

## 'Obamacare' raises many questions

"When you enlist Hollywood to help you try and convince America that something's good, there's some fundamental flaws," said senior Colin Smith.



BY  
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STAFF WRITER

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, informally known as Obamacare, currently treads water. With the House's vote to defund it, plus lack of support from young adults, it may sink instead of swim.

Keeping their heads up, the Obama administration has focused on promoting the act among our generation, hoping we will become the driving force for pushing the act through.

"(Targeting young people) makes sense for both fiscal and political reasons," said first-year Riva Fairhall. "We're the activists. If you want anything done, it's going to come from our generation."

A number of these young "activists" are already sold on the pros of the bill.

"I have a lot of friends who get really, really cheap or free healthcare and birth control that didn't have it before," said sophomore English major Fiona Lloyd.

Some accept the pros, but also see a few cons.

"For a lot of young, (disenfranchised)

women ... some components that apply to contraceptives are really important," said senior community and justice studies major Jodie-Ann Geddes. "But I think often times we have policies that are meant to represent people while not providing what people really need."

Pros and cons aside, there is hope for the bill. For some, its goal to provide affordable, quality health insurance is a bright light just out of reach at the end of a long tunnel of political turmoil.

"I've seen so many family and friends without insurance over the years," said Kathryn Walker, Learning Commons tutor. "It's going to be a good thing once everything works out; we just have to get through all of the logistics."

While Congress fights through the political chaos the act has instigated, the ACA's policies have already taken a toll on hospitals.

"A lot of hospitals and a lot of private practices are firing nurses, cutting their hours or shutting down due to (Obamacare)," said Office of Student Leadership and Engagement intern Megan Stern '13. "There needs to be more focus on how to have universal healthcare reform and not cause people to lose their jobs for this 'universal good,' when the whole idea is that everybody should be able to have a job in the country and be able to go home and support their families."

Still, it would be unwitting not to ask: is the Affordable Care Act really to blame?

"There is probably pressure on Obamacare because they are putting pressure on insurance companies to control the cost, but hospitals are large and sometimes inefficient institutions," said Assistant Professor of Economics Natalya Shelkova.

To my profound distress, as it so often is with politics, the answer is neither yes nor no. Frankly, I have no black-or-white opinion on this topic. The exact effectiveness of the ACA is gray, gray, gray, which makes overall evaluation of it absolutely maddening.

However, one thing is certainly in need of reform: politicians' approach to the act. If politicians spent more time working through the flaws in the Affordable Care Act instead of playing the blame game, more young adults would be convinced to get on board with the act.

For now, we're not convinced the act is the ideal universal healthcare system. The concept is there, but far from perfect and could use tweaking before widely implemented as the ultimate solution.

"(Medicine) is an inelastic good from a microeconomic perspective — you have to have it," said Adam Pearman '09. "Since it's such an inelastic good, we have to be able to collectively bargain for it, which I think the (Obama) administration failed in."

If you invest in the Affordable Care Act, a horde of factors like your income, age and lifestyle will come into play. But at this point, it seems up to Lady Luck whether you sink or swim.

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

## Our wish list for the next college president

Change is in the air. As we all adjust our regular footpaths to accommodate the plaza and adapt to the new renovations of various offices around campus, we are also bracing ourselves for an even bigger change: a new president.

As a representative of the community, The Guilfordian offers the following description of our wants and needs in a new leader.

The next president should lead the college in our ever-continuing mission to live the core values and testimonies that we preach, so that they are more than just pretty flags. This will be an immense challenge to meet while providing the excellent education Guilford is known for.

Our next president must possess integrity in every situation, believe in equality and be a humble, approachable and fully-engaged member of Guilford society.

He or she must believe in community. That involves being present and active in school life, attending sporting events, theatrical performances and protests.

In short, the president's face and name should be known to every member of the community, no matter their position. The new leader must strengthen Guilford's commitment to all forms of diversity. This means active support of the diversity work already underway.

One of the president's main roles should be advocating for justice in all its forms for every community member. Everyone, regardless of background, should feel appreciated and accepted. New ideas, whether from a student organization, the multicultural education department or the diversity action committee, are all vital.

The new president should continue Kent Chabotar's financially stable path, but without forgetting the importance of all the core values, values that Chabotar guided the community to first articulate. The new president should be a good steward of Guilford's resources by making the campus physically beautiful and sustainable, without sacrificing community, diversity, equality, excellence, integrity and justice.

Above all, these values should be espoused and endorsed by the new president.

And while we believe in serendipity, we too must embody our core values throughout this presidential search process and beyond.

## Desensitization nation: the power of acknowledgment

Last week I tortured a man in an abandoned warehouse.

The whole ordeal was oddly amusing.

Before you report me to the authorities, let it be known that this was all taking place in the world of "Grand Theft Auto V."



BY **JOSH  
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As I was running and gunning through an imaginary land, I thought about the recent, real-world violent events in Kenya and Washington, D.C., and I began to feel pretty ashamed. How could I sit on my couch and carry out virtual acts of violence while real ones were happening around me?

What I experienced was a classic case of desensitization.

"Desensitization to violence is a reduction," said Iowa State University Psychology Professor Nicholas L. Carnagey in a paper published in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*. "A reduction in emotion-related physiological reactivity to

real violence."

Change a few words around, and this deals perfectly with the overall problem of desensitization.

Indeed, there is a great deal of worry that people today are becoming desensitized and disconnected from the world around them — and not just in terms of violence.

Frankly, I will admit that, even as the Social Justice editor, I sometimes find it hard to truly feel the emotional impact of a news story I read.

It's so easy to just glance through a link-dump of news articles and mumble, "Oh, what a shame," as you head to check your Facebook account.

I hate to burst your bubble, but this is no way to go about your life.

There is always a great deal of talk on this campus about the "Guilford Bubble," and while it is not a tangible divide, it is most certainly present. Other such bubbles permeate our lives, enveloping other spheres. There might be an "American

Bubble" or a "White Bubble" to go along with your "Guilford Bubble."

No matter the bubble, an issue arises when we push things out and away from us. I know it sounds hokey, but caring about the events outside of our bubbles is important, even with the structural implications that come with such — some would say — privileged action.

It is from this position of privilege that another problem arises: that of cynicism.

With the rise of the Internet and the unique position we find ourselves in as college students, it is surprisingly easy to be dismissive about world events.

"I could never fix that," you might say. "It's too late to change it now. Stuff like that happens all the time."

Allow me to call attention to a quote appropriated by John F. Kennedy: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

I tend to agree with this oft-used quotation.

Doing nothing will get us nowhere, so we need to open up discussions to facilitate change. Whether it is about the aforementioned violence or new changes right here at our school.

It won't be easy though.

"The very attempt to bring attention to disparate voices and an increasingly divisive tone in our culture would also be a potential vessel disintegrating civility," said Judy Martin on desensitization in a 2012 *Forbes* article.

But that's the whole point, isn't it?

Discuss critically instead of sitting around cynically. Make people uncomfortable with your passion for change. I'm not saying that thinking and talking is the end-all, be-all to fix our apparent disconnect problem. It's just a first step.

Think about real world events. Take the time to read an article about what's happening instead of just looking at the headline. And, if you're so moved, go take action for what you believe in.

Maybe then you'll have the time to try and drive jet skis onto the highway while feeling a little less guilty.

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