

Guilford College Confessions: the dangers of anonymity

Hiding behind their computer screens, students have been spilling their guts on Guilford's own version of "Gossip Girls." Controlled by a



BY KIM
KLEIMEIER
STAFF WRITER

group of anonymous administrators, hundreds of posts on a heap of different subjects are submitted daily.

The allure no doubt comes from voicing one's opinion anonymously and not having to accept the responsibility or the consequences.

But, are there certain drawbacks to having this site? I would say so. Not only does the site enable poor communication, it also allows for problematic first impression of Guilford for any prospective student looking at the page.


Sophomore Heather Nelson expresses concerns about this new phenomenon that has swept across campus.

"It shows how disconnected our society has become," said Nelson. "It promotes this sterile, separated community because it's not giving voice."

Within our current culture, we can be instantly connected to anyone, no matter the physical distance, but there is truth in the concern that a different distance is herewith created. Our communication has become worse instead of better because we put less effort into it. People shrink from open confrontation because they now have the option of hiding behind their phones and computers.


Some would argue that there are positives that come from this new page. Giving strangers compliments as well as admitting to wanting a closer relationship with some people is a common theme within the posts.

"Sometimes there is really sweet stuff like when people want to be friends




Guilford College Confessions
April 25

To the black guy with the long white beard that told me how pretty my new haircut is (which I wasn't so sure about), thank you. That made my day. And so does your beard.



Guilford College Confessions
Yesterday

I met the love of my life here at Guilford.



Guilford College Confessions
Sunday

To all the people who don't see fit to flush their turds on campus: I hope a sewer snake bites your anus. They do exist.

with each other," said sophomore Mary Hersey. "But, it gets sad, pathetic and creepy, especially anything involving Early College because people just hawk on Early College girl students."

Yes, the compliments are nice, and it's fun to see people wanting to be friends, but the real question is why can't they do that without the aid of anonymity and a confessions page?

Our society, through its technology and new modes of communication, has lost the ability to confront issues in person, voice opinions outright or even meet people on a face-to-face basis.

"We talk to so much about giving voice to the voiceless," said Nelson.


"And here we are creating a space where people become both faceless and voiceless."

Another issue that arises is that this page is open for everyone to see. Prospective students seeing this page and gaining their first impression of Guilford just from this site can have negative consequences. Not all of the comments are positive or raise intelligent discussions about relevant issues on campus. Some of the posts are flat-out ridiculous, and if misinterpreted, possibly even offensive or hurtful.

"I think the fact that you can say something anonymous, that is not so good," said exchange student Bernardo Sotero when shown the Confessions page for the first time. "A joke can be really misunderstood."


This type of misunderstanding could truly impact Guilford's admissions. A first impression tends to stick, and this page is not a shining example or representation of the student body. Especially posts about pooping in trash cans wanting to have sex with specific people and the open display of drug use on campus are all things that do not need to be advertised.

Parents of future students and prospective students themselves can take this as a real turn-off to attending this school. As an institution currently struggling with admissions, Guilford needs to put its best foot forward. We have more to offer than what is displayed on the confessions page. We have a group of bright, involved and caring people who will one day change the world. Let's advertise that, Guilford.



Guilford College Confessions
April 24

i'm genuinely scared of the squirrels on campus.



Guilford College Confessions
April 26

Dear Neighbors: If you keep blaring music and shouting and banging against the wall my roommate and I will put Rebecca Black on very loud and continuously play it at six in the morning. Just be forewarned.

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

A review of the 2012-13 school year events

As campus fills with the scent of burning midnight oil and the sighs of sleep-deprived students, let's take a moment for reflection on the year behind us.

As a nation, we re-elected a president, experienced tragedy, made leaps and faced setbacks in the debate over marriage equality, all while stressing over a struggling economy. Amidst this myriad of issues, it's not easy to create or maintain an interconnected national community — or a campus community, for that matter.

But, this year at Guilford, we've done just that.

This year held campus issues that cut to the core of our values as Guilford students, faculty and staff. Campus renovations, which threatened to displace Mary Hobbs residents and turned Founders into a regrettably sterile space, forced students to speak out.

Plans for the new fountain and plaza continue to raise questions and concern over the allocation of funds and donations. The possibility of divestment from Sabra brings to light the need to walk the walk and establish our identity in the context of world issues.

And then there's the big one — Kent Chabotar's retirement and the impending presidential search and selection. As a campus, we'll be watching this process closely and striving for a voice in the next turn that the administration will take.

So, clearly we have campus issues. We don't live in a vacuum or a state of communal bliss. But this isn't because we're a weak community — just the opposite, in fact.

This year, we've proven the power of collective awareness and open discussion, student-administration communication and a commitment to transparency and accountability.

It's not easy to create an interconnected community, but as active members of this one, we've made campus our own. So take some time to celebrate the successes of this year and continue to stand up for the community we love.

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