



ELON ACADEMY

Transforming Lives. Building Futures.

ANNUAL
REPORT
2023



From the Director



EACH YEAR, I ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD to the day when we have a copy of this annual report printed and ready to deliver to you — our friends, family, partners and donors. Within these pages, you will find a success story told in facts and photos. This year's report is merely one chapter (our 17th to date!) in the ongoing tale of Elon University's commitment to promoting college access and success for our incredible Elon Academy scholars and families. Thank you for being a part of our story!

In May 2023 we accepted our 17th cohort, the Sigma Class. Made up of 27 students, this ties as the largest cohort ever accepted into the Elon Academy. These students represent every Alamance-Burlington high school, our local early college and a local public charter school. All these students have household family incomes that fall below average for Alamance County, and almost all Sigmas aspire to be the first in their family to graduate with a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university. Based on what they have shown us thus far, we believe that their bachelor's degree will only be the beginning of their college degree attainment.

In fact, 21% of Elon Academy scholars who earn a bachelor's degree go on to obtain a master's degree or higher. This statistic surpasses any that Elon Academy staff ever conceived. Elon Academy is proud that most of these students pursue areas of study and careers in "helping fields." Whether it's immigration law, social work, education, sustainability, human development, counseling, nonprofit work, the medical field or even promoting college access and success themselves, Elon Academy scholars develop a deep sense of civic responsibility as young people and, in turn, let that value lead them as young professionals. We even have two Elon Academy alumni working here at Elon University! Both work to promote access to education for diverse populations. It's immensely rewarding to be able to refer to them as my colleagues.

Even 17 years in, I like to think that the story of the Elon Academy is truly just beginning. I hope that this report will provide a deeper understanding of the impact you have made as one of our supporters and partners. Thank you for continuing to support this life-changing program.

With deep gratitude,

John Pickett

DIRECTOR OF THE ELON ACADEMY

Our Mission

Elon Academy serves high school students in Alamance County who aspire to graduate from a four-year college. All our students face obstacles to achieving this goal. Each come from a family with no family history of college and/or face significant financial barriers to college access and success. Our students also demonstrate academic promise, emergent leadership and excellent character. Once in the Elon Academy, these students gain mentoring, opportunities and resources — all designed to assist our students in both accessing college and ultimately being successful in earning a four-year degree.



DID YOU KNOW ...

20.4%

of children in Alamance County live below the poverty line
(MyFutureNC, 2020)

1 in 5

High school students, since the COVID-19 pandemic, have no plans after high school graduation
(Carolina Demography, 2021)

365 to 1

The student-to-counselor rate in Alamance County
(MyFutureNC, 2023)

1 in 5

Alamance County adults age 25-44 have earned a bachelor's degree
(MyFutureNC, 2020)

61%

of Alamance County students have parents with no college degree
(MyFutureNC, 2023)

37-40%

of males, low-income students, Black students and LatinX students graduating in Alamance County attend a post-secondary institution
(MyFutureNC, 2023)

90%

of low-income, first-generation students will not graduate college within six years
(Education Advisory Board, 2019)

BY THE NUMBERS

70

high school students from Alamance County high schools

97%

will be the first in their family to graduate with a four-year college degree

93%

of families served fall below the median income for Alamance County

100%

of scholars enroll in honors, advanced placement and/or dual enrollment courses

This year, Elon Academy accepted our **400th** scholar!

The Three Phases of the Elon Academy

The Elon Academy is a seven-year (or more) partnership between scholars, families and Elon Academy staff.

