Stressed about academic performance?

By Evan Ward

I am too, so I’ve done some research to try and enjoy my time at school, and I think the best way is through making connections.

Is this really a big problem, or am I just overreacting?

It’s alright to feel stressed, especially right now. In a study by Boston University in the fall 2020 semester, half of their students screened positive for anxiety or depression. In the same study 83% of students felt their academics had been affected by their mental health.

What can we do?

One solution is to talk with professors when you begin to struggle. In conversations around Elon I have found that students have significantly less stress in classes where they’ve made connections with their professors. This separation has been made even clearer with zoom classes, where the student-teacher relationship that many came to Elon for has been interrupted.

As we near more relaxed rules for Covid, and more classes meet in person, reach out to professors and use the opportunities we’re given to connect with them. College Coffee is an excellent way to discuss the class in a low stress environment with the teacher, and more often than not they want you to succeed.

The most common response I always hear when people discuss how to relieve stress is spending time with friends and enjoying art. This comes in many forms, like watching movies with friends or listening to a new album as a group. In Covid times, many have had trouble finding new people to hang out with, especially first years. Finding one or two casual clubs on campus is a great way to meet new people and have fun.

One group of Elon students I discussed the problem with were members of an improvised comedy club called “Please Clap.” In the club they would run games where they could be totally goofy and have a supportive environment. The club was more than just a few hours a week though, it was a community they could spend time with, share passions with, and laugh with, all without the stress of academia. In improv, you learn to use “the top of your mind.” To react quickly in scenes, doing what feels natural and ignoring limitations and stress is very important. The respondents said this way of thinking allowed them to deal with day to day life better too.

In Conclusion

Relieving academic stress is not an easy thing to do, but the first step is to find a community. Elon offers many ways to meet people, be it through PhoenixConnect or College Coffee or maybe even through class. Strengthening these bonds through hangouts, music, film, tv, or maybe even improv lets you start to interact with the top of your mind. The more people you become comfortable with, the more you will find the stress of school slipping away. It’s even better when you can find friends who push you to learn and grow, and sometimes do your homework.