



Alamance-Burlington School System

Office of the Superintendent

William C. Harrison, Ed. D., Superintendent

March 22, 2017

Dear rising seniors,

Beginning this summer, the Alamance-Burlington School System, in partnership with Elon University, will be offering the **ABSS Honors Institute at Elon**. The Honors Institute is a collaborative effort between the school system and university to provide a summer enrichment experience for the district's most talented and motivated students who are prepared for college level work. This exciting program will be held on the campus of Elon University, June 12 – July 7th. The institute will run daily, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is our hope that participants will enjoy an enriching experience with the convenience of being close to home - while retaining some flexibility with summer schedules. Rising seniors are eligible to apply.

We intend to provide a challenging, unique learning environment in the institute, characterized by an emphasis on engagement, discovery, social interaction, and student leadership. One of the goals of the institute will be to provide a forum for students to discover and explore their passions, and then to assimilate knowledge and apply theory to action. It promises to be an exciting experience beyond what we have typically provided in the traditional curriculum, and should be an enjoyable opportunity for all participants.

The curriculum will be focused on engaged citizenship – more specifically, finding your voice, discovering your interests and passions within the context of community, identifying societal issues and problems, generating potential solutions together with classmates, and determining processes for putting theory into action. The foundation for this active learning experience will be a rigorous examination of some core academic disciplines and concepts, including the Social Sciences, design thinking, current events/issues, and civic leadership.

There will be an interest meeting on *Thursday evening, March 30th, at 6:00 p.m.* in the auditorium at Walter Williams High School. The director of the institute and several of the faculty will be on hand to share more information about the specifics of the institute, including dates, times, expectations, and the schedule for students.

Best wishes for a successful conclusion to the school year, and I hope you consider taking advantage of this exciting opportunity.

Sincerely,

William C. Harrison, Ed. D.

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Alamance-Burlington School System Honors Institute at Elon

The Institute

The Alamance-Burlington School System Honors Institute at Elon is a collaborative effort between the school system and university to provide a summer enrichment experience for talented and motivated students. Rising high school seniors are eligible to apply for the four-week institute, which will meet daily on the campus of Elon University. Successful applicants would be those students who are motivated and prepared for college level work. In addition, they would have a track record of outstanding school performance, above average achievement, and reading ability above or well above grade level.

Mission and Values

The mission of the institute is to challenge students to understand, explore, and practice engaged citizenship. Students will leave the institute motivated to develop new connections and to make positive contributions aimed at improving the quality of life within their communities.

This will be accomplished by examining social issues, designing creative solutions to complex problems, and exploring a variety of academic disciplines. Students will develop critical perspectives as well as frames of reference for their own thinking. Moreover, students will create unique responses to pressing issues while working together with their classmates to construct civil and responsible reactions that benefit society.

The values of the **ABSS Honors Institute at Elon** will mirror those of the supporting institutions which include, but are not limited to: 1) Respect for a diversity of opinions, experiences, and responses to the world; 2) Responsible citizenship with an emphasis on equity, justice, and tolerance; 3) A commitment to success for all; 4) Integrity, both personal and collective.

The Curriculum

The curriculum is designed for advanced learners and students ready for the challenge of college level work. The goals of the program of study are for students to grow as scholars and advance their skills in the areas of critical thinking, persuasive writing, reading, consumption of media, and communication. There are no grades, assessments, or credit.

Students will apply their new knowledge in multiple ways - and utilize their autonomy to determine the direction of their own learning within the context of the larger community of learners. Participants will refine their decision making skills and have opportunities to apply theory to action on a larger scale as a planned activity at least once weekly.

As mentioned above, the theme for the institute is Engaged Citizenship. Students will explore current issues at the national, state, and local levels through reading from a variety of sources,

writing, participation in discussions and seminars, and utilization of a variety of media sources. Scholarly thinking, problem solving, and meaningful discourse will be priorities that instructors utilize in developing all student activities.

On a weekly basis, students will participate in four courses, each of which meets twice per week. The courses are: ***Design Thinking; Current Issues; Civic Leadership; Social Sciences***. A complete description of the courses will be available April 1st.

Frequently Asked Questions

When and where does the ABSS Honors Institute take place?

The Honors Institute will run from June 12th through July 7th, M-F, from 8:30 - 12:30. All sessions will be held on the campus of Elon University. Participants must commit to attending all sessions. *Please note: Institute participants will not meet on July 3rd and 4th.*

Who is eligible to attend? How many students will be selected?

Rising high school seniors in the Alamance-Burlington School System may apply. Successful applicants are those students prepared for college level work, with a strong record of school performance, above average achievement, and reading ability above or well above grade level. Thirty students will be selected for the ABSS Honors Institute at Elon this summer.

How do I apply? When will selections be made?

An interest meeting will be held on Thursday evening, March 30th, at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium at Walter Williams High School to share more detailed information. If you are unable to attend, download the application on the district website or your high school website. Applications should be submitted no later than April 21st. *Applications should be submitted no later than April 21st.* Students will be notified no later than May 1st if selected to attend.

What is the actual subject matter for the institute?

Students will explore a variety of current issues while advancing their skills and knowledge in the social sciences, literary analysis, leadership development, strategic planning, and design thinking. Of course, all academic disciplines will have some application or be integrated into the studies of the above topics.

What will I gain or accomplish by attending the ABSS Honors Institute at Elon?

There are several objectives for students that the collaborating partners set as goals for the institute. The first is simple - provide an enriching summer experience that mirrors the college experience for talented, motivated rising high school seniors. In other words, you should experience an exciting four weeks that are a “preview” of what college will actually be like!

The second objective is for students to have an opportunity to really experience what it means to engage in our democracy, whether through activism, participation, organizing, or volunteering. In other words, you should gain the ability to clarify your thinking about substantive issues, put theory into practice, and channel your passions for societal change to make a real difference!

Finally, students will have the opportunity to further build their resumes with a unique summer experience. More importantly, the experience of attending the Honors Institute is designed to result in personal growth and a continuing desire to be an active participant in our democracy. In other words, you

should further develop your leadership skills, better understand the importance of self-awareness, and develop a new way of thinking about solving problems on a larger scale!