

Financial setbacks call for re-examination of financial policies

By Victor Lopez
STAFF WRITER

With Board of Trustees meetings looming, coupled with the new fiscal year approaching, Guilford College administrators continue to try to understand the long-term implications of the new state-based aid fund and what those changes will mean for the college as a whole.

Randy Doss, vice president for Enrollment Services, told *The Guilfordian* that the administration is working hard to lessen the financial impact for future students.

"We are studying the many variables involved in an attempt to create policies and procedures to lessen the impact these reductions will have for as many students as possible," said Doss. "The lack of state-based funding will mean the college will seek more out-of-state students in the coming years."

Director of the Friends Center and Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter told *The Guilfordian* that Guilford's recruiting practices have focused on equality rather than socioeconomic status.

"During times of financial change, some colleges have found it easy to recruit wealthier students while ignoring those who have need, a marketing strategy Guilford has resisted," said Carter. "Over the years, Guilford has recruited very carefully—finding ways to be within the very fine line of the frills offered by High Point University and the sprawling campus of Elon."

Dr. A. Hope Williams, president of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities, visited Guilford College on Jan. 20 to meet with senior staff members regarding the state's new blueprint for financial aid as it applies to Guilford College.

The NCICU represents independent higher education in the areas of state and federal public policy and on education issues with the other sectors of education in the state.

North Carolina legislators eliminated the state's current

student aid program for private colleges and universities, affecting student financial aid at Guilford College by \$2.2 million over two years while a new, centralized need-based system is put in place.

Williams, who sits on Governor Beverly Perdue's N.C. educational cabinet, took part in discussions with senior staff about how to proceed in the face of state funding cuts and funding program changes.

"We discussed how Guilford College ended up with one of the highest percentage cuts in the state, and what kinds of changes in the regulations in the next biennium might

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Randy Doss, vice president for Enrollment Services

benefit Guilford College students," said President and Professor of Political Science Kent Chabotar.

Attorney Carole Bruce, chair of the Board of Trustees Finance Committee, told *The Guilfordian* that the Board of Trustees is aware of changes in the N.C. financial aid program.

The Finance Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees on tuition and student fee changes, endowment use and total revenues and expenses based on assumptions in the budget document that is currently being prepared by the campus budget committee and the administration.

"Even though the college is facing extraordinary

circumstances with a major change to the North Carolina financial aid program, I expect that the budget process will be followed by the college and the Board of Trustees," said Bruce.

Professor of English Jim Hood told *The Guilfordian* that the particular budget cuts are still unclear.

"I can say that any cuts will be difficult because Guilford doesn't have budget fat; there are no easy things to cut that won't affect, at least in some way, program delivery," said Hood.

Hood said that since the cuts are state-based, Guilford could choose simply not to replace any of that aid, in which case some students could not afford to attend Guilford.

"In order to replace some of that aid, Guilford will have to cut spending somewhere else: for salaries, benefits and/or operating budgets," said Hood. "When it comes down to a choice between financial aid, courses taught or educational services provided, it's very difficult to decide what's best."

There are many variables that college officials will have to decipher before the fiscal year begins on July 1.

Drawing from Williams's visit, Chabotar said that the NCICU and independent colleges are advocating that when financial aid dollars are restored, independent institutions get the same percentage increase as the UNC system, since we received the same decrease.

In any event, Chabotar said that these inevitable changes would ultimately burden students as a result of the state cuts.

"The legislative 'merit' program is likely not to return under any circumstance and non-traditional students with 'low cost' tuition are likely to be treated differently under any revised policy," said Chabotar. "The state's new formula for calculating need-based aid assumes that the federal government will make up the loss of state aid to the neediest students, of which Guilford College has a high proportion, so we lost state aid there too."



Hege Library
in stages



(Top) The beginning stages of the remodeling of Hege Library. (Bottom left) Supplies for the renovations line the walls of the first floor of the library. (Bottom right) A future desk sits on the floor near the temporary help desk.

CONSTRUCTION

Ongoing library construction brings new student spaces

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Dunn said that the current renovations and additions are about "how the library can serve current and future needs."

"The library design is a 1980s plan geared for a very print-oriented library," said Dunn. "We know today that's not the nature of our collections or how students work. It's about how we can adapt."

The new workstations on the library's main level will be glass-paneled, allowing for visibility to the rest of the library while preventing group work from disturbing other visitors. The new work spaces are about offering a specific location for collaborative work apart from the rest of the library.

"Instead of gathering around in an open area where it might disturb someone, students could instead use these stations," said Steve Carraway of Burkhead Carraway Construction, the firm contracted by the college to build the new rooms.

"There's a need for group and individual study areas ... With the current library design, it's kind of all one big open space, and anyone doing

one of those types of study ends up disturbing the other," said Dunn.

"We're doing everything we can to turn (the library) into a social space," said Parrigin. "Especially given the writing-intensive nature of the college, students need a space to exchange ideas and work corroboratively."

In the press release, Dunn said, "Student engagement is a critical part of the college's strategic long-range plan, and this space will go a long way in supporting this goal."

Early college student Sulaimon Kassim can already visualize his use of the new workstations.

"I could see myself going there, especially for group presentations," said Kassim. "The available technology would allow for better visuals and practice of group presentations."

Kassim added that librarians have already begun promoting the spaces to visitors when speaking about library resources.

The funds needed for the technology that will be used in these new spaces came from a Library Services and Technology Act grant awarded to Hege Library this past July. Funding for the construction, however, has come specifically from Friends of the Library funds.

Parrigin and Dunn both speak highly and optimistically of the project in the hopes of better serving library visitors.

"We're really excited to have the opportunity to improve our services and especially respond to what our patrons are telling us are important to them," said Dunn.

Both Carraway and Dunn said that, according to the current timeline, the spaces should be available for student use by March 1. At least initially, the new workstations will be open to students and groups on a walk-in basis.

PHOTOS BY MEG STERN/GUILFORDIAN