2026 Family Weekend Acorn Talks
Saturday, September 26 – 11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Beyond "What to Expect": Rethinking Childbirth



Cynthia D. Fair, LCSW, DrPH, Professor of Public Health and Human Service Studies
Watts-Thompson Professor

Lakeside Meeting Room 212

The media often portrays childbirth as a medical event that begins with a woman on a gurney being rushed into the delivery room or surgery theatre and ends with the blissful parents hugging their newborn. However, much more than biology shapes the experience. In this interactive session, participants will get a taste of this professor's capstone Childbirth course by exploring birth stories, medical practices, cultural beliefs, reproductive technologies, and the systems that influence who receives safe and respectful care. Together, we will consider how childbirth is understood in the United States—and what we may overlook when we rely on a single definition of what to expect.

Beyond the Scale: The Health Impacts of Skeletal Muscle



Takudzwa "Titch" Madzima, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Chair of Exercise Science
Japheth E. Rawls Chair for Undergraduate Research in Science

Lakeside Meeting Room 213

When we think about health and body composition, the number on the scale often gets most of the attention. But what if **how much muscle we have matters just as much—or more—than how much we weigh?** Skeletal muscle is more than the tissue that helps us move and perform; it plays an important role in metabolism, blood sugar regulation, physical function, and potentially even brain health and cognition.

In this interactive talk, Dr. Titch Madzima, Chair of Elon University's Department of Exercise Science, will take families **"beyond the scale"** to explore why muscle is increasingly recognized as an important marker of lifelong health. Drawing from research conducted with Elon undergraduate students, he will discuss how individuals who appear to be at a "healthy" weight can still have low muscle mass and underlying metabolic risk that traditional measures such as BMI may miss.

He will also highlight emerging Elon research examining the relationship between muscle health and cognitive function in college-aged women. Families will leave with a new perspective on body composition and practical insights into how **resistance exercise, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle habits can help build and preserve muscle across the lifespan**.

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The Chemistry and Art of Brewing Beer: A New Lab Science Course



Joel Karty, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of the Department of Chemistry
Sydney F. & Kathleen E. Jackson Professor of Chemistry

Lakeside Meeting Room 214

Beer is no doubt a popular beverage, contributing close to $1 trillion to the global GDP, and supporting over 30 million jobs worldwide. Professor Karty's interest lies with the fact that the beer brewing process is immensely rich in chemistry and biochemistry, and this course takes advantage of beer's popularity to teach some of the key scientific principles and techniques behind beer brewing. In this presentation, Professor Karty and participants will discuss some of the chemistry and biochemistry behind the various stages of brewing, including malting, mashing, boiling, and fermenting. We will have samples of malt grain and fresh hops on hand for you to try!