

Sexual assault on campus: students need to help prevent violence at Guilford

About one in every five women is sexually assaulted during college. The same is true for about 6.1 percent of college men. Numbers like these make it clear that institutions of higher education, including Guilford College, need to be doing more to prevent sexual assaults from occurring on their campuses.



BY HANNAH WALLER
STAFF WRITER

Adequate education of students, faculty and staff alike on the issue of sexual assault is the most important element of prevention that Guilford is missing.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics defines sexual assault as "attacks or attempted attacks generally involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender." Most people do not realize this definition includes much more than rape or even physical contact.

Guilford does take measures to prevent sexual assault and offer options to those who have fallen victim to sexual assault. On-campus escorts and whistles are available to students. Sexual Assault Awareness, Support and Advocacy and the annual Take Back the Night event raise awareness about the issue on campus, and Guilford's counseling services are free to any student in need.

However, SAASA and Take Back the Night began at Guilford more recently than some may realize.

"When I first came here in 2008, Guilford did not have an institutional practice of

having Take Back the Night every spring, which surprised me, given the kind of place it is," said Julie Winterich, associate professor of sociology and anthropology and faculty advisor to SAASA.

Another recent addition is that of the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, comprised of faculty, staff and students.

"The committee has been in existence for about a year," said Director of Counseling Gaither Terrell. "It comes at a time when colleges across the country are paying more attention to sexual assault because of the Title IX issuance of the letter and the federal mandate."

The 2011 "Dear Colleague" letter from the office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Russlynn Ali regarding Title IX clarifies sexual harassment and assault as a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX. Part of the letter emphasizes the importance of education on sexual assault in institutions of higher education.

"Schools need to ensure that their employees are trained so that they know to report harassment to appropriate school officials, and so that employees with the authority to address harassment know

how to respond properly," the letter reads.

Much of the education provided to Guilford students in the past has focused on how to prevent oneself from being sexually assaulted. While helpful in some aspects, this can contribute to a victim-blaming mentality in the community.

"It amazes me that we don't have education about consent in middle school and high school, let alone in college," Winterich said. "From my perspective, in education that should be a key component."

"We decided to do a campaign for next school year focused on consent," said Terrell. "Our main focus is going to be consent and educating not just students but everybody on campus about consent and about what to do if one is assaulted or if you see something happening or know somebody who's been assaulted. There's a lot of education that we need to do."

While Guilford certainly needs to implement systematic education on sexual assault and consent, responsibility also lies with the students to educate themselves and to take the college's core values to heart. Terrell encourages students to join the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee.

If you have been sexually assaulted, information on what to do next is available on the Guilford College website and the Family Services of the Piedmont's Rape Crisis hotline can provide assistance 24/7 at the following number: (336) 274-7273.

Sexual Assault Statistics

- Between 62% and 84% of survivors knew their attacker
- 8% of men admit committing acts that meet the legal definition of rape or attempted rape. Of these men who committed rape, 84% said that what they did was definitely not rape
- Sexual-assault offenders were more likely than any other category of violent criminal to report experiencing physical or sexual abuse as children
- Sexual assault is one of the most unreported crimes; 54% are unreported
- Someone in the U.S. is sexually assaulted every two minutes
- False reports of rape are rare, according to the FBI, occurring only 8% of the time.
- 57% of rapes happen on dates
- 75% of the men and 55% of the women involved in acquaintance rapes were drinking or taking drugs just before the attack
- 55% of gang rapes on college campuses are committed by fraternities, 40% by sports teams and 5% by others
- More than half of all rape and sexual assault incidents occurred within one mile of the survivor's home or in their home
- Throughout the last 10 years, the National Crime Victimization Survey has reported that approximately 30% of rape survivors report the incident to the police
- 82% of rape survivors say the rape permanently changed them
- Assault victims are 26 times more likely to abuse drugs

Compiled from oneinfourusa.org

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

A note from the incoming Editor in Chief

We're here to listen.

You've been telling us all year that new Founders doesn't feel as inviting as it used to, so The Guilfordian got together with OSLE to talk with you about what isn't working and what we can do about it. We published the results of our collaborative brainstorm, and we will continue to work with administration to create a space where we all feel at home — hopefully starting with some art on the walls and possibly a rolling cork board for flyers.

We heard your concerns about the fountain and plaza construction, too. We invited you to meet with us and the CRRC to turn concerns into action. The result: a handful of your peers have created a proposal for a student advisory committee to gather ideas from everyone — students, faculty, staff and alumni — about projects that we need on campus so we can solicit funding accordingly. We will be working throughout the summer to advocate for this cause.

We've absolutely loved the opportunity to be your voice during these changing times, and we want to keep it going.

With the presidential search just around the corner, rest assured that we will ask you what you'd like to see in our future president, and we'll pass your thoughts along to the search committee. We'll keep you updated on any developments throughout the search process, too.

But in the meantime, I'm going to challenge you, dear reader, because there are a few things you haven't been telling us.

Remember when we wrote that one article you really loved? How about that story you vehemently disagreed with? It's not enough to point it out to your friends and giggle or vent. Write to us. Tell us what you're thinking. Give us a Letter to the Editor and we'll put it in our next issue.

Let's keep the conversation going, because we accomplish great things together.

— Kate Gibson, Editor in Chief

REFLECTING GUILFORD COLLEGE'S CORE QUAKER VALUES, THE TOPICS AND CONTENT OF STAFF EDITORIALS ARE CHOSEN THROUGH CONSENSUS OF ALL 14 EDITORS AND ONE FACULTY ADVISER OF THE GUILFORDIAN'S EDITORIAL BOARD.