

Accessibility at Guilford is a major accomplishment

While Guilford College's goal to achieve total accessibility for all students has bloomed, look forward to it blossoming.

I hope to see Guilford keep growing and to continue to see both faculty and students working to make Guilford as accessible as possible from many angles.



BY
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Thankfully, the Accessibility Subcommittee does consider the issue in a multifaceted way.

The subcommittee approaches their charge from multiple perspectives concerning information, physical ability and attitude.

"Our accessibility plan is ambitious, but achievable," said Chair of the Accessibility Subcommittee and Director of the Learning Commons Melissa Daniel-Frink.

Considering their ambition combined with their perspective-based approach, Guilford is leagues above its peers in making the campus and its services

accessible for everyone.

Still, there are always other steps to be taken.

Looking at information, the Learning Commons' Dragon Naturally Speaking software assists students who are hearing impaired by converting speech to text. A Kurzweil Reader and a Jobs Access with Speech screen reader provide a text-to-speech output for students who are visually impaired.

"The college has purchased a Braille in order to make information accessible for all our students," said Daniel-Frink.

Yet, the range of services available to make textbooks accessible is significantly more restricted.

"I couldn't take advantage of (the text-to-speech readers) because it requires the binding of the book get cut off," said senior Emma Debby.

The bookstore doesn't offer any similar substitutions, but is willing to look into possible solutions if approached by Disability Resources.

"But (The Learning Commons) were extremely kind and helpful," continued Debby.

The members of the Learning Commons do their best to have information available for its students, even if there are some limitations to the services offered.

Looking at Guilford's accessibility from a physical standpoint, many measures have been taken.

"Most recent is this Summer when Hege-Cox Hall was outfitted with ramps, and door openers were placed on the doors (as well as) in King Hall," said Assistant Academic Dean for Academic Support Barbara Boyette. "Every year we try to think ahead for accessibility and make it better."

Some improvements can be made, such as having door openers for the bathroom stalls. The stalls comply with regulations regarding their size and also have the necessary bars. However, none of that matters if the students can't enter the restroom.

Some other places on campus also remain inaccessible for some students. However, Facilities has shown and continues to express their willingness to adjust beyond the code to continue making renovations to help Guilford become more accessible, like the lowering of the elevator buttons to a height reachable for all students.

In the realm of attitude, Guilford is above and beyond.

"I have always seen disabilities as human variation and I hope

For more information about Guilford's Disability Resources, follow the QR code: (To view the PDF of the Accessibility Plan, click the link under "Accessibility Plan")



that attitude becomes pervasive in our community to where we understand and embrace differences and not look at them in a negative light," said Coordinator of Disability Resources Georgie Bogdan.

Faculty and staff at Guilford have gone the extra mile to ensure Guilford's evolution towards accessibility for everyone.

"The people that we work with are dedicated to making (complete accessibility) happen, and we know we have to change, to grow, and we're all up for it," said Boyette.

Daniel-Frink also expressed Guilford's drive to make not only itself but the whole world accessible as a living, emergent force.

"Take what you learn about accessibility and the mind-set you gain here and take it into the world, because that is where it grows," said Daniel-Frink.

Hopefully, as Daniel-Frink described, Guilford has sown seeds in both its community and the minds of its students to take accessibility to heart and work towards a more accessible world for everyone.

Stereotypes, myths and Batman: it's time to stop teasing the 'fake' geek girl

"Real nerds were not born knowing everything about Batman," said TheMarySue.com writer Susanna Polo at a convention panel.



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This statement was a reaction to the circulating idea of an attention-seeking "fake geek girl." Girls are constantly accused of not being knowledgeable enough about their nerdy interests and shamed out of enjoying things they truly like.

There is no such thing as a "fake" geek girl. Women — just like men — start enjoying things like comics and video games at different ages and to varying degrees.

"There's no reason to join a fandom unless you enjoy it, and if someone accuses you of otherwise it ruins the experience," said Early College first-year Erin Goeke.

This attitude doesn't come from every male in fandom, but it does come from a wide scope of people, and from many who have definite authority in the subculture.

Tony Harris, comic book artist for "Iron Man" and "Ex Machina," posted on Facebook last year criticizing female cosplayers — slang for fans who dress up as their favorite characters — claiming they don't know anything about comics.

"Hey quasi-pretty-not-hot girl, you are more pathetic than the real nerds who you secretly think are really pathetic," said Harris in the post. "You don't know s--- about comics, beyond whatever Google image search you did to get ref on the most mainstream character with the most revealing costume."



This attitude must stop.

Harris was the breaking point between annoyance and distress for many who deal with this on a near daily basis. To hear this from someone you admire, a creator of the products you love? It's beyond hurtful.

"There is a female comic book market out there," said Associate Professor of

Mathematics Ben Marlin. "51 percent of the population is women. You have to figure out how to deal with them."

The mistreatment of geek girls is not just verbal. Women everywhere in fandom experience harassment based on how they choose to express themselves.

"There have been numerous reports

that young women were being sexually harassed and accosted at conventions," said Joe Scott, owner of Geeksboro Coffeehouse Cinema, in an interview with The Guilfordian. "My friend was harassed at a con in Georgia and was greeted with complete indifference by con organizers. I'm inspired by heroes who would never accept that behavior."

A lot of this harassment is focused on women who cosplay. They're accused of wearing skimpy outfits to attract attention, despite the fact that these costumes are exact replicas of male-designed outfits.

"If you want to cosplay Chun Li (of Street Fighter) you don't have much choice but to wear relatively skimpy clothing, and that comes from the game makers," said senior Emily Eadie, commodore of the Guilford Yachting Club. "They need to be held accountable for their portrayal of women."

A lot of time, money and effort goes into these contributions to fandom, yet female cosplayers get little respect from their male counterparts.

"A woman can spend 30 to 50 hours building a Wonder Woman costume, and a guy can roll up in an Avenger's T-shirt he bought at WalMart," said Scott. "He's going to be instantly accepted whereas she has to work hard to gain approval from male attendees. It's not fair."

Eventually, these judgmental members of fandom will have to acknowledge the existence of diehard geek girls and their prevalence in nerd culture.

"Gaming is just another form of media," said Eadie. "No one says that girls can't go to movies, or read or listen to music, so why can't girls get into gaming?"

Superman and Captain America wouldn't accept this kind of behavior. Why should we?

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