

PERSPECTIVES

Guilford—Come Out, Come Out Wherever You Are

Peter Smith
Managing Editor

Although I usually choose to stay off the editorial page of the *The Guilfordian* and devote my energies to managing the paper and reporting important news at Guilford College, I find it necessary to break tradition. I feel obligated to make a few editorial comments about my latest article concerning internships and Jim Keith's removal as internship director.

My article, entitled "Keith Firing Calls College Priorities Into Question," was one of the most challenging articles I have ever completed as a news reporter. I say this not from the standpoint that the facts and opinions of the situation were complex, requiring dexterity and clarity in their presentation. This is to be expected of any complex news story requiring the explanation and presentation of a variety of facts and viewpoints. No, this article proved challenging not from the writing standpoint, but rather from the reporting standpoint.

Since the beginning of my freshman year as a *Guilfordian* member, I have never been so frustrated as a reporter than when I worked to gather facts and viewpoints from the Guilford community concerning this issue. I have never received more "off the record" comments from a variety of students, faculty, and administrators. Indeed, there exists, and I feel I can objectively make this judgment, a whole substratum of accusations, counter-accusations, important facts and feelings, even misinterpretations, and basic misinformation below the surface of this campus concerning the issue of internships and Keith's firing. This substratum of various emotions, feelings, and facts will most likely remain unreported and thereby unexam-

ined by the Guilford community. As a reporter I find this sad, perhaps even tragic, especially in the face of calls by various member of the community for more reconciliation and trust. In response, I pose the question, in all humbleness, to the entire Guilford community—How can we develop more reconciliation and trust when facts are not clear and viewpoints are not flushed out and examined fully, with the full force of community participation and scrutiny?

I believe both proponents and opponents of the college's decision to fire Keith are guilty of this criticism. I am not speaking strictly to the administration's diligent efforts, whether they be necessary or not, to resist revealing information concerning the exact rationale and decision process in evaluating and firing Keith. Ditto for the "sworn vow of secrecy" which the subcommittee of Budget and Planning decided to implement when confronted with questions as to why and how various decisions were reached in their collective evaluation of budget priorities and subsequent budget cuts. I would consider various opponents of the college's decision to fire Keith suspect, too, especially when accusations and/or rumors are circulated which invariably crumble under the challenge of public accountability. Rarely have I ever experienced such a gap between the quotable and nonquotable, between the "on the record" and "off the record." I believe this had negative effects for my article and *The Guilfordian's* attempts to speak to the facts of the situation.

Clearly, reality dictates that there must be efficiency, accountability, and a streamlined decision process at Guilford. I am not advocating a wide-open process in which everything is examined by every-

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one. Furthermore, Guilford is a rather sheltered institution in that a large majority of other colleges and universities would not dare allow such community involvement, participation, and comment concerning key issues and decisions of the college. But again, I was amazed in the reporting of this article at the misconception, misinformation, and mistrust which boil behind the scenes at this institution, bubbling up

to reveal themselves only behind close doors in interviews between one fact-seeking reporter and various individual students, faculty, and administrators. In addition, I was astounded at the fear and suspicion which a variety of members of the community expressed to me when asked to speak frankly about this particular issue

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CCE Students, College Losing Asset

Joe Yow
Guest Writer

Guilford College is losing one of its greatest assets—in the form of one Professor Carol Killian. It is a loss the college can ill afford, and a loss that needn't happen.

Carol Killian is a teacher, tutor, counselor, guide and friend. She doesn't just have a commitment to the values of Guilford: she embodies those values. The ideals that Guilford tries to impress on students are the very ideals that shape the way Carol teaches and the way she lives. In the classroom, the Academic Skills Center, or in individual meetings, she is enthusiastic, dynamic, and engaging; the students know Carol is there for *them*. The effort returned by the students reflects it; the grades earned by those students resound it. Continuing Education students especially benefit from Carol's obvious desire to make returning to school positive and rewarding. Students go away from Carol's classes with experience and skills that can be applied to other classes and their lives. There is a richness to Carol's teaching that can't be duplicated.

One of the institutional goals of Guilford is to "Enhance the quality of student life." Included with this goal statement is a lengthy list of what elements must be addressed to achieve this goal. The entire list of these "sub-goals" does not need repeating here, but one bears mention:

Guilford will create an environment for student life that encourages students to: think critically; live well together; develop tolerance; take initiative; communicate effectively; develop a sense of responsibility; respect and embrace diversity; and

show leadership.

These are all sound and honorable intentions, aims that reflect the values and tradition of Guilford. Any student who has taken a class with Carol Killian will take note that this goal statement is an object-oriented summary of Carol's teaching style. It is sad that such aims should be set aside by the college for the sake of weathering a budget crunch.

Carol Killian is being "released" from her position with Guilford at the end of this semester. The reason given for Carol's release was economic—she is non-tenured and the school is facing fiscal woes. News of a financial crunch is certainly not surprising; budget cuts are being felt every day. What is surprising is how Guilford decided to weather the recession—by dismissing an invaluable member of the faculty.

Historically, recessions are short-lived and survivable. Seasonable times of feast and famine are facts of life that have been borne, by all types of institutions, in a relatively painless fashion. Reflected over a 10- or 15-year period, this recession will probably seem small indeed. Yet, here at Guilford, it has caused short-sighted, reactionary measures.

The void created by releasing Carol Killian cannot be filled simply by "re-creating" the position. The school will have to look very hard to find someone with Carol's gifts. If, indeed, Carol's position was the victim of spreadsheet panic, then Guilford has fed one of the best professors we ever had to a paper tiger, and we will feel the loss for a long, long time.

The writer is a CCE/SGA member-at-large.

THE GUILFORDIAN

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