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# ELON SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

## New Sustainability Employee Resource Group to Support Faculty and Staff

BY: KELLY HARER

The Office of Sustainability recently formed a Sustainability Employee Resource Group to support faculty and staff interested in creating a more sustainable workplace and living a more sustainable lifestyle. This group plans to meet monthly to discuss a variety of topics such as waste, energy and landscaping, among others. Each meeting will include information on sustainability at Elon as well as tips to be more sustainable at home.

The next meeting will be held on **October 28 from 12-1 pm via Zoom**. Registration will be available soon via an email from the Office of Leadership and Professional Development. This meeting will discuss waste management at Elon, including waste reduction initiatives, how to properly sort waste, and the process Facilities Management uses to move waste on campus. At-home waste reduction tips will also be given, including how to backyard compost, opportunities for reusables at home, and upcycling.



**MIND THE BIN.** Eco-Rep Matthew Flacksenburg separates waste during Landfill on the Lawn.

Questions or meeting ideas can be sent to Kelly Harer at [kharer@elon.edu](mailto:kharer@elon.edu)



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# FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. BETHANY BRINKMAN

BY: LAUREN HILL

Elon is pleased to welcome Dr. Bethany Brinkman, the newest Associate Professor of Engineering! Dr. Brinkman teaches Engineering Mechanics: Statics and Grand Challenges in Engineering, while helping craft the foundation for the program's environmental engineering concentration. She has been a mentor for several projects this fall, including a student's capstone project on floating wetlands, an exploration of concrete filters, as well as consulting for a junior level research methods course.

Dr. Brinkman's passion for nature and sustainability was sparked while hiking with her dad as a kid. The more time she spent outdoors and working with water, science and math just felt like the perfect fit. Now, as an engineer, Dr. Brinkman is able to find sustainability in everything. Through her coursework, research, and mentorship, Dr. Brinkman works to weave sustainable practices throughout the entire design process. There is no "sustainability chapter,"

rather a semester long learning objective. We cannot assume resources are unlimited, even in this world of nearly endless possibilities. By encouraging students to reflect on sustainable practices where they are not generally considered, a unique generation of engineering students will be entering the workforce.

Dr. Brinkman believes that engineering needs more of an emphasis on sustainability, that even the most innovative technologies must be held to the same standards of planning for the "end of life" of a product.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Brinkman and her family practice many sustainable living habits. Tending to a quarter acre garden complete with raised beds and fruit trees, they'll be harvesting their own plums, apples, elderberries, and cherries.

A small flock of chickens accompanies the garden, providing them with farm fresh eggs to share with neighbors.

Living in a small city allows



Dr. Brinkman to walk most places when accessible, another simple way to cut down on her carbon footprint.

While admitting it can be hard to be self-sufficient, Dr. Brinkman focuses on minimizing her consumption.

Dr. Brinkman is thrilled to be a Phoenix, already impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of students.

She is eager to grow her mentorships and research, where she hopes to encourage and challenge other women in engineering.



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT: TAYLOR BLACK

BY: EMERSON WELLS

Taylor Black, Elon's Loy Farm Manager, was hired over the summer as the first full-time manager of the farm. A former staff member with Elon Landscaping and Grounds, Black aims to further develop the farm and strengthen its partnership with Elon Dining. In this work, Black integrates themes of sustainability.

Black's job includes weeding garden beds, planting, irrigation, trellising, and generally making sure things are living and healthy. He also works to manage a group of interns and works with other Elon community members on future farm projects.

"The farm is a sustainable farm in the sense that we follow what would be somewhat close to organic practices. We try to consider the health of the soil and take a more holistic approach to the communities that surround the farm, such as soil communities and all of the species that interact with it, including humans," says Black.

In a farm-to-table partnership with Elon Dining, the farm now works to "close loops" as much as possible by providing food harvested by Loy Farm in dining halls on campus.

"It ropes in the greater Elon student body because, whether they know it or not, they are consuming what is produced on the farm," says Black.

At home, Black tends his own garden, composts food waste, avoids plastics, and is conscious about water usage and using high efficiency appliances. In general, he tries to minimize his consumption. As a gardener and farm manager, growing and consuming local food is a main part of Black's life.



