

Defunding Hege Art Gallery would be a terrible waste

It's one of our most well-known features. It's one of the few things that separate us in a great way from other small, private liberal arts colleges.

And it's in danger.



BY ANNA OATES
STAFF WRITER

Of course, I'm referring to the art gallery in Hege Library.

Recently, there has been a lot of buzz about the Administrative Program and Services Assessment floating around campus. Our school is planning on changing a lot, and while most of the list focuses on simply reconstructing parts of our school, our library's art gallery might be eliminated.

"The art gallery's survival is uncertain because of lack of funds," the Guilford Beacon said. "The elimination of the Administrative Assistant Position is recommended. APSA recommends a five-

year timeline to raise funds, and if fundraising goals are not met, elimination of the Art Gallery, as well as Terry Hammond's position as curator, will be unavoidable."

Five years may seem like enough time to pull together some money, but it's questionable, considering the sum needed is \$1.5 million.

But why does this matter so much?

"It brightens the atmosphere, and it makes Guilford a better place to be in general," junior Amanda Williams said.

And she's not alone. The campus has lit up with discussion about this choice, and almost all of it is in favor of keeping the art gallery.

"Over the 14 years I've been here, (the art gallery) has gotten more positive press than anything else here at Guilford," said Visiting Instructor of English Caroline McAlister. "It brings together the Guilford community and the community outside of the college."

The art gallery expresses much of what the Guilford College community stands for. It showcases a wide variety of cultures and encourages us to come together. It opens closed minds to

new viewpoints. And it offers a source of inspiration to anyone who comes searching.

Not to mention that it's beautiful to walk through and makes our campus truly unique.

Yet we're thinking about getting rid of such a treasure?

The board says it's because the gallery lacks direct impact. However, that's not easy to give when speaking about gaining new viewpoints and inspiration.

"(The gallery) has a way of truly touching people, and that's not something you can record or replace," said Curator of the Art Gallery Terry Hammond.

"Even though it's hard to quantify how many people go into (the gallery) and are affected by it, I know a ton of people who do go and really enjoy it," Williams said.

The art gallery's intangible value is important to many at Guilford. But the art gallery doesn't just host art shows. It also features lectures and other events, raising its use and capital.

"I've been to more lectures in the art gallery than anywhere else on campus, and I truly enjoy them," McAlister said.

The lectures attract students from all different majors, and many of them go on unrecorded walk-throughs after the lectures.

"This is not something that is just for the art department," Hammond said. "It's used by many different disciplines. It's surprising how integrated is. I've worked with everything from the English department to the economics department."

The facts remain that the art gallery is a huge part of our campus. It helps shape us, influence it and publicize it. And we're on the verge of losing it.

Chances are that decision isn't going to change much in the two weeks the administration gave us students to read and respond to the report, and we certainly weren't represented well in the APSA committee.

A college is made up of students, faculty and staff. Having each group represented by a single person was a poor choice, and now we are left with the aftermath.

Guilford, we have five years.

Are you ready to fight?

Teachers deserve more respect, money

Job description: seeking people willing to accept meager pay, high workloads and constant criticism.

In today's political and social environment, such conditions are all too common for teachers and those entering the education field. Yet they receive virtually no attention.

Instead of reform, politicians like Sen. Rand Paul and Rep. Michelle Bachmann voice opinions to rid the country of education funding and even the Department of Education.

While other countries are redoubling their investment in teachers and education, the United States continues to restrict and scale back its investment in those sectors.

Talk about progress.

"Folks who have no idea what it means to be an educator are making the changes that impact educators," said Professor of Education Studies David Hildreth. "There is an erroneous belief among these folks that anybody can be a teacher."

Such "folks" are especially prevalent in North Carolina, where the General Assembly recently passed a bill eliminating teacher tenure, automatic pay increases for teachers who earn a

master's degree and the N.C. Teaching Fellows Program.

"It is embedded in our culture," said Dana Professor of Psychology Richard Zweigenhaft. "For the past few decades, we have seen a decreased commitment to public education in America."

Rather than encouraging talented teachers to enter the field, legislators created stronger roadblocks and limits.

"These legislative acts undermine the respect, however limited it already is, for professional educators," said Assistant Professor and Chair of Education Studies Julie Burke.

Burke explained that the effects of the recent laws are already apparent.

"There were a lot more openings in local schools after the 10th day (of school) than I've seen in quite a while," Burke said. "We are already seeing teachers leaving the state for Virginia and South Carolina, where salaries and benefits are more sufficient."

Such an exodus of teachers will likely increase in coming years unless the state provides greater compensation.

Our teachers inherit the burden as the caretakers of our nation's future and ultimately the future of human progress. Teachers are the foundation of our society, the stimulators of intellectual curiosity and experimentation, the progenitors of a future that will only be marked by increased complexities.

And what do we do?

We continue to pay them the lowest

salaries of any profession. We continue to repeatedly restrict their classroom budgets and capabilities. And we continue to discourage bright talent from entering the noblest of all fields.

"Most teachers have a passion above and beyond tangible things like pay and those who really care will stay in education," said Hildreth. "But it is harder and harder to do the things you love when you feel this constant sense of oppression."

"It is definitely frustrating when teachers cannot get the supplies they need for their class," Executive Director of Talent Development for Guilford County Schools Amy Holcombe told The Guilfordian.

Such oppression and frustration is simply unacceptable. Our society rests on the shoulders of our teachers, yet we show no sign of appreciation or gratitude. Instead, we inundate them with continued abuse and restrictions.

The future of our society depends on the teachers that build it. If nothing else, we must stop the continual demoralization of teachers and the use of education policies as a means of expressing political or ideological differences.

Education changes lives, ends poverty and inspires prosperity. If we do not give teachers the respect they deserve, the pay they are worth and the resources they need, we are digging the hole for our own future.

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

The future of Guilford

Four big letters weigh heavy on our minds and hearts these days: APSA.

Unless you've been living under a rock, you've heard about the proposals in the new Administrative Program and Services Assessment report. You've received emails, Facebook notifications, seen fliers on doors or maybe overheard people talking in the cafeteria. Undeniably, a huge controversy has ignited our campus.

We are all concerned about the well-being and future of the College. And frankly, we should be.

We at The Guilfordian hope that the services that strengthen our community and make Guilford the unique institution it is will not be discarded. We hope that the administration will view staff and administrative departments not just in terms of hard numbers or statistics, but in terms of their far-reaching effects on the community and the Guilford experience as a whole.

We hope that the administration understands that many of the areas that face reduction or elimination are indispensable and essential to Guilford's core.

If you usually ignore documents that have scary words like "administrative" and "assessment" in them, you should brave through it for this one because, undoubtedly, the decisions made for the APSA proposal will affect you in some way. They will affect us all.

In the report itself, the euphemism "restructure" can be found throughout the document. Much of what we love about Guilford now faces this fate of restructuring, or worse, elimination.

Services like the Friends Center, the Art Gallery, Bonner Center, Career Development Center and Multicultural Education face downsizing, position cuts or being clumped in with other departments.

And they are the lucky ones. Other services, like the Conflict Resolution Resource Center, could be cut altogether.

Reducing resources that enrich student experience and propel community building and diversity does not reflect what Guilford stands for.

As an institution that emphasizes core values of community, diversity, stewardship and justice, it seems like our priorities are off here — especially given that areas such as the PE Center and Athletics will most likely be maintained as is.

The smell of contradiction lingers in the air.

We feel grateful that we were eventually included in the conversation. We just hope this inclusion was out of more than just politeness.

We hope our voices will not just be heard, but listened to intently.

Guilford's future depends on it.

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