

Special Term sparks excitement, questions



By Victor Lopez
STAFF WRITER

The future of the Special Term, slated to start its pilot at Guilford College in Jan. 2013, seems pretty promising for students; however, implementing the term seems to leave as many questions as answers.

The Special Term, a part of the second Strategic Long-Range Plan (SLRP II) for "student outcomes," will give students a chance to do a wide variety of projects in three weeks over the January break.

The community has not been informed about how we can align this program with our core values, namely equality. Equality for students and faculty.

What exactly does a "Special Term" include?

Special internship opportunities and projects would give students hands-on experience in disciplines and specialties they choose.

Imagine you are pre-med and get a chance to spend three weeks working in an emergency room, getting that

experience and exposure that would never be imaginable any other way. Or you get the chance to study away or abroad for three weeks instead of an entire semester.

For students, the Special Term means added experiences that they can bring directly back to the college, which will enrich our learning environment.

What has not been figured out yet is how students who cannot afford to pay would be able to enjoy the option of a Special Term at Guilford. As the pilot stands, there would be financial aid offered to assist students who might want to take the term.

There are discussions about potentially changing the tuition structure as a whole to have everyone pay for the Special Term, if the term proves successful in the pilot.

Currently, the administration is hoping only to hammer out the scheduling portion of the term and then move on to address other, more challenging issues — faculty compensation, how students will be able to afford the term, and so on.

For faculty, who are already overworked and underpaid, the prospect of being required to teach a Special Term means more work and less pay.

Faculty has warmed to the idea of the Special Term, even in the face of a daunting workload, because Guilford professors want what is best for their

students, hands down.

Guilford professors, by my estimation, do not choose the college for the money they earn, but because most love the college. It is not as if a professor being concerned about compensation is a sign of greed.

Other drawbacks for faculty are the changes that would be made to the tentative new academic calendar that shortens the already crammed fast-track schedule.

Under the current proposal of administration to faculty, the fast-track schedule would be cut by a week, placing more pressure on departments like accounting that will have to rearrange a schedule that is already incredibly concentrated.

Without actually seeing this term through its pilot and breaking a few eggs it is unreasonable, unacceptable even, to say the program will not succeed.

Equally, without the full consideration of the professors' need for compensation and with consideration of class workloads that are already in place, it would show wanton and poor judgment for the administration to rush ahead; fortunately this is not happening and the planning moves forward carefully.

For more information about the Special Term look for an online News article at www.guilfordian.com.

Greek life: an untapped possibility



By Laura Devinsky
STAFF WRITER

Greek Life. The term is shunned, run away from, and otherwise a non-existent entity on Guilford College campus.

But why should it be? Why shun something that actually supports our values?

Guilford is a school that supports community, diversity, excellence, integrity, justice, and stewardship.

But did you catch that? Missing is "equality" because many students don't believe that Greek Life is "equal."

Mind you, not all fraternities and sororities are equal. They select who they want in their exclusive groups, but we already do that at Guilford if you think about it: sports teams, first-year housing, and theme houses.

Sports teams are picked by coaches, first-year housing is based on year standing, and theme houses are just groups of friends with a mission — they are all exclusive groups that already exist on Guilford campus. So adding another exclusive group would not change that many of our social values.

"I sort of think of Guilford women's rugby as a sisterhood," said sophomore Emily Morazán. "We are a group of girls who work hard and have fun together."

And is that not what fraternities and sororities are at heart — groups of individuals who work hard and have fun together?

However, many would consider the definition of "fun" in this context as partying.

"It far too often really boils down to, 'we want to party,'" said Max Carter. "Alcohol is enough of a problem at Guilford; adding a Greek system to it would only exacerbate the problem."

But with the steady disappearance of traditional bonfires, there are fewer social opportunities, and Greek life — or a brotherhood/sisterhood type program — could solve this.

