

Panel discusses the self-immolation of Tibetan monks

FACULTY AND STUDENTS GATHER IN THE LEAK ROOM NOVEMBER 9TH TO LEARN ABOUT THE RISE OF RITUAL SUICIDES OCCURRING DURING RECENT PROTESTS IN TIBET

By Rory Molleda
STAFF WRITER

It starts with a some gasoline and a single match, but it goes far beyond that.

On Nov. 9, students packed into the Leak Room listened to a faculty panel entitled "To Burn Oneself in Protest" that discussed the recent protests and self-immolation of monks and nuns in Tibet.

Self-immolation is a deliberate and willing sacrifice of oneself by fire.

"A lot of people don't understand how someone can withstand sitting in a position while they're being engulfed in flames," said Bryan Brendley, assistant professor of biology. "But with self-immolation, most scientists have reached a consensus that the nerves are so damaged that you cease to feel anything."

Although Brendley described himself as the odd man out in the panel, he provided valuable information about the forensics of self-immolation. Brendley said that when someone sets themselves on fire, the cause of death is from inhaling carbon monoxide and other fumes from the flames, which causes heart and lung failure.

The panel also discussed China and the history of their conflict with Tibet.

Zhihong Chen, assistant professor of history, believes that part of the problem is that there is an assumption among the Chinese people that modern China should inherit the properties of the old Chinese dynasties. This is also why the government of China has tried to keep Tibet under their control.

"When Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China, he felt that other countries would step in if they did not take control of Tibet," said Chen. "The reason the Chinese government felt it needed to assert its claim to Tibet is because foreign powers have been involved in the region since the beginning of the twentieth century and they wanted to avoid that happening again."

George Guo, associate professor of political science, discussed the political climate of China in the last 50 years. China refused a liberal democracy for a system that emphasizes community welfare over individual rights, but the people of Tibet believe they should not be forced to be a part of that state.

Almost every protest or act of self-immolation in Tibet has to do with political and religious freedom, according to Guo. Guo said that when Mao Zedong came to power, his first goal was to gain complete control of the country and all of its peoples.

"Under Mao, there was no space or freedom for religion," said Guo. "He believed people should convert their beliefs to support communism."

Eric Mortensen, assistant professor of religious studies,

agreed with Guo and said that this oppression of religious beliefs in China is what forced the Dalai Lama to leave Tibet in 1959 and is the same reason he will not be returning anytime soon.

Mortensen said that self-immolation is a form of protest that has never been seen in Tibet until recently.

"The monks say that there's nothing left for them to do, and, out of desperation, they call for the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet right before they kill themselves," said Mortensen.

Although many people might believe that China is completely to blame for the oppression and its poor relationship with Tibet, former Professor of History Dottie Borei believes it is not so one-sided.

Borei said that both China and Tibet have falsified documents in an attempt to change history and prove their respective agendas. Although she acknowledged that Tibet has been oppressed by China, Borei does not believe the autonomous region will receive freedom anytime soon.

"More than anything, China wants to have stability," said Borei. "And the Chinese government won't give up land any more than the United States will give up land stolen from Native Americans."

The panel gave a thorough overview of Tibetan history and its relationship with China while also highlighting the importance of the Tibetan monks and nuns that have sacrificed themselves trying to change the current situation.

"Tibetans have given up the ability to achieve political freedom," said Mortensen. "What they want now is the ability to practice their own religion."

Major changes for in-state tuition aid

By Casey Horgan
STAFF WRITER

Beginning next fall, Guilford students who live in North Carolina will face considerable changes to their financial aid packages. The N.C. General Assembly recently cut several state-based financial grants.

Budget pressures have led to the discontinuation of the N.C. Legislative Tuition Grant, N.C. Contractual Scholarship Funds, and the N.C. Lottery Scholarship.

The most widely awarded financial aid of the three, the NCLTG, has been around for over 35 years and is not need-based. Recent budget shortfalls have led the General Assembly to make cuts. In the 2008-2009 academic year, NCLTG appropriated nearly 60 million dollars to eligible students.

To put that number in perspective, one academic year at Guilford costs approximately \$43,000. The total funds awarded in 2008 could have provided one Guilford student with enough money to attend school for 1,395 years.

These former scholarships and grants are being replaced by a single need-based scholarship that has yet to be named. According to the Guilford Beacon, the budget for this is limited, and, as such, awards will be appropriated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Junior Cody Sblendorio currently receives the NCLTG, and believes the move by the General Assembly to cut funding for the grant goes against a national emphasis on education.

"Although the deficit is high and we need to concentrate on fixing our economy, it's important that we don't do it at the expense of education," Sblendorio said.

"The loss (of the grants) could jeopardize students' ability to come here. Guilford is an expensive school."

Deborah Stephens, CCE SGA secretary, is worried about the lack of publicity and the effect it could have on CCE students, in particular.

"We're almost like transients ... we come and we go and we're not necessarily connected," Stephens said. "It's important to me to make sure that all the CCE students file their FAFSA as soon as they can on Jan. 1, 2012 in order to qualify for any financial aid."

"One of the incentives to go to this college has been the NCLTG for CCE students because it actually almost covers the cost of one whole class. With a couple hundred more dollars, we're able to have at least one class paid for, and then maybe through Pell Grants or additional loans, we're able to attend college here. So losing that kind of money out of our financial aid package is really critical to whether we're going to be able to continue or not."

Students who wish to receive funds from the yet-to-be-named scholarship are advised to fill out a FAFSA form after Jan. 1, as the scholarship is limited. Financial aid counselors are available in New Garden Hall.

Guilford's stance towards financial aid is available on its website: "We make every effort, within the limits of our available financial aid resources, to assure that no qualified student will be denied the opportunity to attend Guilford College simply because they lack adequate funds."

According to Student Financial Services, approximately 92 percent of all Guilford students are receiving financial assistance. Of those, approximately 58 percent are receiving aid based on financial need.

GREENSBORO ELECTION RESULTS 2011



Robbie Perkins, Mayor



Marikay Abuzaiter, City Council, At-Large



Yvonne Johnson, City Council, At-Large



Nancy Vaughan, City Council, At-Large



T. Dianne Bellamy-Small, City Council, District 1



Jim Kee, City Council, District 2



Zack Matheny, City Council, District 3



Nancy Hoffman, City Council, District 4



Trudy Wade, City Council, District 5

COURTESY OF YES! WEEKLY