



THE GUILFORDIAN

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Follett draws mixed reactions



DAVE SCOTT

Because of its hurried takeover of the Guilford College bookstore, Follett has had some trouble meeting student demand. Empty bookshelves are just one of the problems.

Zack Hample
STAFF WRITER

As Follett Higher Education Group begins its first full semester in control of the bookstore at Guilford College, mixed reactions continue to accumulate from both students and members of the faculty.

Fifteen months ago, President Don McNemar made the controversial, but financially practical, decision to outsource Guilford's bookstore. While numerous benefits were guaranteed, many opposed the move, believing the corporate presence would challenge the friendly intimacy of the small Quaker campus.

One year later, the issue resurfaced when Follett took over and made its presence known. Pam Henry and Betsy Johnson, the former long-time bookstore managers and friends to the community, refused the offer to remain as part of the new operation.

The ensuing concern of community members swept the cam-

pus and cast a shadow on Follett. Intense scrutiny of the new bookstore has continued ever since.

First-year student Sarah Crane said, "I've had experiences with [the employees] being both friendly and also very cold."

"When Pam and Betsy were here," added junior Eli Abrams, "you couldn't get three feet past the door without them at least saying hello to you."

Fortunately, others like junior Jackie Thai, have been able to focus on the positives. "The books are definitely cheaper," she said.

Junior Zach Whicker pointed out that his recent experience inside the bookstore was "a lot more efficient -- I got out of there a lot quicker than I have in the past."

According to senior Stephanie Melesky, the good comes with the bad: "I think that efficiency has replaced being helpful. It's lost the personal touch that Guilford markets as being a presence on campus."

Numerous professors have also expressed dissatisfaction, some of whom share the belief that the initial decision to

outsource was ill-conceived. In response, the faculty established a bookstore committee whose purpose is to field complaints and help monitor Follett's proficiency in handling them.

Second-year philosophy professor Lisa McLeod is a member of this committee. "Some faculty have told me that some of their books hadn't come in or had been told that books were out of print when they weren't," she said.

McLeod explained that there was not a smooth transition between Pam Henry and Betsy Johnson and Follett. Understandably, they felt disheartened and did not stay to give instructions and assistance to the new manager.

McLeod said it is still too early to determine the long-term success of the new bookstore, but feels it is taking the appropriate measures. "So far, the Follett manager has been responsive to complaints."

Edwins Laban Gwako, a second-year professor of anthropology, is another member of the bookstore committee. He has heard that Follett's new, inexperienced staff has, on several occasions, received incorrect editions of books and failed to notify professors promptly and appropriately.

While Gwako acknowledges that complaints are legitimate, he suggested that "it might be advisable for us to go slow on whipping them...They are in the midst of that transitional crisis."

Gwako added, "I am convinced that they are doing everything possible to adapt to this college." He justified his confidence by considering the situation from Follett's perspective: Follett is a profit-motivated company, and their performance here will certainly affect their future endeavors.

President McNemar wants Follett to succeed here, not only

Please see **Follett**, page 2

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MLK Vigil: Keeping the Dream Alive



Kara Price
STAFF WRITER

"This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. I still have a dream. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

On January 26th, the Guilford College Community observed Martin Luther King Jr. Day through visual and performance art, panels, discussions, films, and public talks.

The day was one of remembrance and celebration of the life and legacy of King as well as a time to reflect on the existing issues of racism and injustice in this country.

The heart of the celebration was the candlelight vigil at which keynote speaker Constance Slaughter-Harvey's sentiments echoed that of the King quote above. Her speech synthesized the events of past and present in order to pose the challenging question: "Are we better off?"

Constance Slaughter-Harvey currently works as the assistant attorney gen-

Please see **MLK**, page 2