

Headline: New HealthEU Director Hopeful For The New HealthEU Building

Deck: New HealthEU Director, Anu Räisänen discusses her thoughts on the new HealthEU Building coming in 2026.

Byline: Megan Walsh

Visuals: Building renderings (waiting for her to email), photo (slacked to Avery)

Social Caption:

Anu Räisänen began at Elon University in August and is already hopeful about the new possibilities coming to the Health EU program's new building.

The new Health EU building will be constructed in the field near the Innovation Quad. The building is set to open in 2026. Räisänen said groundbreaking will hopefully occur late this year or early 2025, as soon as the final details of architecture renderings are completed.

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“I think as soon as those plans are ready, there's no reason to wait for the groundbreaking,” Räisänen said. “So as soon as we know what exactly the blueprints are, I think we want to get that going.”

Räisänen said she is excited for everything students will have access to in the new building, highlighting several features like the new pool, demonstration kitchen, and climbing wall.

“If you've been to the pool here, you know that this is going to be a big change, and hopefully we can provide students more opportunities, whether that is students who are already used to swimming or doing activities in the water, or whether that is the students who don't actually know how to swim,” Räisänen said. “Hopefully, we can provide them with opportunities during their time at Elon to actually get comfortable with water, And therefore, also hopefully improve their enjoyment of water, but also it's a significant improvement in their safety as well.”

Beyond features, Räsänen said she hopes people will come into the building and find other ways to enjoy the space. People may come into the space for one reason like counseling services on the third floor or to go to a classroom on the second floor, but find new things along the way.

“At the same time, they would also walk past, for example, the new fitness center and see the climbing wall. They might see some new opportunities for health promotion and things like that.” Räsänen said. “So hopefully they're seeing new opportunities and participating in things that they didn't previously participate in.”

Räsänen only began working at Elon in August after moving from her last job at the Western University of Health Sciences in Oregon. She said she is trying to learn from everyone on campus and find the gaps that need to be filled in the HealthEU Program.

“I'm trying to learn as much as possible about all those good things, and then talking to people, how we can fill the gaps, or identify the gaps, or what do we need?” Räsänen said. “What do we don't have yet, and what can we work on together, ideally, to create these collaborative projects between the departments or institutions within Elon University.”

Additionally, Räsänen said she is connecting with students in student government, student organizations, and at College Coffee. HealthEU is also in the process of setting up a student advisory group to further connect with students.

“I think overall, the goal is that as we move forward and build HealthEU, even before we have that new, wonderful building, we have more things that people associate, that they took part in, that are part of HealthEU,” Räsänen said.

Räsänen said she hopes that people will remember the new building when they visit campus and see the importance of well-being to the community.

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