

# ELON ACADEMY

EDUCATION ■ LEADERSHIP ■ OUTREACH ■ NOW

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November 9, 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

When Superior Court Judge Howard Manning threatened to close an underperforming school in Alamance County in 2006, President Leo M. Lambert found himself rethinking the role of the University in our local community. How could Elon, a thriving institution with tremendous resources, reconcile its place in a community where only seven miles away a high school struggled to survive? What could Elon, as an institution and as a society of individuals, do to address such a serious inequity?

As a result of President Lambert's thinking and his commitment to the broader community, Elon has taken major steps to increase its involvement in local schools and educational efforts. Building on existing programs for new and veteran teachers through the Office of School Outreach Programs in the School of Education, service learning projects and tutoring programs sponsored by the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement, the university has initiated new and ambitious programs that will increase Elon's support of education in the local area. These efforts range from initiatives at Cummings High School to support its restructuring to a new and exciting endeavor, the Elon Academy.

President Lambert appointed Dr. Deborah Long, Professor of Education, to lead the charge. Dr. Long and a university team researched and/or visited college-access programs across the country, including Princeton University and Furman University. The team took components from these programs to develop a unique model for college access and success program, The Elon Academy.

The Elon Academy began in 2007 with the goal of inspiring academically promising students who are often underrepresented on college and university campuses to pursue higher education, build leadership skills, and develop an active sense of social responsibility. The Elon Academy is

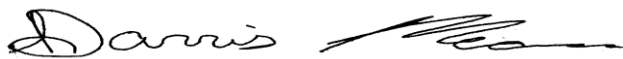
based on a youth-development model that supports students during their journeys to college and challenges them to reach their full potential. Students are recruited for the program during their ninth grade year. Admission is highly competitive; each year the program receives approximately 100 applications for 26 spaces. The program is intentionally ethnically and racially diverse; 32% of students are African American/Black, 30% are Hispanic/Latino/a, 27% are White, 9% are multi-racial and 2% represent other racial/ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, 94% of scholars' parents and guardians have never attended a four-year college or university. Currently, the Academy serves 110 high school and college scholars and approximately 300 family members. The Elon Academy's four-phase model is designed to partner with scholars and their families, beginning with their enrollment in the Academy through their college graduation and beyond; this model provides comprehensive support for scholars to gain access to college *and* to succeed in college. There are very few university-based programs that provide that type of support for students in the local community.

The Elon Academy is not only an innovative program, it is also a successful program. All high school scholars in the Elon Academy (100%) are enrolled in honors and Advanced Placement courses and have participated in community service as part of their Academy experience. All Academy graduates (100%) have been accepted into colleges and universities. The college persistence rate for program completers is 95%. The success of the Elon Academy is remarkable when compared with national data on college admission and retention for low-income and minority students.

We are constantly improving our program to better support, advise, and encourage our high school and college scholars. We look forward to continuing to support these deserving young people as they make their dream of a college education a reality.

For more information about our program, please view our website at [www.elon.edu/elonacademy](http://www.elon.edu/elonacademy).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darris R. Means". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "D" and "M".

Darris R. Means