



Queer Life on Campus

Lavender Graduation, National Coming Out Week, and Intersectionality within the movement



64

Special Instructions



Following National Coming Out week in October, many queer members of the Elon community found the positive aspects of their lived coming-out experiences across cultural lines. In an interview with Elon News Network, senior **Kamal Lado** – who identifies as queer and uses they/them pronouns – said that while they did not face homophobia when initially coming out as gay, they have faced racism within the LGBTQ community.

“Coming to Elon, and for the first time in my life being surrounded by other Black queer folks, I was able to recognize the importance and the beauty of my Blackness and to fully celebrate it and integrate it into my queerness,” Lado told ENN. “It wasn’t until I came to college and started celebrating my Blackness that I could really start analyzing what the gay community had done to me in terms of racism.”

Lado said they have faced interpersonal racism within queer circles on campus, but they have been able to find a home within the Performing Arts Department.

“I was able to exercise my intersectionality a lot more within my major,” Lado said. “I was able to find

that solace to just be myself in my department, and specifically within my class, and even more specifically, within a very small friend group within my class that has been super supportive along the way.”

Intersectionality has also been an emphasis between El Centro and the Gender and LGBTQIA center on campus this year. Chief of Communications for Elon Spectrum **Ket Cordova ‘23**, a trans man and first-generation Ecuadorian-American, told ENN that interacting with people who share similar identities makes him feel more comfortable in a given space.

“I go to a lot of El Centro events, and a lot of the people there also identify similarly to me, and so that’s very comforting to see something like that,” he said.

Dani Pino, assistant director of El Centro, told ENN that the increasing amount of crossover events has also been “reassuring” for him on a personal level.

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Captions 1) Members of Elon’s LGBTQIA community celebrate their achievements at Lavender Graduation. 2) **Kamal Lado ‘21** embraces another member of the Gender and LGBTQIA Center. 3) **Becca Bishopric Patterson** dons **Daniel Castillo ‘21** with a stole (All photos courtesy of the Gender and LGBTQIA Center).