnas** and Communications Manager **Tommy Kopetskie** helped coordinate Elon's contributions, scheduling nine of the 21 educational sessions.

**Andrew Scarlata '19**, player education and cultural development coordinator for the Washington Nationals, provided an insightful keynote address at the **Department of Sport Management's fall internship forum**, held virtually on Oct. 19. Nearly 70 sport management majors listened to Scarlata's keynote on Zoom, outlining his own time at Elon and his career path.



Seven alumni joined FreshTV's weekly meeting in September to engage with first-year students.

**Cornelius Muller '93** led an Oct. 20 **Unity in Communications** conversation, discussing his inspiration and the challenges he overcame to start his North Carolina-based film company. Muller owns and operates Cornelius Muller Productions LLC, producing films such as "Brother's Keeper," "Find a Way" and "Sacred Hearts."

Several Elon students were recognized with national honors from the Associated College Press and College Media Association during their joint virtual **National College Media Convention**. Among the organizational honors, The Pendulum was named a finalist for a Newspaper Pacemaker, ENN was named an Online Pacemaker finalist and Colonnades was honored as a Literary Magazine Pacemaker finalist.

Journalism major **Emery Eisner '22** was named a recipient of the Pulitzer Center's Climate Science Reporting Fellowship, a grant that allowed her to research the climate injustice occurring in Robeson County. One of about 150 majority-minority counties in the U.S., Robeson County was devastated by hurricanes in 2016 and 2018.

## NOVEMBER

Associate Professor **Hal Walker's** Event Management Service Learning class coordinated a two-day golf event to benefit Kopper Top Life Learning Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization that specializes in using therapeutic horseback riding and other therapies for individuals with or without disabilities. In total, the service-learning class raised more than \$4,500 for Kopper Top.

Assistant Professor **Alex Luchsinger**, an experienced field reporter, spent several days

broadcasting breaking news on the 2020 presidential election from Washington, D.C., and Delaware for EuroNews, a France-based television news network.

**Jack Norcross '21**, news director at Elon News Network, was named the D. Haney Howell Student Journalist of the Year by the Radio Television Digital News Association of the Carolinas. The award, which recognizes the top student journalist in North Carolina and South Carolina, was presented at the virtual 2020 RTDNAC Convention. Additionally, **Liam Collins '20** won first place in Best Student News Reporting for his series on the opioid epidemic.

Assistant Professor **Ahmed Al Fadaam** was one of three university community members to participate in an international Zoom conference honoring the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Working with the Al Masala Art Group, the conference organizers requested that Al Fadaam help organize a digital art exhibit for the conference and serve as a judge.

**Javik Blake '23**, a journalism major and Communications Fellow, was one of three recipients of the Broadcast Education Association's Abe Voron Scholarship, recognizing students pursuing a career in radio.

PAN Communications, a leading integrated marketing and PR firm, invited ElonComm to participate in its academic mentorship network, the **PAN Portal Network**. Elon was one of just four institutions to partake in the career development initiative, which aimed to provide tangible advice and résumé support to strategic communications majors before graduation.

# THE YEAR IN REVIEW



Alex Luchsinger reports on location for EuroNews.

**Amanda Willingham '21** was one of 50 students nationwide selected to participate in the American Advertising Federation's Most Promising Multicultural Students program. For four days, the nation's top multicultural college seniors met virtually to work, network and build their personal brand with help from advertising, marketing and media professionals.

Professor **Kenn Gaither** was named to The Plank Center for

Leadership in Public Relations Board of Advisors. Based at the University of Alabama, The Plank Center provides resources, content and leadership in the public relations industry.

Representatives from the NBA, NFL, MLB, ACC and Minor League Baseball participated in the **Elon Sport Careers Diversity Forum**, discussing their experiences in the sports industry and highlighting the value of a diverse work force. The Jan. 19 event was hosted by the Department of Sport Management in coordination with the Student Professional Development Center and the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education.

## FEBRUARY

In collaboration with journalist Martin Markovits, Assistant Professor **Alex Luchsinger** traveled to Mexico in December to highlight two female asylum seekers attempting to enter the U.S. and the additional hurdles they faced because of the COVID-19 pandemic. His news coverage appeared on NBC affiliates and their online platforms throughout the country in February.

Lecturer **Hal Vincent** collaborated with two co-authors to publish the second edition of the "Brand Builder Workbook: Tools to Building Winning Campaigns," a book and accompanying website that provide the guidance, skills and understanding to build businesses and brands.

