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Bringing Theory to Practice Announces \$1.5 Million Award from The Endeavor Foundation and the Launch of the Paradigm Project

Elon, NC: Bringing Theory to Practice (BT2P) today announced the launch of the Paradigm Project, a multiyear initiative for systemic change in undergraduate education, supported by a new grant of \$1.5 million from The Endeavor Foundation.

“The Paradigm Project has big goals: to help develop new models of holistic, inclusive, engaged education and to catalyze systemic change that realizes them for all students,” commented David Scobey, the Director of BT2P. “We have long worked with other educational change-makers to advance improvements in areas like student well-being, engaged learning, and the civic responsibilities of universities, but these have too often remained siloed. In a time of turmoil across higher ed, it’s urgent to move from piecemeal innovation to systemic transformation—and to bring together a broad coalition of faculty, staff, students, alums, and leaders in and out of the academy to make it happen.”

The Paradigm Project will advance these goals by braiding together three efforts:

- Advancing integrative and inclusive design that turns the siloes and partial innovations of the typical undergraduate experience into models of a new whole, one that is greater than the sum of its parts and that equitably welcomes and nurtures all students.
- Building a movement that includes educators, students, alums, organizational allies, and others committed to such change and advocates with decision-makers who have the power to realize or thwart it.
- Changing the dominant public narrative about the mission and future of higher education to focus not only on degree completion and economic returns, but also on the personal, social, and civic purposes of college.

Project activities will include field scans of current promising innovations, design labs that forge new holistic models of the college experience, and books and media that distill, debate, and disseminate the ideas and values of the project. For a fuller summary of the project’s goals, strategy, and activities, please see the Project Paradigm overview.

The initial years of the project are made possible by the generous support of The Endeavor Foundation, including the \$1.5 million award announced today. “The Endeavor Foundation is delighted to support the launch of the Paradigm Project, with its ambitious aim of bringing holistic and systemic change to undergraduate higher education in the United States,” commented President Julie Johnson Kidd. “While so much of the national focus is on what is

wrong with higher education, this project seeks to harness what higher education is doing right, connecting and integrating its strongest elements and thereby reanimating its core purposes. This resonates strongly with the Foundation’s values, and we can think of no one better suited to undertake it than Bringing Theory to Practice. Through its many projects and initiatives, BT2P has always been unafraid to take on big questions, to insist that academic institutions further not just the individual but also the social good, and to draw on their intellectual and imaginative resources to do so.”

The launch phase of the Paradigm Project supported by this new grant will extend through May 2025, and Elon University will continue to serve as the host and home of Bringing Theory to Practice. Elon was named the hosting partner of Bringing Theory to Practice in June 2020, and the partnership has created new opportunities for the university community to help shape innovative and creative concepts in higher education.

“I applaud both BT2P and The Endeavor Foundation for this important, ambitious initiative,” commented Provost Aswani Volety, a member of the BT2P Advisory Board. “Elon is honored to be part of a national effort that aligns with its values and advances an inclusive and engaged approach to learning for all students.”

About Bringing Theory to Practice: Founded in 2003, [BT2P](#) is a national initiative, headquartered at Elon University, that aims to advance the core purposes of college—active learning, preparation for democratic citizenship and meaningful work, the well-being of the whole person, and social equity—and to change higher education to offer these to every student.

About The Endeavor Foundation: Founded in 1952 by Christian A. Johnson, The Endeavor Foundation, Inc., is dedicated to improving the world for the benefit of all living beings, in the context of supportive societies in which all can thrive, a healthy climate, and a sustainable planet. Its founder believed above all in the power of the human mind and heart to improve the world when individual commitment and enthusiasm are undaunted by the prospect of hard work or the risk of failure.

About Elon University: Elon University has built a national reputation as a premier student-centered arts and sciences university that values strong relationships between students and their faculty and staff mentors. Elon is ranked among the top-100 National Universities by U.S. News & World Report, with a No. 1 ranking for excellence in undergraduate teaching and No. 9 for innovation. The university’s more than 7,000 students prepare to become the resilient, ambitious and ethical leaders the world needs, putting their knowledge into action on campus, in the community and around the globe.

For more information about BT2P and the Paradigm Project, please visit www.bttop.org or contact Kelly Jones, Communication & Public Outreach Coordinator at 336-260-7556 or at Kelly@bttop.org

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