



IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Nature RX promotes outdoor time
- 2 Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Stephanie Baker
- 4 Staff Spotlight: Xandria Hughes
- 5 Student Spotlight: Seth Wolter '24
- 7 Earth Week Preview: Speaker and Events
- 8 Resources

MOBILE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM KIT

Elon faculty members who wish to hold class outdoors may request access to [Elon's Mobile Outdoor Classroom Kit](#), which contains 20 outdoor chairs, a wearable voice amplifier and a wagon for transportation.

ELON SUSTAINABILITY NEWSLETTER

Nature RX initiative promotes outdoor time for improved mental health

BY: LAUREN HILL

The [Nature RX initiative](#) promotes spending time outdoors to enhance physical health and enrich mental and emotional well-being. Extensive research, including [this study](#) out of Stanford University, supports this.

“What I love about the premise of Nature RX is that it is accessible to everyone,” said Kelly Harer, associate director of sustainability for education and outreach. “You don’t need to climb a mountain or do intense outdoor activities; simply watching the sunset or studying outdoors is enough to receive these benefits!”

Elon University takes pride in its outdoor spaces, from the Elon Forest to the Community Garden and hammock spots at Lake Mary Nell. These spaces serve as green sanctuaries for students, faculty and staff to unwind and reconnect with the natural world. [Elon Outdoors](#) offers many opportunities to get outside – from a variety of outdoor trips to equipment rental.

Whether it’s a brief moment of mindfulness or an immersive outdoor experience, Nature RX invites us to pause, breathe and appreciate the beauty around us. If you are interested in learning more about Nature RX or contributing to outdoor initiatives, reach out to the Office of Sustainability to explore how you can get involved and make a difference on campus.

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. STEPHANIE BAKER

BY: MATTHEW FLACKSENBURG

Dr. Stephanie Baker is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Public Health Studies at Elon University. While working as a physical therapist in the Washington D.C. area, Baker noticed certain patterns of health outcomes. Why were there so many correlations between her patients' socioeconomic status, transportation methods or work environment and their health conditions?

These questions led her to pursue a Ph.D. in public health and discover her passion for uncovering socioeconomic disparities in health issues. She spent some time teaching at UNC Greensboro, feeling that her efforts were best spent educating rather than doing data-heavy research that didn't seem to directly address the issues with which she was concerned.

It wasn't until she was invited to serve on the Greensboro Health Disparities Collaborative that Dr. Baker realized that she could do research that had a real, visible impact on people. She began conducting community-based participatory research, a method that prioritizes collaboration with community organizations and members during the research process.

Continue Reading on Next Page >>



Dr. Baker during a gathering of students in the H.E.R. Lab, an organization she launched with Assistant Professor Yanica Faustin to analyze the roles of race and racism as the main contributors to racial health inequities.

**HEALTH
EQUITY &
RACISM
LAB**



Dr. Baker, right, and Deena Elrefai '22 worked together on a Lumen Prize research project examining the reproductive health of Latinx women in Alamance County.

Dr. Baker's work highlights the importance of environmental justice and recognizing the communities which are most directly harmed by environmental degradation. "I was looking at cancer disparities with a community based participatory research partnership." says Baker. "When you think about what communities are most likely to be exposed to toxins that increase your likelihood of getting a cancer diagnosis, then you realize it's all connected. You have to ask yourself why people are getting cancer in the first place."

She says from a personal perspective, having family in certain communities in Mississippi, almost everyone ends up with some sort of cancer diagnosis due to the environmental issues to which they are exposed. She explains that while treatment is important, we must address the issues that are making people sick in the first place.

In her personal life, Dr. Baker makes efforts to minimize her waste. She shared that ever since she was a child learning about the three Rs in elementary school, she has been a "nut for recycling." Nowadays, she and her daughter are big composters and are subscribed to a composting service that picks up compostable waste every week and returns nutritious soil for personal use. Dr. Baker says this soil does wonders for her garden, where she loves to grow cherry tomatoes and other fresh vegetables. She notes that once she started composting, the amount of trash she had to throw away started to dwindle. Dr. Baker emphasized that while these sorts of individual actions are important to help build a sustainable future, it is essential to remember that having the time, money and energy to do so is a privilege, and we need larger systemic changes to push ourselves forward into a more sustainable and equitable future.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: XANDRIA HUGHES

BY: ELIANA OLIVIER

Xandria Hughes is a supervisor at Clohan Hall, one of Elon's three dining halls. She grew up on her family's organic farm in Hurdle Mills, North Carolina, and says that is a big inspiration in her life. Her upbringing has given her a profound respect for the Earth and the many ways different cultures engage with and cultivate food. Xandria's enthusiasm for sustainability is not just a personal choice but a professional passion that aligns perfectly with Elon Dining's commitment to supporting local businesses. Xandria loves how this helps to reduce emissions and waste while uplifting local communities.

