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English 110

Professor Laminack

Academic Pressures at Elon

Every thirty minutes or so you hear the familiar, soul-crushing sound of papers and books being showed into a backpack and zipping it up; another student has finished their nights work but you are still here. On a given week night, you hole up, phone off, in some quiet place, whether it be the third floor library, carlton commons, the CFL, a commom room in your dorm and so on, away from your friends and from the Elon buzz in general. Most of the time, you are not the only one buckling down to crank out a paper, but when you are consistently the last one left awake on campus because of work, it can get to you.

Elon, being an academically challenging school, does put academic pressure on their students, and even if its not from the teachers in general, elon students tend to put a lot of pressure on themselves to excel in what they are studying. If its not the school/teachers or yourself, some parents still hold excessive influence over their son or daughter’s grades and academic work. A combination of all those pressures or even just one or two can cause a student to feel overwhelmed and under rested.

As exhausting as the academic pressures are during a normal school week, for the handful of students who feel an overwhelming amount of pressure, the weekend nights are the hardest. “I would be like embarrassed to go out in the halls when people were coming down and getting ready to go out because I thought people would judge me say like “it’s a Friday night, its 10 o’clock why are you in your pajamas, no makeup doing homework” and so yeah I felt “alone” in that sense in the beginning of the year because it seemed 90% of the student body was going out and I was just in, doing work….” says freshman Lilly DeNunzio. What does it say about our school that kids are embarrassed to go out in their hallways on the weekends because they are working? Is there any way to change this? Lilly, a hardworking International Studies major, states that she feels the pressure not only from the school, but from herself. “The workload is manageable” she says, but she prefers to work at a slower pace to make sure she turns in consistent, thorough work. She is an example of even though her parents don’t put this pressure on her, the combination of Elon’s academic pressures and her own expectations can feel overwhelming at times. When asked when she typically goes to bed, she responded that she has an average bed time of 2 or 3 in the morning.

In interviewing another Elon freshman, Drew Cook, he argues that he feels most the pressure from his parents and from his major. “My parents set a lot of expectations for me and on top of that I have expectations for myself which relate to not feeling like I’m enough for elon, that I don’t belong here…those pressures help me get through those obstacles”. As a bio/chem major, Drew has long labs in addition to lectures whose homework takes at minimum four hours to complete “All my friends and I pile in our study room in our hall and try to get our work done. Lab works takes around 4/5 hours every time we are in there”. In addition to talking about the academic pressures at elon, I prompted him about his sense of “bELONging” here at Elon to which he replied “There are many times when my academic pressures here at elon become so much that I feel as if I don’t ‘bELONg’”.

Plan

Elaborate on “bELONging” here at elon

Describe the students more

Talk about Drew’s experiences with friends going out on the weekends

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