Associate Professor **Denise Hill** was elected board chair of

the Diversity Action Alliance, a cross-industry coalition of public relations executives, educators and principals who are committed to diversity, equity and inclusion action. As board chair, Hill leads a group of 28 industry leaders, including Elon colleagues **Dean Rochelle Ford** and Professor **Kenn Gaither**.

**Colonnades Literary and Art Journal**, **Elon News Network** and **Phi Psi Cli year-book** won Best of Show awards Feb. 28 from the North Carolina College Media Association. Nearly two dozen students were honored in the individual categories as well. The awards were presented at the association's virtual conference hosted by William Peace University.

## MARCH

ElonComm students and **Elon News Network** earned a total of 13 accolades in the Broadcast Education Association's 2021 Festival of Media Arts, a digital media and broadcast competition for faculty and students. The "60 Minutes" Master Class, taught by Assistant Professor **Alex Luchsinger**, captured first for its "30 Minutes" entry in the Student News Competition's TV News Magazine Category. Elon News Network's "ELN Morning" show also won the Student News Competition's TV Newscast (3 per week or less) Category for its Sept. 10, 2020, broadcast.

Adam Pawlus, executive director of the National Lesbian & Gay Journalists Association, served as the guest speaker at the **Unity in Communications** event on March 4. During the virtual conversation, Pawlus addressed the history of LGBTQ news coverage, intersectionality in newsrooms and how the organization can support student journalists.

## DECEMBER

Hosted by Cinelon Productions, the university's student-run film production company, the **Cinelon Showcase** screened via livestream 13 original films and projects. The showcase aired on School of Communications OTT apps and the Cinelon Facebook page.

**Dean Rochelle Ford** was honored with the Makovsky Excellence in Mentoring Award as part of a PRSA-NY virtual awards program and panel event. The organization's top mentorship award is presented to individuals who lead, guide and selflessly counsel and stimulate the careers of PR professionals.

**Elon Sports Vision** produced the Dec. 19 broadcast of the Elon men's basketball game on WMYV My48, a Greensboro-based television station serving the Piedmont Triad region. The home matchup with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro was the student organization's first live production to be featured on a linear broadcast. Alumnus **Taylor Durham '96** was the broadcast's play-by-play announcer, with journalism major **Tellier Lundquist '22** providing color commentary.

## JANUARY

Assistant Professor **Young Do Kim** published a peer-reviewed article in the *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, one of the world's leading journals for the sports marketing industry. Titled "Developing a sport fan equity index," the co-authored article sought to quantify the overall asset value of a sport fan.



Isabella Seman '21 introduces the lead segment for the fall 2020 "30 Minutes" episode, produced by the School of Communications' "60 Minutes" Master Class.



**Lily Peskin '21** was named a finalist for the PRWeek Outstanding Student Award. For her final competition entry, she created a sustainable campaign for a virtual New York Fashion Week. Elon students have been named finalists for the award six times since 2016.

Associate Professor **Dan Haygood** presented his research on the copywriting career of Margaret Fishback, the highest-earning woman copywriter in New York during the 1930s and 1940s, during the American Academy of Advertising's annual conference.

## APRIL

Journalism major **Kyra O'Connor '23** was named a member of the inaugural Student Trustee Council of the Society of Professional Journalists. The group consists of nine students from across the country and will provide feedback, insights and recommendations on improving the SPJ campus chapters and general student experience.

**Marjorie Anne Foster '20**, a Multifaith Scholar, earned a fifth-place finish in the Multimedia Innovative Storytelling Competition in this year's Hearst Journalism Awards for her website "Meeting Muslims." Foster's website incorporated videos of Muslim students talking about their interests and achievements, illustrating Muslims as ordinary people who care deeply about family and have many pursuits and passions.

**Ashley LaPlaca '20**, a psychology major who minored in sport management and coaching, and Assistant Professor **Young Do Kim** published their recent research, "Marketing and communicating sustainability through college athletics: The effects of pro-environmental initiatives on the belief-attitude-intention hierarchy," in the "Journal of Marketing for Higher Education."

**Daija Rion '23** and **Ariana Wilson '23** received 2021 LAGRANT Foundation scholarships, which support ethnically diverse college and university students interested in the fields of advertising, marketing and public relations. In the past five years, ElonComm students have secured nine such scholarships.