Outside of work, Xandria enjoys baking and helping her father manage the farm. She uses as much local produce as possible in her cooking to support local businesses, like her family's, while incorporating more sustainable eating habits. By prioritizing local ingredients, Xandria supports nearby businesses and practices

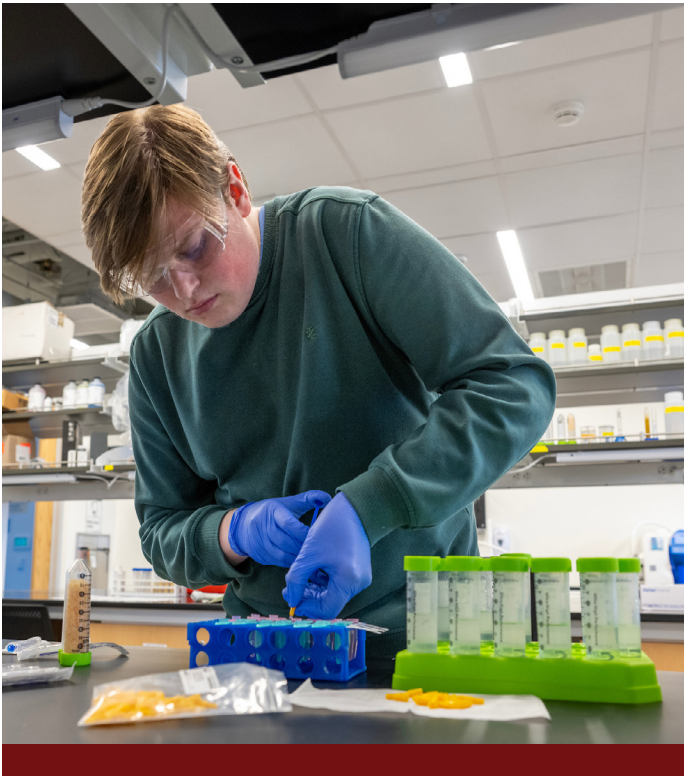


Xandria collaborating with a sustainability pop-up supporting local food. In this case, local happens to be her parent's farm, Pine Knot Farms, located in Hurdle Mills, NC. They served sweet potato biscuits with ham, paired with purple sweet potato hummus, collards and crispy butternut squash.

environmental stewardship, creating a ripple effect of sustainability within her community.

Xandria's passion extends to her family life, where she enjoys spending quality time with her daughter on the farm. This shared experience not only strengthens their bond but also serves as a hands-on

educational opportunity for her daughter, nurturing a new generation's appreciation for sustainable farming and local produce. Through her professional work, culinary practices and family life, Xandria shows how individual actions can contribute to a larger, positive impact on both the community and the environment.



Seth Wolter '24 tests water samples taken from Elon's south campus to evaluate a new material's ability to reduce phosphorous and nitrogen in runoff.



Julia Darcy (right), assistant research professor at Duke University's Center for WaSH-AID, instructs Lauren Hill '24 (middle) and Seth Wolter '24 (left) on testing procedures.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: SETH WOLTER '24

BY: SOPHIE ESKENAZI

Elon University senior Seth Wolter is at the forefront of groundbreaking environmental research. Inspired by his upbringing in Hillsborough, NC, where water quality issues were prevalent, Seth is one of the first students at Elon to pursue an engineering major with an environmental concentration. Seth is working alongside Julia Darcy, assistant research professor at Duke University and WaSH-AID program manager, and Will Puer, assistant professor of engineering at Elon University. He is also working with Lauren Hill, a senior engineering major at Elon.