PHASE 1

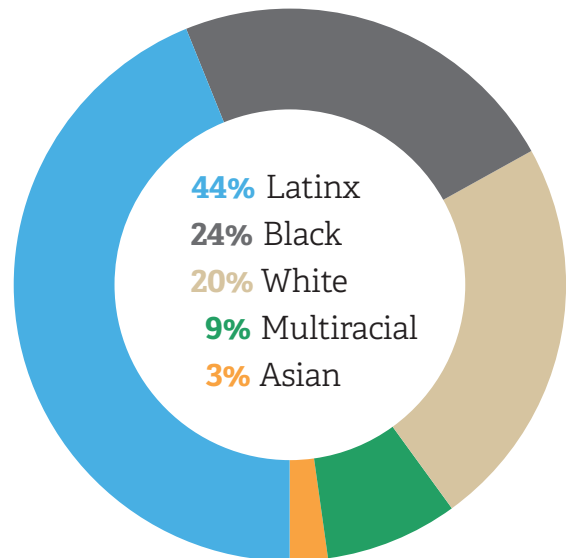
College Access
(9th-12th grade)

PHASE 2

Transitions to College
(summer after high school)

PHASE 3

College Success
(undergraduate and graduate years)



“The EA Way”

A poem by Elon Academy Sigma Scholar Yaziel Aleman

There's a long road ahead, but it's one we tread
Sometimes it's hard to leave your bed
But you're not alone, you're part of the fray
We're a family here for you, no need to dismay
We co-exist and see one another each day
Love and support, that's the EA way
Besides, it's to what we swore oath
Dedicated to our intellectual, personal, and spiritual growth
We've committed ourselves to honesty, integrity, and respect
Forever impacting the world with a positive effect
We'll rise up and make the world's problems feel smaller
Because we all joined generations of Elon as bearers of its honor



Yaziel Aleman





Class of 2023 Snapshot: Omicron Scholars

Our high school seniors, the Omicron Scholars, accepted a total of \$2 million in scholarships and grants from their prospective institutions. They earned 162 college acceptances to 41 different schools. Scholarships earned include the Morehead-Cain Scholarship at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Carolina Covenant

at UNC-Chapel Hill, the Goodnight Scholarship at North Carolina State University and the Odyssey Program at Elon University. Scholars were also awarded placement into the honors programs at UNC-Chapel Hill, Elon, UNC-Charlotte and St. Andrews University.

Elon Academy has now been in existence for 17 years, and 100% of our scholars who complete the high school phase of Elon Academy have been accepted to college!

Lives Transformed, Dreams Realized

In May 2023, Manuela Espinosa, parent of Omicron Scholar Daniel Espinosa, shared remarks from a parent's perspective at Elon Academy's annual reception honoring our high school seniors' graduation. Please enjoy this excerpt from her speech:

Doesn't it feel like just yesterday when we first learned about this scholars program?

I remember Mr. Pickett hosting a session at the River Mill Academy library where the room was full of hopeful students. Two were selected.

I started following [social media] posts of other accepted students, and finally, we began meeting with other parents during our quarterly family meetings at Elon.

Somewhere along the way, an uninvited friend named Coronavirus came along and tried to derail the summer program, but we all masked up and met anyway.

As I stand before you all today, I see a room of successful young individuals that have their lives ahead of them.

I remember the early Saturday mornings, having to have our temperatures taken and covering our faces with a mask to ensure that we could all stay safe and well.

I remember learning about scholarships, different levels of colleges such as choice, target and challenge schools.

I recall listening to different college representatives from as close as Alamance Community College to as far away as N.C. State so that we could make informed decisions with our children when it was time.

I remember laughing at the talent show photo slides and crying as I listened to speeches after the summer program of 2022. Mostly, I remember listening to my scholar's stories about how he has learned about life.

Elon Academy has given you the potential and possibility to get where you are at this moment. I want all of you to remember this moment. College acceptance is part one. What matters is what you do with what comes next.



Manuela Espinosa (right) and son Daniel (left)



Valerie Mason Lambda Scholar

2019 graduate of Graham High School
2023 graduate of Elon University

Valerie recently earned a Bachelor of Science degree in exercise science. She plans to attend graduate school, where she will pursue a master's degree in physician assistant studies.



At Elon University's Commencement ceremony, Valerie had a surprise planned for her mother. Mid-photo, Valerie disrobed and put her cap and gown on her mother. She turned to her mother and said, "Since you never got the chance, this is your accomplishment too! Only God knows how much you have had to go through and all of the sacrifices you have made in order for me to be here today!"