Assistant Professor **Kathleen Stansberry** authored an article titled "The Financial Drain of Misinformation," published by PRSA. The article was developed for PRSA's new



Journalism and religious studies double major Marjorie Anne Foster '20 speaks to two members of the Burlington Masjid during the Muslimmedia event in 2019.

Voices4Everyone initiative, an online resource that addresses misinformation/disinformation, DEI, civility and civic engagement.

"Regulars," a documentary film produced by **Emma Kopkowski '20**, was screened during the 2021 RiverRun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem. The 13-minute project, which the alumna began filming in fall 2019, introduces audiences to the customers who frequent Jake's, a 24-hour diner in Greensboro.

**Natalie Green '21**, who was instrumental in the formation and leadership of the school's **Unity in Communications** initiative, earned national recognition for her contributions to the Elon community at the 2021 CSR & Diversity Virtual Awards Gala presented by PRNEWS. The strategic communications and sociology double major received the event's Undergraduate Student of the Year Award for her efforts to support students of color and LGBTQ individuals.



Interactive Media student Ben Johnson G'21 looks on as Meg Boerick G'21 (left) and Yasmeen Grandison G'21 discuss their group's project.

## MAY

**Maggie Cornejo '21** was one of three members of the university's Class of 2021 to be selected to teach English overseas or conduct research abroad through the Fulbright U.S. Student Program. The strategic communications and Spanish double major, who is a Communications Fellow and LAGRANT Foundation Scholar, will teach English in Spain.

The **Interactive Media graduate program** showcased its projects for the public good during a May 14 presentation in Turner Theatre. Traditionally, the graduate students travel internationally to conduct a monthlong project. Due to COVID-19, the program pivoted this spring to assist three North Carolina-based organizations — HeARToscope, Terra Cotta Heritage Foundation and the African American Cultural Arts and History Center.

## JUNE

Associate Professor **David Bockino** published three articles in recent months examining textbook inaccuracies, college rankings, and journalism and mass communication education in Pakistan. As part of his article, "A Textbook Example: Fact-checking a Popular Introductory Mass Communication Text," Bockino addresses the notable errors he uncovered in the "Converging Media" textbook.

**Miranda Ferrante '23**, a journalism and communication design double major, was awarded a \$3,000 summer grant through the Scripps Howard Foundation. She spent the summer in her home county of Westchester, New York, interning with Westchester Magazine, a website and monthly lifestyle publication.

# Saying farewell, thank you



Don Grady

Associate Dean Don Grady, Professor David Copeland and Associate Professor John Doorley concluded their impactful tenures during the 2020-21 academic year.

For more than three decades, Grady's leadership, steady hand and baritone voice were synonymous with the university's communications programs and excellence. Having arrived on campus 15 years before the school was founded, the longtime professor and administrator was pivotal in the development of Elon's nationally renowned communications

school. But in December, the one-time broadcaster officially signed off.

"Don Grady is one of the giants who helped transform Elon into what it is today," Founding Dean Paul Parsons said. "During the two decades I worked alongside him, he was central to making the School of Communications great through administrative leadership, national accreditation, his student-centeredness, and being a fount of wisdom and integrity."

Copeland, who retired in May, was Elon's A.J. Fletcher Professor and professor of communications. In 2017, he was named the university's sixth Distinguished University Professor, recognizing his career achievements that have inspired the university community.



John Doorley

A prolific media historian and author, Copeland served as founding director of the Interactive Media master's program. After overseeing the program's development for more than a decade, he was succeeded by Associate Professor Derek Lackaff in June 2020.

"David Copeland led Interactive Media from just a dream of the School of Communications to being a program that has positively and profoundly impacted hundreds of lives," Lackaff said. "He built a culture of collegiality and enthusiasm among the students, faculty and staff, and guided us through significant technological and social shifts over the past decade."

Doorley arrived on campus in fall 2015. A long-time Merck & Co. executive and New York University professor, he helped facilitate the corporate communications emphasis of Elon's M.S. in Management degree.

Doorley is widely known for his contributions co-authoring "Reputation Management," the well-regarded how-to PR guide for students and professors. During his tenure, Doorley mentored six finalists in PRWeek's Outstanding Student Award competition.



David Copeland





TONY WEAVER



NAEEMAH CLARK



BEN HANNAM



VIC COSTELLO

## ElonComm assigns new administrative roles

**F**or more than 15 years, Professor Tony Weaver has been a constant presence at Elon University, producing a curriculum vitae built around thoughtful research, a commitment to classroom instruction and supporting student and faculty success. In January, Weaver took on new responsibilities as the School of Communications' associate dean for undergraduate affairs and assessment.

