

LIFE AFTER GUILFORD: Non-profit fair a profitable experience

By Meg Holden
FEATURES EDITOR

It is a beautiful Wednesday afternoon in March. The sky is a cloudless blue, music is playing on Founders patio and the aromas of French fries, pork loins and vegan chik'n wraps entice students into the dining hall.

In Alumni Gym, however, a different scene is unfolding. Inside, away from the laid-back atmosphere of the quad, well-dressed students mingle with representatives from non-profit organizations from around the state. The North Carolina Career Consortium Non-Profit Fair is underway.

According to Director of the Career Development Center Alan Mueller, the annual non-profit fair is a collaborative effort by the career centers of Bennett College, Greensboro College, Guilford, High Point University, and Salem College. The spring non-profit fair supports the centers' mission of helping students find volunteer opportunities, internships and careers.

"The non-profit industry is growing every day, but the individual agencies are struggling," said Mueller.

"One of the fastest-growing sectors of the American economy is non-profit work," said Eric Melniczek, director of career and internship services at High Point University. "In the Piedmont Triad area alone, there are hundreds of non-profits."

Because there are so many non-profits in the area, there is a high need for volunteers and interns. The work experience gained from working with a non-profit will be valuable in any career.

"You will gain a skill set (from working at a non-profit) that you might not get from working at a larger institution," said Melniczek. "There are opportunities in finance, fund raising, human resources, recruitment, event programming ... It's a real-world opportunity to build skills in a work setting."

The students present at this year's non-profit fair certainly hoped that they might be able to benefit from working or volunteering at a non-profit. First-year CCE student Rena Davis, who has over 15 years experience in property management, came to the fair looking for volunteer opportunities that might lead to a new career.



(Above) **Monica Keyes** (left) from the Guilford County Partnership for Children discusses career options with senior **Lauren McClure**.

(Below) Sophomore **Mindy Souvannalay** (right) gets excited about the Carolina Tiger Rescue with volunteer **Rita Nunn**.



Meg Holden/Guilfordian

"I want to spend some time volunteering at a non-profit," said Davis. "If I find somewhere I can volunteer, I might be able to get my foot in the door so that later I can find a position where I can use my degree."

Senior Sarah Schardt's search for an internship led her to the non-profit fair.

"I am especially drawn to non-profits because of the work they do," said Schardt. "There is a different goal (in non-profit work). There is more of an emphasis on community."

Schardt believes that working with a non-profit is a good way to "get a job helping and participating in the community," which Guilford students can relate to.

Mueller likewise supports working with a non-profit as a way to support Guilford's core values.

"Working for money is fine, but helping other people and getting money for it is better, in my opinion," Mueller said.

Doing work for a non-profit can be a great start to a career, but it might not be for everyone. Most of the organizations

present at Wednesday's fair were looking for volunteers or interns, so if you are looking for a full-time job, your search may not be quite over. And non-profit work is not for everyone.

"Non-profits are good to work for if you are highly motivated and care about the topic," said Andrew Leon, the sustainable projects coordinator for Caldwell Green Commission in Caldwell County. "Personally, I feel like I am making a difference and directly influencing people."

If you are more interested in the paycheck than the problem, non-profit work may not be for you. Non-profits are often understaffed and underfunded, requiring lots of effort for little initial reward.

However, if you are looking for a volunteer position, internship or job in a growing field, non-profit work may be the key to your life after Guilford, and job fairs are an easy way to find opportunities.

"It was great of Guilford to put this on, especially for seniors," said Schardt. "Any chance to see what jobs are out there is great."

GLUTEN

Students follow gluten-free diet on and off campus

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in an email interview. "I also would get severe skeletal pains and aches. I was unable to hold my body up and had debilitating back spasms, along with the sensation of a urinary tract infection, migraines and feeling faint."

Shutler has been gluten-free for a year and a half. After feeling ill for over a year, she went to a holistic doctor who suggested she cut out gluten from her diet.

Shutler's symptoms sound horrific. Considering that gluten is in most products and the severity of Shutler's intolerance, one can imagine the difficulty of eating gluten-free meals in the dining hall.

"College is very difficult for those who are gluten intolerant, because rarely is anything in the cafeteria gluten free," said Shutler. "Sauces are thickened with flour; meats and poultry are marinated with chemicals that contain gluten. Overall, it is difficult to keep things gluten-free in a large kitchen because foods are too easily contaminated."

Junior Lydia Rain has gluten sensitivity. She went through special testing at age ten to determine her sensitivities and allergies. Consequently, the doctors discovered she was sensitive to gluten. She "would get these sharp pains in (her) neck after digesting gluten." After eliminating gluten from her diet, her seasonal allergies also considerably downsized.

Rain has had a different dining experience compared to Shutler. She has been able to find satisfying food options from the cafeteria. Her meals consist of big salads with proteins.

"Being able to eat in the caf, where there is an abundance of mixed greens, fruits and vegetables and protein ... that is why I eat so well," said Rain. "If I weren't eating in the caf, I would have a much more restricted diet because I can't afford to buy things that would go bad."

Rain also pointed out that it can be difficult to find a filling meal when the only options are either pastas or pizzas in the cafeteria.

Some restaurants and many grocery stores now carry gluten-free products, though the dining hall does not often have these options. Junior Jordan Poirier, who is currently studying abroad in Ghana, has found that eating gluten-free can be difficult outside of the United States.

"The labels (on food in Ghana) rarely have allergy information so basically, I stick to fresh vegetables ... delicious fruit (and) tons of rice," Poirier said in an email interview.

While Poirier tries to refrain from eating gluten, cravings do occur. While in Africa, she has missed the gluten-free products that are offered in the States.

"In America, I have alternatives such as gluten-free bread, pizza, beer, etc.," said Poirier. "But here I have caved and eaten pizza and in turn gotten very ill."

Students at Guilford have a variety of strange diets, from raw foods to vegan to everything in between. A gluten-free diet is just one of the many ways students are keeping themselves healthy, on- and off-campus.