

Features

Annual QLSP seminar held: Quaker Education

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STAFF WRITER

What does it mean to be a Quaker college? How does Guilford fit into that vision?

The Quaker Leadership Scholars Program's (QLSP) juniors held a seminar on Quaker Education February 22-25 at New Garden Friends Meeting. "Constructing Beloved Communities: Solving Problems in Quaker Education Today" was open to Guilford College students, faculty, and staff as well as the wider Greensboro Quaker community.

The seminar began casually in the Hut with a movie, food, and informal discussion, giving way to a weekend of panels, lectures, workshops and meetings for worship.

Doug Heath, retired professor from Haverford, spoke Friday night about his research of Haverford and other Quaker schools as "schools of hope" and how they affect their students throughout their academic career as well as in later years. Heath's resources for the talk were the most recent of the ten books he has written and numerous articles and pamphlets on these and related issues.

"It was interesting to see a statistically based reference for all the things that hap-

pened to [people] in [their] life, such as the trends of success," first-year Troy Unverdruss said.

Saturday morning opened with a silent worship, followed by a panel discussion with Quaker college representatives for the purpose of assessing our shared values. Next, attendees had the opportunity to meet guest speakers in workshops.

After lunch, guest speaker Dwight Wilson spoke on "A Vision for the Role of People of Color in Quaker Schools." Wilson, president of the Independent Teaching Project, discussed his view of the ideal Quaker school with an emphasis on ways the needs of students of color can be better addressed.

"Every person that walks in the door should be respected, not merely tolerated," said Wilson.

He stressed the importance of a support system made up of students that come from the same background as well as an accurate representation of one's race in the faculty or boards. The environment provided is a form of respect, which is necessary for the preservation of the individual's sense of identity. In this lecture, as well as in his message in College Meeting for Worship about

obeying the spirit, Wilson shared many personal stories about his family, career and spiritual journey.

Wilson's talk was followed by a panel discussion with students, faculty, and staff who examined Guilford based on Heath's eight characteristics for assessing "schools of hope." The panel was made up of professors Max Carter and Dave MacInnes, senior Suzanna Roettger, and Ryan O'Dell of Project Community. Each spoke openly about their experiences at Guilford and how they impact their opinion of Guilford as a Quaker school.

"The panel really spoke to me," said junior Pearl Mueller. "These are people that I respect and want to hear from. I appreciate hearing them work through the issues and seeing how they've reconciled those disparities personally."

Observers became more involved in this portion as an open dialogue developed. Junior QLSPer Priscilla Ewen, who coordinated the panel, later said, "I think we had a nice balance of being analytical about the positives and negatives of our current state, as well as looking to the future."

On Saturday evening, Emma Lapsansky, history professor at Haverford, spoke

about spiritual wellness in college using a portion of a recently developed ten-hour series from Haverford's Physical Education Department as a model for such issues.

"Students come to college seeking spiritual grounding," Lapsansky said, noting that spirituality plays a role in everything from time management to crisis management. This lecture also eased into conversation, as Lapsansky paused to ask people what they were thinking or to do small group discussion exercises.

Lapsansky said she felt "well met and well taken care of. The [junior QLSPers] did a nice job conceiving a smooth committee structure. The intellectual as well as managerial energy was well coordinated."

As the seminar came to a close with Lapsansky's lecture, junior QLSPer Christina Repoley reflected with satisfaction, "It's really nice to be part of a group that's facilitated people coming together about these things. It was hard to imagine it before, in the planning stages, but it was really good to see it come together, to search for our identity and to see other schools' perspectives."

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