The one-time chair of the Department of Sport Management

(from 2015 to 2020) helps guide the undergraduate academic programs in collaboration with department chairs, program directors and faculty members. His responsibilities include course scheduling, curriculum changes, faculty hires, academic advising and core course requirements.

"Tony has a tremendous record of teaching excellence, collaborative research and effective leadership that make him an ideal fit for the position," Dean Rochelle Ford said. "While he has been synonymous with our Department

of Sport Management during his tenure at Elon, we are excited to have him bring his wisdom, insight and passion to all of the school's academic programs and majors."

The School of Communications made several other administrative changes in advance of the 2021-22 academic year. Professor Naeemah Clark has been named chair of the Department of Cinema and Television Arts and Associate Professor Ben Hannam was appointed chair of the Department of Communication Design. Additionally, Associate Professor Vic Costello

will serve as the new director of the communications core and minor. All three leadership positions became effective June 1.

"This is a wonderful group of educators and scholars, who bring an important blend of teaching and professional experience to their respective positions," Ford said. "Naeemah, Ben and Vic have been visible and invaluable members of the school. Their perspectives, inclusive leadership and care will lead to greater opportunities for student success, which is at the heart of everything we do."

## University recognizes Clark, Donohue

**P**rofessor Naeemah Clark is just the third faculty member to be named the J. Earl Danieleu Distinguished Professor since the professorship was created by the board of trustees in 1997 to honor the university's sixth president. It is awarded to an outstanding professor in any field.

Clark has been a member of the Elon faculty since 2009 and was promoted to full professor in 2019. During her time at Elon, Clark has distinguished herself as a teacher-scholar-mentor.

"I'm so proud to be named the Danieleu Distinguished Professor," Clark said. "It was clear that Dr. Danieleu found joy inside and outside of the classroom. I hope that I have exhibited that same enthusiasm through the work I've done at Elon around media representations and inclusive communities."

With a "laser focus" on student growth and development, Colin Donohue '05, director of student engagement and special projects and instructor in journalism, has been described as "the epitome of a mentor," with his students and peers frequently calling him an inspiration in their lives and careers. At the university's annual awards program, Donohue was the first person to be honored with the Steven and Patricia House Excellence in Mentoring Award.

"Mentorship is not simply a box he checks or a to-do list item," Donohue's nominator wrote. "Mentorship runs through his veins and drives him to work harder each day."



DANIEL HAYGOOD



YOUNG DO KIM



HAL VINCENT

### PROMOTIONS AND TENURE

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

- **Daniel Haygood**, promoted to professor
- **Young Do Kim**, promoted to associate professor
- **Hal Vincent**, promoted to senior lecturer



REBECCA BAGLEY



SOWJANYA KUDVA

### NEW FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS

- **Rebecca Bagley**, assistant professor of communication design
- **Sowjanya Kudva**, assistant professor of cinema and television arts

### SCHOOL AWARDS

Faculty and staff members were recognized during the School of Communications awards ceremony on May 6 in Turner Theatre:



Associate Professor Qian Xu received the Excellence in Teaching Award



Associate Professor Amanda Sturgill received the Excellence in Scholarship Award



Lecturer Staci Saltz received the Excellence in Leadership Award



Director of Technology, Operations and Multimedia Projects Bryan Baker received the Outstanding Staff Member Award

# BY THE NUMBERS

## INTERNSHIPS

Here is a closer look at the internship process in the School of Communications during the 2020-21 academic year:

**287** Internships completed

**116** Number of internships in North Carolina; followed by New York (46), California (30) and Massachusetts (21)

**2** International internships (Italy and South Africa)

**90%** Percentage of employers who would recommend their student intern for a permanent position in organization

**93%** Percentage of students who said they "strongly agree" or "agree" that the internship helped assess their strengths

*"Charlie is very thoughtful and he has several out-of-the-box solutions to problems that I would not have even considered. His ability to graphically illustrate certain concepts and clearly explain data is really exceptional."*

- Eric Dyer, Tamboran Resources Limited; supervised Charles Cunningham '20



Sophia Ortiz '21, a cinema and television arts major and Communications Fellow, was selected as a Verizon Adfellow this spring. Launched in 2015 by Verizon, Adfellows is the first and only industry fellowship offering young, diverse marketers and career changers fully integrated client/agency paid experience over eight months.



