

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Apparently, from a letter recently published in the Guilfordian, it is desirable to clarify certain aspects of faculty procedures.

The Guilford College faculty is organized into committees to facilitate its work. The Committee on Faculty has three regular sub-committees: Recruitment; Evaluation of Teaching; and Promotion and Tenure. The Sub-Committee on Promotion and Tenure does not hold open meetings; all deliberations of this particular faculty committee proceed on the basis of strict confidentiality. No non-tenured member of the faculty, and no student, serves on this faculty Sub-Committee. Students have their own independent committee. There is no necessity for the faculty committee and the student committee to agree, although if the recommendations are consistent some effort is made toward reaching a consensus. However, nothing bars the student committee from adopting its own procedures and it has done so.

The faculty committee presently consists of Ted Benfey, William Fulcher, Daryl Kent, Mildred Marlette, and Frederick W. Parkhurst Jr., and includes Cyril Harvey and Bruce Stewart, representing the college administration. The faculty committee has no final authority but is an advisory group. Our task (like that of the student committee) includes making recommendations to the President of the College. For this purpose we have invited departmental chairmen to meet with us, we ask fellow members of the department to submit written statements concerning the colleague being reviewed, and the faculty member under consideration may request or be requested to meet with us, and this has been done in the situation discussed in the recent letter to the Guilfordian.

In addition, we look at all available data and sources of information in an effort to discover teaching effectiveness and other qualities appropriate to the academic life and needs of the college. Many ingredients are involved including diversity of personnel, balance of disciplines, and adaptability to the demands of a smaller liberal arts college.

"Tenure" is acquired after six years of probationary status. "Tenure" means that a teacher may be dismissed only for reasons of incompetence, gross neglect of duty, or moral turpitude. "Financial exigency" as a reason is also acceptable, but the recent Bloomfield College case indicates that the financial emergency must be so serious that, in effect, the college has exhausted all other possibilities such as selling its surplus land.

Thus, "tenure" is a powerful protection for faculty but not to be lightly granted since it assumes, for practical purposes, a lifetime commitment. The function of tenure is to provide security for the faculty member who has passed probation and performs at a satisfactory level. The reason for tenure is to safeguard a faculty person against arbitrary treatment. A tenured member of the faculty cannot be dismissed just because that faculty member's politics, religion, or personality clashes with fellow faculty, the department chairman, or administrators, or, for that matter, students, alumni, donors, townspeople, or Trustees!

A non-tenured member of the faculty need only be given a year's notice that his services will not be required. There is no trial or a hearing as to a challenge to competency, or other cause for dismissal, prior to a grant of tenure. A decision whether to continue a non-tenured member of the faculty is a choice of

whether that person is as well qualified as other applicants for the position.

After tenure is acquired, no matter how well qualified applicants may be, there is no longer any choice. Tenured faculty members may not be dismissed just because an applicant may be better qualified. This means that, prior to tenure, the college feels an obligation to continually search for the most qualified persons for the college, and there is no guarantee that a very well qualified non-tenured person shall receive tenure if it is believed that the college can "do better."

Thus, we have very able persons on our faculty who are performing well who will not receive tenure. At the same time, we need to recognize the morale problem which may be created if we adopt the policy of continually replacing non-tenured faculty members with fresh faces. We may be heading toward a situation where all non-tenured faculty become academic nomads, moving from one college to the next; in effect swapping faculty in a search for the most qualified, at the price.

Recognizing this danger, we still need to be alert to protecting the interests of all concerned, students and faculty and the well-being of the academic community generally. Even for non-tenured faculty we need to be sensitive to the demands of academic due process even where this may not be technically mandated. Such a sensitivity we have sought to cultivate at Guilford College.

This explanation may help clarify the expressed concerns as to the work of the Subcommittee on Promotion and Tenure.

Frederick W. Parkhurst Jr.,
Chairman



"You Know, Ethyl, 68 thermostat degrees somehow don't seem as warm as 68 air conditioner degrees."

EDITORIAL

Mid-term grades are due this Friday. These grades, and the later grades they foreshadow, mean different things to different people. To us, they are a symbol of the bankruptcy of American education. "To offer a prize for doing a deed is tantamount to declaring that the deed is not worth doing for its own sake," stated educator A.S. Neill.

The system of reward and punishment by grades not only results in performance due to fear of failure instead of a search for knowledge, but blocks development of self-motivation and ultimately self-satisfaction. As long as we must compete with each other and be graded like eggs, we will be unable to grasp the true value of education.

Elementary schools are shifting away from the use of grades due to their destructive influence on the social and academic development of young children. Many progressive institutions of higher learning are searching for more meaningful means of evaluating students.

We do not advocate the abolition of traditional grades at Guilford, only the institution of alternative forms of evaluation for those who needs are not served by the present system. The option of alternative evaluations must be made available to all students and teachers in all courses if Guilford is to provide for differing individual needs.

Dear Mrs. Feagins,

To begin, thank you for your letter. Let me attempt to speak to each of your well-taken points, one by one.

As to the use of the word "gay", I have to agree that it is not entirely satisfactory. At the same time, it seems the best word available at present. Let me venture a few thoughts on this use of the word as a "restriction":

Webster's 3rd International Dictionary lists, as a fourth category of meaning after "joyous", "bright" and such, the following: 'a. given to social pleasures, b. inclined to the dissipations of society (licentious, loose, esp. of a woman), c. leading an immoral life, esp. engaging in prostitution d. homosexual...' The use of the word "gay", meaning homosexual, is apparently not recent; a lexicon of gay slang called *The Queen's Vernacular* traces the word back to the 16th century French word *gaie*, meaning homosexual man, and also to the British slang *gay girl*, meaning whore. But the associations of the word "gay" with "licentious" is no more recent, and when you suggest that "gay" in this sense suggests "dalliance"

you have some ground. It is, obviously, not the definition of the word I wish to assert; the association of "homosexual" with "licentious" is one I would like to break down.

I need in some way to indicate the concept of someone with homosexual experience who wishes to deal with it openly and in terms of integrating it into a full life, living among people as people rather than sexual types. Certainly the word "gay" on first hearing does not suggest all these things, but it comes much closer than "queer", "fairy", "pervert" or even "homosexual". "Homosexual" properly refers only to a certain kind of human sexual behavior, not to any "type" of person; it is a useful word only in that context. There are not homosexual persons, only persons with homosexual experiences; to have homosexual feelings or experiences or feelings is not an identity in itself, but only on aspect of many identifications that make up who we are.

I also agree with you that finding one's identity is serious business and that no role - particularly sexual - is to

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"It's quite explicit chief... only as long as the sun shines & the rivers run."