"The soil is so dynamic that things change year to year... there's always something that stimulates some part of your learning. There's never any shortage of engagement, if you are actually growing your own food," explains Black.

"More people should get outside and find the part of wildness that gets them going. It is going to be different for everybody, whether you figured out that you really like the idea of creeks and waterways, or if you really just enjoy walking through trees... I think it is important that everyone finds their anchor point in nature that excites them and nourishes their soul," says Black, when asked what sustainable practices Elon students should implement into their daily life.

"Once you find that thing, engage with it regularly... and practice mindfulness."

To read more about Loy Farm, [click here!](#)

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: GRACE GRANGER & JAKOB REUTER

BY: SAMANTHA SCHWAMBERGER



Elon students often find themselves with excess clothing they no longer plan to wear. Grace Granger and Jakob Reuter are two students who founded a business called U Thrift in order to keep this clothing from ending up in a landfill.

Grace is a senior majoring in theatrical design and technology and minoring in entrepreneurship, and Jakob is a junior majoring in entrepreneurship and minoring in computer science and data science. The two students started U Thrift last year in their Creativity & The Doer/Maker Mindset class taught by Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship Elena Kennedy.



Grace and Jakob realized that there is a lot of waste on college campuses due to students regularly buying and trashing clothing and furniture, and they wanted to create a business to keep these items out of the landfill. That is how they came up with the idea for U Thrift, a second-hand shop on Elon's campus that takes students' unwanted goods and sells them for a reasonable price. If the item sells, a portion of the money goes back to the student who donated the item.

Grace and Jakob say that sustainability is integrated within all aspects of their business, from the idea of a second-hand store, to business cards made from recycled cardboard, and even within their own lives. Back home, Jakob works for a zero-waste shop in Florida, which has had a big influence on him.

This job encouraged him to recognize how he can limit his environmental footprint, such as through composting and unplugging any electronic devices when they are not being used. Grace is a long-time fan of antique shops, second-hand stores, and thrift shops, and she also makes an effort to reduce her energy consumption whenever possible.

They hope to pass on the U Thrift business to continue its legacy for future Elon students after they graduate and are excited to see where it goes.

CHECK OUT U THRIFT'S  
**WEBSITE** FOR MORE  
INFORMATION!

PLUS, READ MORE  
ABOUT THEIR  
BUSINESS ON **ENN**.

# GET INVOLVED

## JOIN OUR UPCOMING EVENTS:

### HALLOWGREEN

October 28 | 4-6 PM  
Moseley Center



Come see the Eco-Reps in Moseley for sweet treats, spooky crafts, and free reusable bags!

### INDIGENOUS HERBS

November 2 | 4:30 PM  
Medallion Plaza near Lakeside



Join Vickie Jeffries (Mihe Heyananhes Yattse) – herbalist, artist, and tribal administrator for the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation—to discuss how to identify and use native herbs in cooking and for medicinal purposes.

**Registration Required.**

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## SUBMIT TO THE DATABASE!

### What is it?

Online platform of past or current student projects related to sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS DATABASE  
STRENGTHENING SUSTAINABILITY AT ELON



### Why submit?

This is an opportunity to showcase your work and offer research ideas to interested undergraduates

### How to submit:

1. Go to **"The Sustainability Projects Database"**
2. Log in with Elon username & password
3. Click "To add a project click here"



Elon has partnered with UCapture, a green-tech company that funds environmental projects and applies coupon codes, at no cost to you, when you shop with online partners.

### How Does It Work?

When you shop using UCapture, partner stores pay commissions. UCapture uses 66% of these commissions toward high-quality, third-party verified carbon offset projects, which are then retired on Elon's behalf, reducing Elon's carbon footprint.

### Follow These Steps to Utilize UCapture:

**Step 1:** Visit [www.ucapture.com/elon](http://www.ucapture.com/elon)

**Step 2:** Click 'Add UCapture' to install the browser extension and set-up your account

**Step 3:** Activate UCapture when you visit online partner stores.