

Facebook Guilford College Confessions page lays it all on the table

AS THE CONFESSIONS PAGE EXPANDS, QUESTIONS ARISE ABOUT ITS BENEFITS

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Between classes, homework and other important collegiate business, students can sometimes eke out a moment of downtime. What they choose to do with it can range from enjoying nature to perusing one's favorite Facebook page. One pair of students used this time to create and update Guilford College Confessions.

Guilford College Confessions is a Facebook page that provides a forum for people to comment on the goings on at Guilford anonymously. Topics discussed on the page are diverse from privilege in one post to a student's secret love in another.

Due to the page's anonymous nature, the administrators wished to remain unnamed.

"We really just started the page out of boredom," said Admin 2. "We were just hanging out, with nothing to do, and Admin 1 was like, 'Wait. We should start a confessions page for Guilford.'"

Students submit confessions to an online survey that reports them to the admins.

"The SurveyMonkey survey is totally anonymous," said one of the two admins. "There is actually no way that you can save personal information about the responders."

The anonymity of the page can be attractive to would-be confessors, but it can be a double-edged sword.

"(The anonymity) allows people to feel comfortable saying things that they wouldn't necessarily say if their name was tied to it," continued the admin. "It's awesome when someone gets the confidence to confess a crush on the page because it is anonymous, but we also have problems when people say nasty things because it is anonymous, and they don't have to take any real responsibility for their words."

Since its birth in March 2013, the page has accumulated over 600 likes and is a popular subject of discussion. Often, confessions will be comical. Other times, posts will have a more serious tone.

"When I was abroad, I pooped in my pants," said one confessor.

Apart from its entertainment value or the possible emotional relief, there is an even more practical benefit that Guilford College Confessions may provide.

"First-years do not really understand what Guilford is," said first-year Conor Sastre, a follower and contributor to the page. "They have not been here that long, no one has talked to them, and they just do not have the best idea about what Guilford really is. If you go to a place like Guilford Confessions, then it will help to inform you on a more student-to-student level about what actually happens here."

"It seems apparent that Guilford College Confessions meets some need for students to speak their mind without fear of judgment," said regular commenter Assistant Academic Dean for Career Development and Community Learning Alan Mueller. "This should be a sign to those of us who work on this campus to be ever more intentional about creating inclusive and supportive communities."

The page is open for everyone to see, regardless of one's affiliation with Guilford. Its followers are students, alumni and faculty members. However, this begs a very important question. Is there a place for faculty members on a page that is mostly concerned with the personal lives of students?

"College differs from high school in that this is the beginning of students' time as young adults," said Mueller. "I believe that Guilford is a community and that faculty and staff participation in public conversations with students can be very positive."

The page continues to grow and gain new members, and much of Guilford is watching. So, keep it smart, keep it quirky, keep it sweet, keep it weird but most of all, keep confessing.



(Left) Take Back the Night is a series of events designed for victims of sexual violence to share their experiences. Students held candles at the Speak-Out by the bonfire pit at the lake. (Bottom left) Students spray-painted t-shirts to stand up against violence and reclaim their confidence. (Below) Sophomore Isabel Ramirez and senior Heather Scott played music during the dinner. For more pictures from our photographers Brianna Glenn and Allison DeBusk, see the online gallery at www.guilfordian.com.

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TEDXGREENSBORO

TEDx: fresh perspectives, ideas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

relations and programs. "It is so important to be imaginative and to un-limit yourself, but the power comes in when you share those dreams."

The TEDxGreensboro website talks about the theme "Dreamsboro" as what we can envision for the future of Greensboro.

"Is it a city of the future because of creative entrepreneurship and aeronautics, logistics, nanosciences, arts and music, technology, advanced manufacturing, design, health, education — and other fields we may not even know about yet?" asks the site. "Or, is it something else? What can be imagined?"

Another component of TEDxGreensboro came in connection with Winston-Salem's Imagination Installations Project.

"Everyone who viewed TEDxGreensboro was encouraged to write a statement 'Imagine when ...'" said Manson.

According to the Imagination Installation website, the project shares these statements through interactive art exhibits and social media.

Although TEDxGreensboro focused on the wider Greensboro and Piedmont Triad region, Manson finds it important to inspect the Guilford community in a similar manner.

"I think the time is so ripe for our community to start dreaming about the future of the college and who we want to be ... and what we want to do as an institution," said Manson.

Each of the speakers delivered short talks, around 15 minutes long, on topics ranging from post-college transitions to songwriting.

Troy McConnell, an entrepreneur, explained the most important steps to take as an entrepreneur: act, ask, and adapt.

A few minutes later, artist and curator George Scheer

explained how his living museum "Elsewhere" allows people — sometimes complete strangers — to "come into this space ... and feel at home."

"They tied together in really different ways," said Kim Yarbray, project and communication manager of the Center for Principled Problem Solving. "There were all kinds of people speaking: artists, business people, young professionals, educators. You could really tell that they were thinking about the theme through their own lens."

Bringing different perspectives and fresh ideas is what TED is all about.

TED began as a conference uniting its three components of technology, entertainment and design under the theme "ideas worth spreading."

The non-profit has now grown to include TEDx, TED Open Translation Project, two TED conferences each year and other programs.

"I love the TED talks, and I also think that Guilford talks about community all the time," said Manson. "We are all talking so much now about how we fit into the triad community, and this was an obvious connection."

The Office of Alumni Relations plans to go further with the idea of TED at Guilford.

"I would love to see Guilford host a locally organized TED event at some point in the future," said Manson. "We have a lot of people who could do a wonderful presentation."

Looking even further, Manson hopes to use the model that TED follows to reach out to alumni.

"I think it would be so cool to have locally organized QUAKEx events where maybe three people from (a regional alumni chapter) could give 10-12 minute talks for other alums," said Manson.

"We could record it, and then they could have a party. That way, we could start to hear from each other."

Keep on the lookout for future TEDx (or QUAKEx) events at Guilford.

You never know what new ideas you may encounter.