

CAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

Obama takes combative tone

"America is back," said President Obama last Tuesday in his State of the Union address, ironically echoing Republican Ronald Reagan's "Morning in America" campaign for re-election in 1984. "We've come too far to turn back now."

The president pointed to three months of solid job growth and a recovering auto industry. This theme of optimism in America's recovery dovetailed with a combative call for restoring fairness to the American economy, specifically in regards to tax policy.

This populist focus on economic justice promises to recapture many voters who have soured on Obama's stewardship of the economy, and perhaps help him keep the White House.

The problem is we've seen this before. The president walks up to the podium and lays out the agenda that a solid majority of the voting public elected him on three and a half years ago — and according to most polls still support — and then proceeds to water it down to get the support of a die-hard Republican opposition that never materializes.

In reality, this opposition's goal, according to its leader in the Senate, is to make Obama a one-term president, not to join a bipartisan effort to confront the economic crisis that plagues the working and middle classes of this country.

Aside from remarks that bookended the speech, reminding voters that it was his administration that took out Osama Bin Laden, the dominant theme of the night was how to restore fairness in the American economic system. The president's tone was refreshingly scrappy as he vowed to fight obstruction and oppose efforts to return to Bush-era policies that he blamed for the crisis.

Obama's calls for higher taxes on the wealthy have ignited claims of class warfare from the Republicans. They argue that the deficit is the biggest problem facing our nation — after ignoring how it exploded under George W. Bush.

Republicans have done a superb job of concealing from voters that a primary source of the deficit was the loss of revenue resulting from tax cuts on the upper-income brackets passed in the early 2000s.

Obama preemptively responded to Republican criticisms. "Now, you can call this class warfare all you want," he said. "But asking a billionaire to pay at least as much as his secretary in taxes? Most Americans would call that common sense."

One can hope that the president's combative tone in the speech marks a permanent shift in his political strategy. According to a recent poll conducted by the Washington Post, independent voters have started trickling back to the president in recent weeks. This is perhaps in part a response to a nasty Republican primary season, but also a result of the game of political chicken played last month surrounding the payroll tax-cut extension. Democrats won the debate by portraying Republicans as indifferent to the needs of the middle class.

The lesson is that when Democrats play the "class warfare" game, they win. With unemployment still depressingly high, the election promises to be a tight one. Portraying Republicans as defenders of tax breaks for individuals who resemble Mr. Monopoly while Grandma's Social Security check continues to be cut and Pell grants continue to be slashed might be the only recipe for warding off a President Romney.

Incidentally, the president made his call for tax fairness the day Governor Romney finally, begrudgingly, released the amount of taxes he paid last year after a barrage of criticism for his defensive stalling — some from his own party. The percentage he paid on \$45.2 million? 13.9 percent.

The president played the populist card in his speech and tried to convince the "99%" that he, and not the Republicans, was on their side. It will be interesting to see if he keeps this rhetoric up in the coming weeks and months. If he can indeed convince them, he may just win a second term.



By Aaron Hall
STAFF WRITER

Don't let budget cuts hinder education



By Victor Lopez
STAFF WRITER

I have been harboring deep thoughts concerning the recent legislation that will affect our college and other colleges across the state. I'm not sure if your experience with Guilford has garnered the same types of feelings, so without further ado, here goes.

Surely you've heard by now that the program, which once offered residents of N.C. enrolled three-quarters time a \$1,388 Legislative Tuition Grant and those enrolled full-time a \$1,850 Legislative Tuition Grant, has been eliminated.

While there will be need-based financial aid offered in 2013, the funding will be less, which could very well translate into staff positions being cut and North Carolinians being unable to afford to take classes at Guilford College if the financial situation continues to worsen.

I don't know how many people are like me. Guilford won me over as a school whose curriculum, professors and values promoted proactivity geared towards changing the community for the better, mixed with strong academic programs.

Granted, Guilford has worked for me. I've been intellectually evolving. I am interning at a fantastic organization and I write for an award-winning newspaper. Yet, none of this means a tinker's damn if I don't affect some kind of change in the face of these budget woes.

Whether it's personnel cuts, increasing class

size or students not being able to afford to come to Guilford, change is inevitably coming. I thought to myself, "Surely there is something we as students could do."

In fairness to the college, there is very little the administration can do to directly change what legislation has abolished, except to be responsible stewards of people's livelihood while also protecting the college from financial self-sabotage.

Contrary to some beliefs, the college has proven that it has students in mind by subsidizing financial aid for N.C. residents in the current semester and embarking on a fundraising campaign to provide more financial aid in the years to come.

Guilford College hopes to raise \$1 million in the next two years to help offset the college's losses in state-funded financial aid for NC resident students.

They need your help.

Associate Vice President for Philanthropy Leigh McIlwain said the advancement office welcomes student involvement, though it is still ironing out the exact details.

"We have discussed the idea of asking for student testimonials to include in the materials we will share with potential donors," said McIlwain. "Perhaps that is one way we can ask you and your fellow students to be more engaged in this process."

Contact McIlwain at lmcilwain@guilford.edu and find out how you, too, can help counter these budgetary issues with your voice and story.

I want to be a part of change and advancement and not just by reading about it in books or discussing it in class. I want what I'm learning to manifest itself into meaningful action.

Though we can't undo what the N.C. legislature has done to the education system, we can show them, through testimonials, that we won't let their policies hinder others from receiving the education everyone deserves.

Commending Public Safety for a job well done

By Randy Smith
GUEST WRITER

I am a senior majoring in economics and transferred to Guilford College from Duluth, Minn. For the past eight years, I have been employed as an N.C. private protective officer in Greensboro. I have had the opportunity to train with some of the finest men and women, including those who have had extensive backgrounds in military, corrections and police work.

As a student here at Guilford, I have had the pleasure of interacting with most of the Guilford College Public Safety officers. In noting the various public safety departments that I have been familiar with throughout my protection career, Guilford has one of the best public safety teams I have ever seen.

Some of them have had police, military or other service-related experiences which is a valuable asset in protecting people and property. Their interpersonal

and professional etiquette, while admirable, is superfluous compared to their true work. They present themselves as assertive and effective. I applaud

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Randy Smith, senior

their image, work ethic and campus coverage. They have a knack for popping up when you don't really expect their presence.

Walking to class or leaving a building, a public safety officer is almost always near. It keeps us alert and encourages policy attention.

I think we take for granted the possible ramifications of our unpredictable environment. Sometimes we may walk to classes, dorms and vehicles, while preoccupied with thoughts of school or other things without being aware of our surroundings.

While it's a healthy habit to look out for ourselves and others, it's also important to acknowledge those who look out for us on a daily basis. The Guilford College Public Safety officers deserve a "thank you", at the very least.

College can be challenging, along with having to work and fulfill other obligations. However, it's nice to know that we are all in this together, striving for the same goal. Suffice it to say, personal safety is vital while in pursuit of vocational aspirations.

So, thank you to the Guilford College Public Safety officers and management team.