

# On the record with Community Senate's Ali Stewart

**Ben Kelly**

Staff Writer

**O**n March 22, Ali Stewart '06 was elected Senate president for the 2005-2006 school year. *The Guilfordian* met with Stewart to talk to her about Senate's role at Guilford and overcoming student apathy.

**How long have you been working for student government?**

As I first-year, I showed up to meetings even though I didn't have a position, out of interest. My sophomore year, I was secretary for (Student) Union and on Steering Committee. This year, I was secretary for Senate. I've been fairly involved.



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**L to R: John Holt (Trs.), Leise Gergely (VP), Stewart, and Lily Sharpless (Sec) will serve as Community Senate executives for the 2005-06 year**

**What sparked your interest in student politics?**

I'm a political science major. I think that's part of it. I see there's certain ways set up within an institution to make students' voices heard.

**Do you think that's the role Senate plays, to make student voices heard?**

I know a lot of students feel like we aren't heard very much. I feel like Senate is an avenue for voicing student opinion.

The more power students give it, the more power it would have.

I sense an apathy on campus. I think Senate is a way of giving students a place to have their opinions

heard, so things can happen.

**Speaking of apathy, your party was the only one to run in the Senate elections. Do you think that's a sign of people not investing very much confidence in Senate?**

It's the first year that I've been here that a party has run un-contested for Senate. (In the past), not only has it been tight races, in the last several years, there have been cases of contested elections, people double-counting votes and what-not. I was really surprised by how difficult it was this year to find a group of students who wanted to commit to running for Senate.

**How can Senate combat apathy? I think of the one most important ways**

is showing that when Senate decides to do something, it gets done. For instance, there have been a couple proposals, like the rock climbing wall and the Frisbee

golf course, where there is proven student interest. (Getting them done) will show that Senate does help with projects like this; it does make them happen. Student issues need to be addressed.

**It seems like a major challenge for Senate to speak for all people. It often seems like Guilford has a fractured student identity, many different voices, and I imagine it's hard to have to speak for all students.**

Yes, I think it's very difficult. Even though it's a very small school, there are very different students, and it's really hard to know everyone at the same time. But, I think it's important

to try and extend Senate to all people.

**How do you plan to stay in touch with the student body next year? Well, one of the things we did this year was to put up a bulletin board to explain Senate to everyone. Also, we've met in the caf every Wednesday. Just having more of a presence on campus is important. Also the *Guilfordian* column we've been doing this last year. I think these are all amazing ways to keep our name out there, and to get people to know we are. One of our goals is to have a website up that has useful information that people can use.**

**And you're going to build a website? Yes, and to have a calendar of events for every weekend. This weekend, there's so much stuff going on, but not everybody knows about it. We need a calendar to let everybody, all the different clubs, know what everybody else is doing, so they can network and help each other out.**

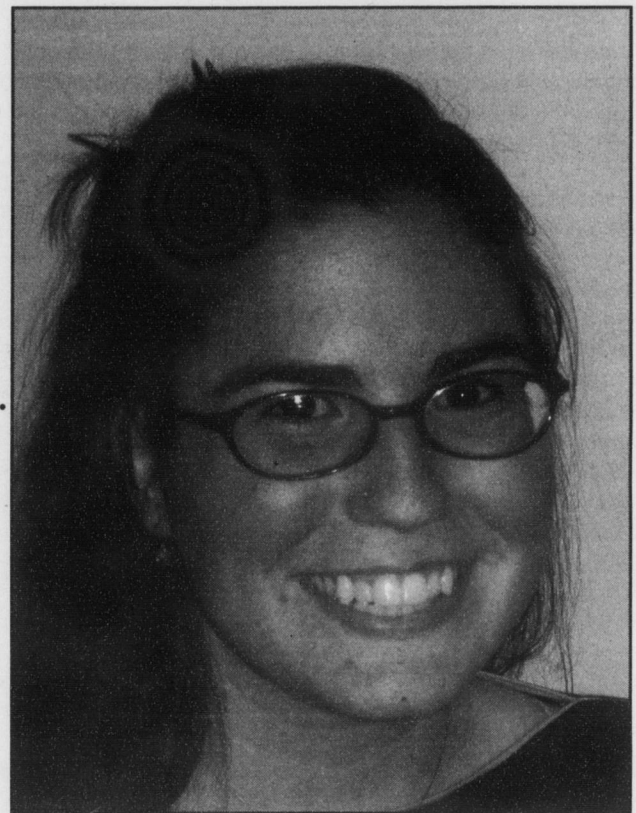
**It sounds like your main goal for next year, and your main challenge, will be uniting people.**

Yes, uniting and making communication (easier). Colleges are essentially bureaucratic institutions.

**Cutting out the red tape? Exactly.**

**Do you really think you'll be able to make a change?**

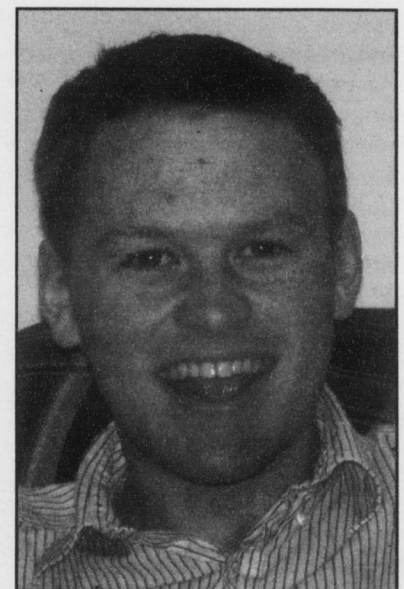
I think change takes longer than some people think, or would like. You know, Senate is not going to, overnight, prove itself as a reliable organization on campus, because for so many years, whether it's been true or not, students haven't believed that it is. I think by having stability in the next year, and the years to come-although this is not



BEN GULLEY/GUILFORDIAN

**Ali Stewart will serve as president of Community Senate for the 2005-06 school year**

going to happen until after I've graduated-people will think of Senate as a much stronger organization. I think my executives and I will be part of getting Senate to that place, but I don't believe it will happen immediately, unfortunately. But, I do think that little things like making communication easier, helping clubs connect, that kind of thing, can happen over the next year.☞



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