98%

of Elon Academy's current
college-aged scholars are
on track to graduate!

Elon Academy College Graduates (cumulative)	Prior to 2019:	88
	2019- 20:	99
	2020-21:	112
	2021-22:	121



Kimberly Romero today (left) and as an Elon Academy scholar (below)

Kimberly Romero

2014 graduate of Hugh M. Cummings High School

2018 graduate for Wake Forest University

Currently attending Louisiana State University and pursuing an M.A. in Higher Education Administration

Recently named Elon University's Director of Undergraduate Admissions for Diversity and Access

"The Elon Academy has undeniably played a key role in shaping me into the individual I am today. Through intentional programming, year-round support and residential experiences, the Elon Academy allowed both my family and I to learn about and prepare for a successful journey to higher education. Upon gaining admission to two selective schools, the Elon Academy helped me compare financial aid offers and academic programs to make the

best college choice. The support continued with dedicated staff who personally visited me on campus each year through graduation.

"The Elon Academy's guidance equipped me not only with practical tools along the way, but also with a self-assurance that I have carried beyond the program. The Elon Academy introduced me to the community that exists at Elon University, and it is a privilege to be able to continue my work with them in my current position. The Elon Academy's role in my personal growth and educational trajectory stands as a testament to its unwavering dedication to transforming lives.

"My time in the college admissions and enrollment space has sparked my energy toward serving underrepresented groups, and it has been tremendously rewarding. In the future I hope to continue working toward equitable access to a quality college education for students from all paths of life."



FISCAL YEAR 2023

DONORS

184

Individual Donors

126

Households

CASH GIFTS

\$102,940.33

Total

DONOR MAKEUP

33%

Undergraduate and
Graduate Alumni

22%

Faculty and Staff

21%

Parents and Grandparents

23%

Friends

1%

Corporations/Foundation

Impacting the Future

When Elon alumni, parents and friends choose to support the Elon Academy, they are making an investment in the lives of future leaders and their families. The strength of our community — and the world — lies in empowering our most promising young people to overcome hardship through education.

Thanks to philanthropy, the market value of the Elon Academy Endowment stands at \$5.5 million. That support makes this essential program possible. Annual operations costs for the program total nearly \$500,000, and the Elon Academy Endowment supports 20-30% of the budget.

Contributions can take various forms. Some donors create endowed funds or add the Elon Academy to their estate plans. Corporations and foundations, including LabCorp, the Riversville Foundation and Voya Financial, have provided annual and endowed gifts. Morgan Stanley and Duke Energy have made gifts through matching gift programs with their employees. Some donors give from their IRAs Required Minimum Distribution.

More modest donations work together to make an impact through recurring gifts, payroll deduction or outright gifts. Gratitude abounds for each contribution that helps continue the mission of Elon Academy to improve the lives of deserving students and to create leaders for our communities.

TO MAKE A GIFT, PLEASE VISIT elon.edu/makeagift, select “Center for Access and Success” and choose the Elon Academy Annual Fund or Elon Academy Endowment from the designation dropdown list. **Thank you!**

2022-23 Honor Roll of Donors



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“Elon Academy is a special program, one that will push you to be your absolute best at everything you do while you are in the program.”

—Jacob Hyle, Kappa Scholar, 2018 graduate of Williams High School and 2022 graduate of Elon University. Jacob (pictured above left today and above right with his mother when he first started Elon Academy) was an Odyssey scholarship recipient at Elon and a winner of the Lumen Prize, the university’s most prestigious grant for undergraduate research. Jacob graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor’s degree in adventure, health and physical education. Jacob is in his second year as an English teacher at Henderson Collegiate in Henderson, N.C.



ELON
UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR
Access and
Success

elon.edu/elonacademy

Mailing Address:
Campus Box 2108
Elon, NC 27244

Campus location:
The Center for Access and Success
Mooney Building
Suite 302

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