Duke University's Center for Water, Sanitation, Hygiene and Infectious Disease, WaSH-AID, works to develop innovative solutions to water pollution. They are specifically focusing on using rainwater and runoff to identify harmful chemicals in the water and to remove these chemicals before there is a chance for them to enter our water systems.

**READ ABOUT THE RESEARCH PROJECT
ON THE NEXT PAGE**

Although the origin of the project is Duke University in Durham, NC, Elon students and professors were recruited for the project due to Elon's wide availability of resources through the new engineering and physics buildings, Founders Hall and Innovation Hall, and the campus' large amounts of greenspace, which is optimal for water collection. The project focuses on creating nanomaterials capable of adsorbing nitrates and phosphates from waterways, preventing further contamination. Nitrates and phosphates, pervasive in water bodies due to agricultural runoff, pose grave threats to aquatic ecosystems, livestock and human health. Excessive levels can lead to harmful algal blooms, oxygen depletion and disruptions in food chains.

This endeavor is not only about scientific advancement but also about providing students, like Seth, with hands-on, impactful research experiences. The project is sponsored by Oldcastle Infrastructure, a leader in engineered building solutions. As Seth and his collaborators delve into the complexities of environmental engineering, they are not only expanding their own knowledge but also contributing to a sustainable future. With their dedication and ingenuity, Seth and his WaSH-AID collaborators exemplify the potential for young leaders to drive positive change in addressing global environmental challenges.

Julia Darcy (far left) and Tate Rogers (far right) review the system and procedure for stormwater sampling with Elon engineering seniors Seth Wolter and Lauren Hill.



EARTH WEEK IS APRIL 21-27

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: DR. BRITT WRAY



HOW TO COPE WITH CLIMATE ANXIETY: SAVING THE EARTH AND SAVING OURSELVES

During this fascinating and hopeful talk, Dr. Britt Wray—groundbreaking researcher, storyteller and author of *Generation Dread*—will discuss the emotional and existential effects of living in a warming world and how we can get through them together. Dr. Wray will present practical tips and strategies for dealing with our emotions and strengthening our communities so we can combat climate change together.

APRIL 24 | 7:00-8:00 PM | MCKINNON HALL

Sponsored by the Office of Sustainability, Counseling Services, Environmental Studies Department, and the Truitt Center for Religious & Spiritual Life



FOR A FULL LIST OF EVENTS AND DETAILS, [CLICK HERE](#) OR SCAN THE QR CODE

A FEW EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

SUNDAY, APRIL 21

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association Farm Tour | 11 am-4 pm*

MONDAY, APRIL 22

Tree Walk | 12-1 pm*
Alamance Fountain

TUESDAY, APRIL 23

Plant Adoption: House plants for Mental Health | 10 am-12 pm
Moseley West Lawn

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

Party for the Planet | 5-7 pm
Medallion Plaza

SATURDAY, APRIL 27

Sustainable Day of Service:

Peacehaven Community Farm Garden Workday | 8:30-11:30 am*

Lake Mackintosh Kayak Clean-Up
9 am-12 pm or 1-4 pm*

**Event Requires Registration*

AND MANY MORE!!!

RESOURCES

SHARE THE RIDE

What is it?

STRNC is a free, secure and user-friendly online tool that helps find ridesharing options for commuting or single trips to the airport, beach or wherever else you travel. It also allows users to log their trip to learn about dollars saved and emissions reduced. Sign up [here!](#)

How to Join:

REGISTER: There is an Elon-specific program for students, faculty and staff. Using your Elon email, register for a free account and create a profile!

FIND A RIDE! Enter some info about where you want to go so you can view and communicate with potential matches through the system.

EMERGENCY RIDE HOME PROGRAM

This program reimburses eligible faculty/staff commuters for a qualified emergency ride home a maximum of 4 times in a fiscal year.

To be eligible, participants must:

1. Be a part-time or full-time employee *and*
2. Have carpooled, biked, walked, taken the train or a bus to work on the day a ride is needed.

It's available for commuters when:

1. They or an immediate family member gets sick or has a crisis
2. Their carpool driver has to unexpectedly leave early or stay late OR
3. They must work unscheduled overtime

Learn more [online!](#)

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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”

UCAPTURE

SAVE MONEY. SAVE THE PLANET.

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

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