Giving students an opportunity to meet new people through rushing and multiple Greek family parties are some things bonfires have given us in the past.

Social opportunities that clubs initiate surround one issue, maybe two, and nothing more. They strive to solve, serve, provide, or complete their goal, while sisterhood and brotherhood are brought about by core values, certain issues, and the idea that they have each other's backs.

Specifically, sisterhoods and brotherhoods are social-justice driven clubs: they are required to do philanthropic work, but with a social focus.

Sisterhoods and brotherhoods would also be held to certain standards; hazing wouldn't exist — and if anyone even tried, the entire campus would know within a day.

Hazing, partying, and the idea of rush week are all negative ideas that surround Greek life. Guilford is already a nontraditional place as it is, so therefore there would be less, or even none at all, of the traditional Greek life problems.

These negative associations only cover a small portion of Greek life and sisterhoods/brotherhoods. Greek life can bring about community and hospitality and teach vital leadership skills for later in life.

Guilford does not necessarily have to have Greek life and would not have to make these sisterhoods and brotherhoods the center of attention. But they would be a little something extra for students who wish, or wished, to be part of a sisterhood/brotherhood and are not able to get that here.

Sisterhoods and brotherhoods may not be brought about today, and probably not tomorrow, but it is a thought.

CAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

We want less government, but...



By Jacob Rosenberg
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Upon entry to Pat McCrory's website, you will find this 2008 Republican nominee for the governorship of North Carolina with an arm around his dog and a smile on his face.

McCrory is expected to run against current Democrat Governor Bev Perdue in a rematch of 2008. With Perdue at a low 40 percent approval rating even after a post-Irene seven-point jump, McCrory is an early favorite.

With the 2012 Democratic National Convention being held in Charlotte, what would be the consequences of a Republican governor, especially with a Republican party schizophrenically calling for smaller government while acting out the big-government fantasies of the far-right wing?

One of the scarier possibilities with would be a continuation of the right wing crusade against gay rights.

Despite the fact that there is already a law limiting marriage to a man and a woman in North Carolina, the Republican legislature has passed a bill for a May referendum vote to make this anti-gay legislation part of our constitution.

On the N.C. GOP website, this party recalls a history of being "freedom fighters." With this bill, they look more like George Wallace screaming for segregation.

McCrory supported this constitutional amendment and, with him as governor, you can expect any anti-gay legislation to be signed quickly.

This vote, which is conveniently during the Republican presidential primaries, is even likely to help out the vote for far right candidates like Rick Perry and Michele Bachmann. You can thank in part our Republican legislature for giving these two candidates a better shot at the presidency.

When it comes to big business, welfare, or health care, "get government out of our lives" has been the motto of these far-right Republicans. Governor Rick Perry has even called Social Security unconstitutional in his book "Fed Up!", but stopping two people from marrying should be put in more constitutions?

There is still more going on than just constitutional amendments. A new push by our Republican legislature slyly tries to do the same to young and minority voters as the suffrage amendment did so many years ago.

Recently, the N.C. legislature passed a law calling for photo ID when voting, which was vetoed by Governor Perdue.

To many it seems common sense. McCrory has even made it a central part of his campaign, but when looked into deeper, this voter ID law is not to prevent voter fraud, but rather a clever way to make sure fewer and fewer people are involved in the election process.

Voter ID laws would effectively disenfranchise the up to 12 percent of eligible voters who do not have government issued photo ID, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

Coincidentally, the percentages are even higher for seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income voters, and students. That means there is a higher possibility if you vote here in North Carolina as a student your vote could be disenfranchised because of not having an up-to-date ID.

If McCrory wins it could also be dangerous for the re-election of President Obama. With the Democratic National Convention in North Carolina, Obama is hoping to win this swing state with a strong effort here. However, if Perdue performs poorly there is a huge possibility this 2008 blue state will turn red in 2012, and send a signal all across the county that Obama cannot win the swing states.