

## Greek System would Rigidify Social System

James Martin  
Guest Writer

I don't understand the arguments about whether or not we should go Greek at Guilford. We already have fraternities. If we remove the gender requirement from the word fraternity, then every circle of friends becomes exactly that, a fraternity without the gender requirement.

Every circle of friends is dynamic. Circles change and grow or fall apart as the people in them change, grow or fall apart. To say that one group is exclusive and my

own is not would be a misrepresentation of facts. There are people on this campus that I would prefer not to spend my free time with. We all have the right to social freedom. But we do not have the right to carry our freedom so far that we, despite our best intentions, offend by the institution.

There are two aspects to life at Guilford. I have learned many things from the scholastic aspect, but the social education that I have received is as important to me as my major. Structure and organization are essential to the type of learning that comes

from the classrooms and professions, but can be detrimental to social learning. In a school where the social life centers around the Greek system, the Greek system becomes the social life.

Because the practice of expelling people for failure to perform up to acceptable academic levels is necessary for the health of our school, we must formally tell the individual when we have done so. But it is not necessary to formally inform someone when they do not conform to accepted social standards, nor is it necessary to remove them from the environment. We deserve a better, less offensive, more flexible method.

In an institutionalized social environment that the Greek system can provide, everything is cut and dry. "He is a Sigma Chi, she is a Delta Mu. He is cool, they are not cool, look at the cool insignia on my jacket." Why do we need these labels? Why do we need to conform? "He tried to be a Sigma Chi but we wouldn't let him so he had to join those losers over at Alpha Beta." "We have the best-looking women come to our parties at Sigma Chi."

However true these statements are (which are representations of comments that I have actually heard) they are telling signs of an institutionalized social system that has the power to point out specific individuals and deem them unacceptable. The power to put up a neon sign that says "We are the social life and all who pass here are cool and all those who we do not let pass here are definitely not."

In our free social system there are labels that we put on each other. We yell "jock" or "lizard" at each other and avoid each other often on the basis of appearance only. But these social lines are not distinct, and grey areas are enormous. I feel comfortable at Guilford resting somewhere inside the grey, vaguely separated, social circles that provide a middle ground between extremities.

The fraternity system would provide the framework that eventually could split that grey area into fortified opposing sides, with less to offer as a whole. This might attract a less diversified group of students and completely change the face of Guilford.

### From the Editorial Board ...

### Energy Misdirected but not Lost

The new apartments are going up. Senate has passed a revised drug policy. No, this isn't the latest Guilford progress report (with updates on construction soon to come)—just a reflection on the way two first-semester controversies have turned out.

There were petitions and there were forums and there were loud cries of criticism and protest. "Save the trees," "Preserve students rights," "Listen to me." At times, a visitor to campus might have wondered if he/she had stumbled upon some new sort of invisible dictatorship, given the rhetoric that was flying around. Unhappiness seemed to be the order of the day.

But ensuing events showed that all is not lost in this community; the very fact that forums and discussions were held is encouraging. Despite the increasing (perhaps inevitable) tendency to pick

sides and characterize disputes as The Administration vs. The Students (are we reverting back to the "seize the Dean's office" attitude of the 60s?), it's reassuring to know that there can still be open dialogue.

Even more reassuring is the fact that the dialogue can produce results, from discarding "One Strike You're Out" to limiting the number of trees cut down in the Guilford woods. And while those results may not satisfy everyone, they do at least show a willingness at Guilford to listen, to modify and to change direction, if necessary. Fortunately, student voices still count for something.

Let's just hope that the experiences of 1990-91 won't have to be repeated next year and that student voices will have time for things other than protest (just think of what all that energy could do for the yearbook...).

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### In Response

To the Editor:

I am responding to the letter in last week's Guilfordian which calls for "educated discourse." The letter claims to be a defense of "issues women have been raising," and although the authors probably meant to say "women's issues that have been raised," their word order seems to reflect a propensity to discount men's opinions on women's issues. Curiously, this seems to happen most when these opinions are dissenting.

The letter also says that "concerns and arguments... have been responded to with accusations." Why is it that one position on women's issues is the levelheaded and intellectual sounding "concerns and arguments" and other positions are irrational "accusations"? Why can't all positions be described in something at least resembling equal terms?

The accusations, we are told, "do not reflect any serious understanding of them," which, translated, means that "had you seriously understood our opinions, you would not disagree with them, so you must not have understood them." To this statement I reply that it is not that some people do not understand your opinions, it is just that they don't agree with them.

It also seems odd that the authors of the letter have felt that previous criticisms of their opinions contained a "Shut up" message. Anyone who expresses their opinions in a public forum, it seems to me, should expect and maybe even welcome criticism of their opinions. And while I agree that feminist issues do have a rich academic founda-

tion and a solid empirical base, it doesn't necessarily follow, like the authors suggest, that everyone with a feminist opinion is engaging in "educated discourse."

Marc Feuerberg

#### Complete Consensus not Reached

To the Editor:

I want to clear up a misconception of your writers concerning the decision of the new drug policy.

Though it appeared as though consensus was reached, many students in Senate know that, in reality, a faction which represented a majority of the student body won. When President Vance Ricks and others say that consensus was reached, they speak to the fact that no one openly opposed the policy decision after Ricks asked for approval.

After six weeks of debate, stalemate and indecision, those who opposed radically changing the current policy simply remained mute. Among that group, of whom I am one, was the understood notion that the policy would inevitably be changed, with or without their input, and the battle was no longer worth fighting. Instead, we worked to make the new policy as stringent as possible.

Admittedly, we accepted the policy changes when Ricks asked for approval by saying nothing, but we did not approve of the new policy. On such a delicate and demanding issue, complete consensus cannot be reached. Students hold fundamental divisive ideologies which in no way can combine into

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