

CCE program embraces adult students

By Tim May
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 31, Dean for Continuing Education Rita Serotkin gave a presentation called "An Overlooked Minority: Adult Students' Persistence and Degree Completion," which analyzed the graduation rates of adult students across the country. The data is based on the National Center for Education Statistics.

The statistics of the presentation clearly showed differences between adult and traditional students. A 2005 survey showed that adult students are more likely to have children and 54 percent hold a job that requires them to work at least 30 hours a week. This shows that many adult students are part-time.

"We don't see many first-time, full-time adult students," Serotkin said.

As for Guilford College, the data presented was for Center for Continuing Education (CCE) students who were full-time in their first semester at Guilford. It showed that over 40 percent

of CCE students are non-white, most are female, and most hold an average GPA of 3.0. The most popular majors are business and elementary education and in the fall of 2001, it was estimated that 51 percent of CCE students graduated within five years.

One of the topics discussed at the meeting were the differences between CCE and traditional students, which Serotkin believes to be culture-oriented.

"A lot of adult students don't have a mentor pushing them," Serotkin said. "They need more guidance than traditional students."

Despite this difference, Claudia Lange, a senior in the CCE department, embraces the diversity between CCE and traditional students.

"I have never felt anything but welcome among the traditional

students," Lange said. "I learn so much from them. The students I have gone to class with for several years now are friends. We comfort each other and give each other advice. They help me and I help them."

Lange's experience with traditional students shows that Guilford's size plays a role in some of the CCE successes.

"We're doing better because some surrounding schools have more students and the adult students tend to fall through the cracks," Serotkin said.

This has to do with a smaller student population, and more interactions with professors. Lange believes that part of her success as a CCE student is due to her chemistry with teachers.

"Most have been very willing to accommodate the weirdness that comes along with returning

to school while balancing family, spouses, illnesses, even pets," Lange said.

While the Guilford CCE program is flourishing, it seeks improvements as well. A lot of CCE students, who often take class at night, want more classes to be offered at that time. Serotkin wants to improve on these factors to make CCE an even better environment for adult students.

A recent donation will continue the improvement and expansion of the CCE program. On Oct. 26, Steve James ('76) and his wife, Judy, made a commitment of \$210,000 to fund scholarships and service needs for CCE students.

"This endowment will help us guarantee that (CCE students) will have the support they need to achieve their dreams," Serotkin said on the Guilford Web site.

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Claudia Lange, senior CCE student

UNTENURED

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Professors (AAUP), "the term (contingent faculty) calls attention to the tenuous relationship between academic institutions and the part- and full-time non-tenure-track faculty members who teach in them."

On Oct. 31, in the Walnut Room, Cat Warren, president of the AAUP in North Carolina, and her colleague Deborah Anne Hooker explored issues related to contingent faculty in a presentation entitled "Trick or Treat? The Use and Misuse of Nontenure Track Faculty." Faculty and staff attendance was high, but despite an open invitation, no students attended.

"Nationally things are pretty grim," Warren said. "Faculty salaries have stagnated for the last 20 years. And not just for contingent faculty. We are faced with the death of tenure. (Only) 20 percent of new faculty hires are on the tenure track this year, the lowest percentage ever. That is not a good thing."

Tenure is a long-established policy in most colleges and universities.

If it is earned, it basically guarantees a professor's a job at their college for life. One of the most important aspects of tenure is that it safeguards academic freedoms on campus, ensuring that professors can pursue theories or research that is not in line with established hierarchies on campus or in society.

Tenure is also expensive and in an era when many colleges and universities are short on funds, many administrations have been trying to cut back on the number of tenured professors hired.

College attendance rates are mushrooming as well so schools have had to resort to non-tenure-track professors or contingent faculty. These faculty are not safeguarded by tenure and are therefore in a more vulnerable position when expressing contentious



DAN MILLER/GUILFORDIAN

Cat Warren addresses Guilford faculty and staff in the cafeteria's Walnut room.

views.

Warren spoke on campus last year at the behest of Dana Professor of Psychology and President of Guilford's nascent AAUP chapter Richie Zweigenhaft.

"We picked (the topic of contingent faculty) because this is an issue nationally," Zweigenhaft said. "(We wanted) to take a look and make sure we were being as fair and conscientious as possible at Guilford. They found that our school is doing pretty well."

"Guilford has 35.7 percent part-time; that's not awful," Hooker said. "It's not a horrible place to be but there are places that are better. Only five percent of Davidson's faculty are contingent."

"There were two areas that she thought we needed to work on," Zweigenhaft said.

"One was clarity in the agreement. What are the agreements (and) what are the expectations for part-time people? Do we expect them to do anything more than teach a class

or two?"

Hooker was also concerned that too much emphasis is placed on student evaluations, privileging popular teachers while disadvantaging demanding teachers.

She suggested that peer review was equally important and that contingent faculty should be given enough feedback and enough time to fix what they have been critiqued on.

Nationally contingent faculty are routinely underpaid and overworked.

According to the Faculty and College Excellence campaign, many of these faculty hold master's or doctorate degrees but are still paid around \$20,000 a year, even with a full course load.

"We all love what we do," Warren said. "We don't need to consider that we are working 65 hours a week while part-time faculty are cobbling together an existence, driving from campus to campus, where they don't have offices or computers. It is really an embarrassment but it is also the future."

PSYCHOLOGY

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The APA justifies its position of involvement, however, by asserting that the presence of psychologists can serve to mitigate the abusive measures that interrogators resort to. But for Earlham's and Guilford's psychology departments, this was not any more convincing of an explanation than it was for Shinn.

"Given what we know about the kinds of behaviors that have been deemed acceptable to the Bush administration, it would be naïve to assume that the presence of psychologists is stopping much in terms of abuse," said Richie Zweigenhaft, Dana professor of psychology.

"The biggest concern that motivated this resolution is that we really don't know exactly how psychologists are being used in these settings," said Michael Jackson, the professor of psychology at Earlham responsible for drafting the document.

In his efforts to create a united front to reform the APA, Jackson wrote to colleagues at other colleges. So far only Guilford and Smith College have responded.

"Most troubling of all is that by allowing psychologists to continue to participate in the interrogations of detainees in secret military and CIA facilities, it continues to aid in legitimizing these interrogations and foreign detention centers," Jackson said.

Jackson also added that most of these interrogations are conducted in places where detainees are deprived of due process of law, which is "a context that psychologists should not be implicated in."

The resolution was received at Guilford by Zweigenhaft, who after reaching a speedy consensus with his colleagues, agreed to sign on.

"We wrote back (to Earlham) and said, 'we're in agreement, add our name to your list,'" Zweigenhaft said. "The APA came out with a very lukewarm, not very progressive, challenging, or decisive position on the role psychologists might play in some of these interrogations, so naturally there were some psychologists who were disappointed."

While Zweigenhaft sees this resolution as significant, he is not entirely convinced that it will lead to immediate change in the system.

"I think its part of an accumulation of concerns that are being raised that will have an effect," Zweigenhaft said. "Yes, it's a positive step, but I don't think it in and of itself will end these kinds of interrogations."

Nonetheless, this unprecedented move on Earlham's behalf is expected to catch on in the psychology departments of other small, private, liberal arts schools — especially Quaker-affiliated ones.

"I feel proud that Guilford's psychology department is part of this resolution," said Carly Mills, a sophomore psychology major. "It's important that these inconsistencies in the APA's practices are being addressed."