## OUTSTANDING ALUMNA AWARD

Nneka Enurah '11, head of development and partnerships for FBE, also known as Fine Brothers Entertainment, was recognized as the School of Communications' alumna of the year during a virtual ceremony in October. More than 30 friends, faculty and staff members joined President Connie Ledoux Book and J McMerty '00, director of the Elon in LA program, to celebrate the alumna's impressive young career. Enurah, who graduated with a degree in media arts and entertainment, leads FBE's branded and premium content development and packaging for television and platforms. Prior to that, she was director of digital development and production at Academy Award-winning actress Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine.

## JOB OUTCOMES

### Where's the Class of 2021 headed?

#### Isabelle Allen

Associate account executive, Antenna Group

#### Melissa Beck

Digital public relations intern, Weber Shandwick

#### Dulaney Bernstein

Marketing analyst, Heli

#### Rebecca Betterton

Copywriter, Red Ventures

#### Haley Bookholdt

Recruiter/account manager trainee, Insight Global

#### Megan Boyda

Graduate student, Boston University

#### Riley Bradford

Travel guide writer, Plannet

#### Michaela Bramwell

Account intern, Real Chemistry Global Health Company

#### Halle Brennan

Sales associate, ViacomCBS

#### Lauren Callihan

Social associate, Publicis Health Media

#### Isabella Campione

Communications intern, Weber Shandwick

#### Kristin Chan

Multimedia content coordinator, CCA Global Partners

#### Jocelyn Clendening

Junior publicist, Dunn Pelletier Media

#### Brooke Cohen

Sales associate, New York Jets

#### Maggie Cornejo

Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship, Madrid

#### Maxwell Costello

Graduate student, Domus Academy

#### James DiBiasi

Graduate student, Georgetown University

#### Sydney Dye

Video design intern, The Mundy

#### Michael Ellick

Consumer intern, WE Communications

#### Emily Epstein

Broadcasting/special events associate, New York Mets

#### Sarah Fazli

Account coordinator, Racepoint Global

#### Lexie Flood

Junior account manager, Healthcare Consultancy Group

#### Morgan Flynn

Account executive, Arrive Logistics

#### Amanda Gibson

PR assistant, Jennifer Bett Communications

#### Jack Haley

Audience engagement specialist, Newsweek

#### Malik Harrison

Service-year graduate fellow, Elon University

#### Samantha Haseley

Graduate student, American University

#### Nicole Hawley

Assistant account executive, WHITE64

#### Erin Healey

Client solutions associate, GLG

#### Calissa Holder

Communications manager, RLF Communications

#### Sarah Johnson

Content marketing specialist, Clark Associates

#### Jenna Jones

Territory development specialist, Varonis

#### Skylar Kays

PR/sponsor relations specialist, Kaulig Racing

#### Meghan Kimberling

Graphic designer, Stream Realty Partners

#### Julie Levine

Social media intern, Real Chemistry

#### Joyce Llopis-Martell

Intern, Level Up Media

#### Isabel Manella

Executive training program, Ruder Finn

#### Roberta Marsh

Management rotational associate, Capital One

#### Morgan Mathews

Customer marketing campaigns associate, Wells Fargo

#### Caroline Moore

Graphic designer, The Ben Silver Corporation

#### Kendall Mumma

Marketing communications coordinator, Baltimore Aircoil Company

#### Kalie-Ann Nassoura

Dancer/model/actress signed, BiCoastal Mgmt

#### Jack Norcross

Producer-in-residence, WCNC

#### Sophia Ortiz

Ad fellow and marketing consultant, Verizon

#### Sophia Pescatore

Digital marketing analyst, The Grit Group

#### Matt Piersanti

Head groundskeeper, Missoula PaddleHeads

#### Kara Redcay

Media analytics intern, 22Squared

#### Julia Reed

Marketing communications specialist, PTC Inc.

