

Enrollment Increase Effects on Financial Aid

James E. Tatum
Editor-in-Chief

This is the second in a series of articles about the increase in enrollment at Guilford College and its implications for the Guilford community. This article looks at financial aid.

Guilford College expects to enroll around 2,000 students this fall, including traditional, CCE, and Early College students.

While a larger enrollment does mean more tuition dollars for the institution, it also means more students seeking assistance with the price tag. Many students at Guilford are on some form of financial aid - the college awards over \$8 million in aid to students each year, not including loans and scholarships from the federal government.

Anthony Gurley, Associate Dean for Enrollment, sees two implications that the increased enrollment could have on the financial aid program at Guilford.

"First, it depends on where that enrollment is coming from, traditional students or CCE," Gurley said.

"There are for all practical purposes no institutional grant scholarship dollars awarded [to CCE students]." Gurley adds that CCE students do receive some institutional aid, but calls it "statistically insignificant." He also indicated that the majority of the recent growth in the college's enrollment has come from the CCE program.

"On the other hand, any growth that comes from the traditional campus - and I hope we will

see some of that over the next year or two - will impact the financial aid programs, assuming you enroll students from the same economic strata that you are currently enrolling students," Gurley said.

"And if you are, then obviously there is an average institutional [cost] per student, and as the population increases, if that average stays about the same, the aggregate dollar amount has to go up."

"Of course, the other side of that is producing more net revenue," Gurley said.

Gurley said that the college was also gradually reducing its discount rate - the percentage of tuition expenses that Guilford funds itself through institutional dollars. Although the discount rate does not vary much from one year to the next, Gurley says the college has "a pretty good track record over last few years of driving down that discount rate just ever so slightly."

"The goal is to keep the discount rate as low as possible while enrolling as many qualified students who fit the mission of the college as possible," he added.

Gurley cites the increase in CCE enrollment as one factor that has allowed the college to reduce its discount rate. CCE students bring money to the college from the state of North Carolina under the NC legislative grant, dollars that do not count against the college's discount rate because they come from the state.

The NC Initiative

As the population of NC residents at Guilford increases,

the college receives additional funds from the state.

Every full-time undergraduate North Carolinian carrying at least 12 credit hours receives a grant from the state of approximately \$1,700 dollars, down from the last few years due to state budget cuts.

In addition to that, for every full-time equivalent student that all North Carolinians add up to, including full time and part time (two half-time students equal one full-time), the college receives about an additional \$1,100 from the state. Gurley estimates these additional funds total about a couple hundred thousand dollars each year, increasing the financial aid coffers.

"All of the money that Guilford College receives from the NC legislature - legislative tuition grants and so forth - is entirely used for financial aid purposes," said Phil Manz, Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer.

Manz added that some of the money went toward the individual students for whom the state made the contribution, while some of the funds are allocated to other needy students at the college.

Gurley said he felt that other administrators at the college understood that increasing the total number of students enrolled would require earmarking more resources for financial aid.

"You can't enroll more students of a similar economic stripe without allowing more financial aid dollars to be spent," Gurley said.



Associate Dean of Enrollment Anthony Gurley has put in a request for an additional clerical position in Fin Aid.

Sarah Austin

Growing Pains in Financial Aid?

But while the financial picture presented from bringing in more students to the college may appear rosy, the increasing enrollment has had its impact on the financial aid staff.

Gurley notes that over the last 18-24 months, while the CCE enrollment has close to doubled, the financial aid staff has not increased in size.

"We have the same financial aid staff at 1800 students that we had with 1200 students," Randy Doss, Vice President for

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"Understanding net revenue is key," Gurley added. If the college takes in more money per student than it must pay out in financial aid, then the college still comes out ahead financially, even if the student does not pay full price.

Gurley said that because the funds from the state in part went to cover the financial aid costs of needy students from out of state, the end result was that college funds that otherwise would need to be spent on financial aid were freed up for use on other projects, such as maintenance.