

LIFE AFTER GUILFORD: Let the commencement preparations commence

By Meg Holden & Meredith Brown
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Seniors: you are about to graduate and become a part of the real world. Are you ready?

Even though the semester seems like it has barely started, it is already time to prepare for graduation. Commencement is just around the corner, and events this month will get the ball rolling.

"This is the first series of events leading up to graduation," said Associate Dean for Campus Life Tammy Alt. "It's the kickoff for all senior celebrations."

On Monday, Feb. 13, seniors can enjoy a meal prepared by faculty and staff at the annual Homecookin' for Seniors event at New Garden Friends Meeting.

"Homecookin' for Seniors is just fun, it's nice, it's casual," said Alt. "It's our way of saying, 'hey, come eat dinner, we want to celebrate with you.'"

On Wednesday, Feb. 15, and Thursday, Feb. 16, Founders will hold the annual Grad 101 Fair, with tables of information for graduating seniors. At the graduation fair, you can pre-order your graduation regalia, announcements and class ring, talk to the registrar, find information on the alumni association and more.

Already having your regalia and invitations ordered will lead to a stress-free graduation experience in May.

The class rings and personalized invitations are sold through Josten's, though the bookstore will have generic invitations available in packs of five after the fair.

The caps and gowns will also be available for pre-order and will be delivered to the bookstore for pickup. And, as sales associate Christina Summers said, "any slackers can also buy their caps and gowns (in the bookstore) after the grad fair."

A new development for graduating seniors and alumni is the myGuilford site. MyGuilford allows alumni to set up a personal profile, connect with classmates, share pictures and class notes, and look up events and job openings. According to Jamie Barnett, administrative assistant in Alumni Relations, the site went live for everyone in January and seniors are encouraged to join as soon as possible.

"We like for graduating seniors to begin thinking in terms of being alumni," said Barnett. "You are a student for four years, but an alum your whole life."

After months of waiting, it will be time to graduate in early May. Graduates are not required to attend the Baccalaureate Ceremony on May 4, but must attend rehearsal on May 4 and Commencement on May 5 if they intend to walk.

"The big thing for seniors to remember is to know the schedule," Alt said. "You need to know where to be on

(May) fourth and fifth."

Commencement is usually held on the quad in front of King Hall, but if there is rain, the commencement activities will be moved into Ragan-Brown Field House. According to Alt, a rain call will be made by rehearsal and graduates will be given tickets for their family and friends. Tickets are not necessary if Commencement is held outside.

This year's Commencement speaker, chosen by a committee of faculty, staff and students, will be Patti Digh '82. The author of "Life is a Verb," Digh embodies Guilford's core values through her encouraging work.

"I'm interested to hear what (Digh) has to say," said senior Elijah DaCosta, who served as a student representative on the committee last spring. "We think she will have a great message for the Guilford community and the student body."

With classes, work and extracurriculars taking up your time, Commencement may be the last thing on your mind. It seems like there is a lot to keep track of, but all you need to do is "make sure you are cleared to graduate, get your cap and gown and be (at Commencement) on time," as Alt said.

So, seniors, as you prepare for your life after Guilford, don't forget to prepare for those last golden minutes of life at Guilford.

Sobriety on campus: you are not the only one

By C.J. Green
STAFF WRITER

To protect anonymity, some students quoted in this article are referred to by initials only.

"College is a time for you to have fun and express yourself," said junior K.E. "So trying some 'things' like drinking or others should be okay. I mean, it's college."

For many students, "it's college" is one of the biggest misconceptions they hold when trying to figure out who they are on the college scene. Many see college as a time to experiment with ideas, substances and sexuality — some good, some bad and, maybe, some illegal.

For some students, the party scene is not appealing, not because of the social gatherings but because of the questionable decisions made at these events.

"I usually don't try to go to many events due to what people do when they are drunk and high," said senior J.F. "(Substance use) makes the whole party experience not all that it's cracked up to be."

Drug and alcohol consumption has been a problem on college campuses for years. The pressure to use substances is very high in college communities, which can make students who do not use substances feel out of place.

"People are getting high, sometimes over three times a day, and it leaves them being high more often than they are not," said first-year Chris Jones.

If you feel like you are the only person who is looking for a good time without all of the vomiting, marijuana smoke and drunken mistakes — then there is a place for you.

The Sane and Sober Group and Personal Growth Group are two sobriety organizations on campus that try to help students get over or lessen their substance usage. These groups are headed by Part-time Counselor Ernest McCoy and Director of Counseling Gaither Terrell. Each group meets in the Hut on a weekly basis.

In the Personal Growth Group, students who wish to refrain from or have suffered

due to substance usage come together on a weekly basis to seek comfort in their sobriety. In the Sane and Sober group, students who do not use substances meet up to discuss how they feel about living sober lifestyles on the college scene.

"Ernest's support group helped me get over some mistakes I made with substances," said sophomore T.W. about the Personal Growth Group. "After I got in trouble last year, I realized my mistakes I made with alcohol and have been trying to stay clean since."

Another sobriety group that is better known on campus is the group Am I the Only One? This group is headed by Director of the Friends Center and Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter and meets on Fridays in the Hut at 4 p.m. The group is directed toward students trying to live substance-free lives.

"What's one of the main reasons why people say that they drink around here?" asked Carter. "(Alcohol) removes (your) inhibitions, makes (you) feel better, you don't feel as introverted and you can get out of yourself. In large part, they wish to be someone else."

AITOO? co-sponsored the Cheerwine and root beer kegger as part of Religious Emphasis Week and coordinates other activities that emphasize that you can have fun without substances while in college.

"I lived through the sixties and seventies without the use of any substance," said Carter. "And the best part is I still remember them."

Although college is regarded as the greatest time in our lives, many would like to remember it when they grow older. Groups such as AITOO?, Sane and Sober, and Personal Growth are open to all students who are sober or working to reach that title.

"Many students find that their relationship with substances changes over their time (at Guilford) as they grow and mature," said Terrell. "We are always here to talk with students about substance-related issues on an individual basis as well as in groups."

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