#### Harry Rosen

A/B testing and optimization specialist, SAP

#### Jasmine Ruffin

Creative assistant, Bombshell Media

#### Molly Saum

Business operations associate, TEK Systems

#### Lindsey Schubert

PR specialist, Lands' End

#### Bay Shuford

Business development rep, InMotionNow

#### Mallory Siegenthaler

Graduate student, Chapman University

#### Seton Swiderski

Social & digital manager, Kengos

#### Araya Sykes

Graduate student, University of London Royal Holloway for Theatre Directing

#### Claire Thompson

Associate, Finsbury Glover Hering

#### Emmanuel Tobe

Freelance digital production assistant, NBC Olympics coverage

#### Emma Trimbur

Post-graduate intern, Golin

#### Morgan Troxler

Data entry specialist, Elon University's Financial Aid department

#### Courtney Weiner

Graduate student, Columbia University

#### Laura Welch

Associate, ParetoHealth

#### Amanda Willingham

Assistant account executive, Leo Burnett



# National Advisory Board

## **Roger Bolton P'16 (chair)**

President, Arthur W. Page Society,  
New York

## **Matthew Anderson P'22**

Strategic Adviser, Lupa Systems  
San Francisco

## **Sheryl Battles P'23**

Vice President, Global Diversity &  
Inclusion, Pitney Bowes, Stamford, Conn.

## **Jeff Blumb P'18**

Founder, Blumb Communications &  
Consulting, Green Bay, Wis.

## **Joie Chen**

Senior Adviser/Faculty Member,  
Poynter Institute, Washington, D.C.

## **Michael Clemente P'10**

Former CEO, NewsMax TV,  
New York

## **Angela Connor**

Director, Internal Communications,  
Bandwidth, Raleigh, N.C.

## **Carol Cunningham**

Vice President, Consumer Insights  
BET Networks, New York

## **Steve Daniels**

Anchor, WTVD-TV, Raleigh/  
Durham, N.C.

## **Ben Davis**

CEO, Phizzle, Inc., San Francisco

## **Monica Fee '04**

Property Sales Agent, CAA Sports,  
New York

## **Michael Friedenberg P'23**

President, Reuters, Blue Bell, Pa.

## **Renee Kopkowski P'20**

Vice President, Institute Communications,  
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta

## **Eric Kraus P'16**

Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs,  
Clean Harbors, Inc., Norwell, Mass.

## **Luke Lambert**

President and CEO, G&S Business  
Communications, New York

## **Kathy Lewis P'19**

Senior Vice President, Communications,  
NYU Langone Health, New York

## **Jack MacKenzie P'18**

Founder, CollegeAPP, Los Angeles

## **Sunshine Overkamp**

Chairman, Overkamp Overkamp-Smith,  
Atlanta

## **Kim Parsons P'21**

Chief Operating Officer, Taymar Sales U.,  
Greensboro/Winston-Salem, N.C.

## **Colleen Penhall '98**

Vice President, Global Communications,  
Jeld-Wen, Charlotte, N.C.

## **Barri Rafferty P'21**

Head, Corporate Communications,  
Wells Fargo, New York

## **Lee Rainie**

Director of Internet, Science & Technology  
Research, Pew Research Center,  
Washington, D.C.

## **Troy Senkiewicz '98**

Founder and CEO, DigiMax Consulting,  
Los Angeles

## **Melanie Sill**

Founding Executive Director,  
NC Local News Workshop, Raleigh, N.C.

## **Hugh Stevens**

Attorney, Stevens Martin Vaughn  
& Tadych, PLLC, Raleigh, N.C.

## **Norby Williamson P'18 P'22**

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

## Philanthropy in Action

A look at how donors supported the School of  
Communications during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

All gifts count toward the Elon LEADS Campaign. Learn more at  
[elonleads.com](http://elonleads.com).

|                        | OVERALL      | ENDOWED      | ANNUAL       |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Number of Donors | 610          | 5*           | 608          |
| Total Dollars Raised   | \$419,837.56 | \$244,632.96 | \$175,204.60 |

\*3 donors that made gifts to endowed funds also made gifts to an annual fund, which is why the  
endowed and annual totals do not equal the overall number

## A breakdown of donors

Undergraduate

Alumni – 311

Parents – 150

Past Parents – 84

Faculty/Staff – 25

Friends – 11

Undergraduate

Students – 10

Grandparents – 8

Past Grandparents – 3

Retired Faculty/Staff – 2

Former Faculty/Staff – 2

Non-Grad Alumni – 1

Law School Alumni – 1

Graduate Alumni – 1

Family Foundation – 1

**TOTAL – 610**

# ELON UNIVERSITY

School of Communications  
PO Box 398  
Elon, NC 27244  
*Change service required*

Nonprofit Org  
US Postage  
PAID  
Elon, NC  
Permit No. 1



*To commemorate Associate Dean Don Grady's retirement, faculty and staff participated in a surprise parade celebration Dec. 11, driving by the Burlington home Grady shares with his wife, Joan. Did you spot Assistant Professor Ray Johnson in the foreground? Read more about Grady's impactful tenure on page 14.*