

## It's just nudity, don't try to cover it up



By Haley Hawkins  
OPINION EDITOR

The college campus: a place for exploration and freedom of thought. A test run for the "real world." So the common understanding goes. It is hard to accept that any aspect of the higher education realm would be treated as anything less.

It is astonishing to believe, in this day and age when constitutional freedom is used in persuasive campaign slogans and catchy ads of patriotism, that a reputable North Carolina university would find itself embroiled in a case of old-fashioned repressive censorship.

But let's take a few steps back first.

East Carolina University, located in Greenville, N.C., is home to the well-established collegiate newspaper, the East Carolinian (sound familiar?). It is also home to a vast student community and, of course, Saturday football games.

In fact, it was during one such game on Nov. 5 that a surprising addition was made to the line-up. During halftime ceremonies, John Sieglinger, a student at Wake Technical Community College, tore across Bagwell Field in Dowdy-

Ficklen Stadium — completely naked. What's more, a picture of the incident was published in the East Carolinian the following week.

Yes, this certainly stimulated shock and awe. After all, public nudity is never seen with indifference.

However, the truly shocking piece of this story occurred after the initial fiasco, after Sieglinger's detention, after the establishment of misdemeanor charges. For, after all was said and done in regards to punishment for the scandalous act, faculty adviser for the East Carolinian Paul Isom was told by ECU administrators to pack up his things and hit the road.

"They told me they wanted to go in a different direction," Isom commented in an interview with the Daily Reflector. "They were very cautious not to give me a real reason."

Call me brash, but this sudden decision to go in a "different direction" is quite the euphemism. More than likely, it is a not-so-stealthy way of reining in the newspaper's freedom of speech, if for no other reason than to cover the administration's collective hide and prevent any future embarrassment.

Since his firing, the issue of this being a violation of Isom's first amendment rights has been heavily under question. Accordingly, ECU released a public statement in response to this speculation.

"The First Amendment demands public universities provide student journalists the opportunity to make their own news decisions and learn from them without

interference. ECU puts that principle first. It has upheld it, especially in this instance," said Virginia Hardy, vice chancellor for student affairs.

In reading this statement, one question comes to mind. If ECU fully recognizes students as the decision-makers and holders of accountability, why is Isom now out of a job? The East Carolinian faculty adviser since 2008 and a veteran journalist, he undoubtedly deserves more respect than he is being given (not to mention his job).

As a college newspaper editor and writer myself, I would expect that administrators would defend my rights, as well as those of my colleagues and faculty adviser. Those rights undoubtedly include the right to free speech, something that is ingrained in my being as inherent.

Yes, one would think that a college campus would be the perfect place to exercise one's first amendment freedoms, to explore one's leadership abilities without running the risk of a slap on the hand at the first sign of impropriety.

Yet, though the nudity in the photo is virtually indiscernible by even the keenest eye, this exercise of first amendment rights has caused a true uproar. Sure, you may deem the editorial decision in poor taste. But is it unlawful? Is it beyond the editorial board's jurisdiction? Is it disrespectful?

No. It is a prime example of uncensored journalism, which, in case anyone has forgotten, still occupies a long-standing and comfy spot in that little document called the Constitution.

## Tough economic climate calls for patience rather than pointing fingers



By Victor Lopez  
STAFF WRITER

North Carolina's decision to replace the state's entire student aid program is alarming.

The financial cuts that are involved will affect programs across the board at Guilford College and it is not going to be pretty. Every department campus-wide will be affected.

Last year, the college claimed we would be seeing a financial aid decrease of \$1.4 million over the course of two years. The forecast was wrong.

The actual cost to Guilford College will be \$2.2 million, which amounts to about 8% percent of our budget.

Though I rightfully question power, instead of pointing fingers, it is imperative during this rough financial time that I encourage our community to support the administration led by President and Professor of Political Science Kent Chabotar.

Before you lay down the paper and swear me off, consider this: Chabotar is no stranger to financial crisis. When he was offered the presidency at Guilford in 2002, the college was running multi-million dollar budget deficits with double-digit endowment spending even though the campus was poorly maintained and

employees had not received a raise in two years.

Guilford needed \$10 million to put the college back on the road to financial equilibrium.

Though the college never received the full amount, he still balanced the budget and cleaned up the campus grounds throughout the years.

In his free time, Chabotar and other staff members, such as former vice president of finance and special assistant to the president Jerry Boothby, have been asked to help create strategic plans to keep other colleges afloat. This shows that, not only has the team kept Guilford out of the red, but also their sage advice is in demand at institutions across the country.

"We usually consult one or two institutions a year," said Boothby.

It is also important to remember that Chabotar is an educator, as well as an administrator, who is sincerely eager to explain strategic and financial concepts in an understandable way to lay audiences.

Equally as important, as a trained CFO he can interpret spreadsheets and financial statements to uncover underlying trends.

Chabotar does not believe in platitudes and rhetoric as much as data both historical and comparative, which keeps him levelheaded in times of crisis.

Along with being sound-minded, Chabotar reminded me that he was strategic.

"I deal in two levels in almost everything I do: short term and long term," he said. "You cannot decide one without the other. Stay ahead of the competition. Anticipate and welcome change."

Just on the basis of those reasons alone, I am undoubtedly assured Guilford's administration will care for the students and faculty during what is expected to be a very tight fiscal year ahead. Only time will tell if that faith has been misplaced — though I doubt I'm wrong.

## Staff Editorial

## Exercise your right to help others

Sometimes it can seem like holidays like Martin Luther King, Jr. Day serve their biggest purpose as an opportunity for politicians to pander. Especially in an election year, it can be easy to be jaded even at a place like Guilford College.

Luckily, we are part of a community that offers extensive celebrations of MLK, Jr. Day — celebrations that are more an opportunity to learn and reflect than an opportunity to celebrate in the common meaning of the word. Though it may be a cliché, MLK Jr. Day is not a day off at Guilford, but a day on.

That is the ideal, in any case, and the individual Guilford student is fortunate to be in an environment where they can realize that ideal if they so choose.

We should not let the holiday pass, however, without taking the time to reflect on the man himself. King is forever remembered for his work in the Civil Rights Movement, but we ought not think of him only in terms of racial justice.

King is often thought of as an African American leader. This is a limiting viewpoint, as King was a leader of all people, not a leader for a specific race. His work stands as a lesson of peace and humanity to people of all races.

Though we may become jaded politicians invoking this holiday for our own purposes, and we may be tempted to let it pass without meaningful reflection, let us not lose sight of that which King had to teach us.

These are uncertain times, and while the problems we face will not be solved merely by invoking the wisdom of past leaders, we may still find something to encourage us to find our own solutions. Hopefully, these words from King may give us some encouragement for the trials we face:

"Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they don't know each other; they don't know each other because they cannot communicate; they cannot communicate because they are separated."

In honor of King, let us not be separate, but together. Let us purge our fear and hatred of one another, and instead look to the future, united with courage to support each other, so that we may find the solutions to the problems of our age.

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