

Sexual assault open forum promotes change

BY TY GOOCH
STAFF WRITER

On Nov. 13, students gathered in silence at the open community forum on sexual assault. Sponsored by Guilford College's Sexual Assault Awareness Support and Advocacy and Sexual Violence Prevention Committee, the forum gave students the opportunity to share experiences with sexual assault in a supportive environment.

Moderated by senior and Community Senate President Samir Hazboun, Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter and Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology Julie Winterich, the forum allowed participants to speak out of the silence, providing each attendee the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences.

The forum offered a silent, safe zone where participants could speak out as they felt inclined to do so.

As an open forum, the event was not a place for debate. Participants were allowed to comment on

anything they felt was relevant, as long as it did not challenge another participant's previous comment.

Whenever someone broke the silence, everyone listened intensely, showing strong support.

And while most of the stories shared were negative, the energy in the room was nothing but positive. Students held hands, hugged and cried in each other's arms. The room buzzed with positivity and acceptance.

"I was amazed by how supportive the space was," said first-year Marek Wojtala. "It saddened me to hear about all of these things, but the support of the community makes me feel proud to be at Guilford."

After attendees shared their stories, the room fell back into

silence and the moderators opened the floor for suggestions on how to improve the current sexual assault resources on campus.

Junior Alexander Morales raised the issue that anonymous reports are not listed anywhere and that steps should be taken to include

safety officers need to be taught sensitivity training, something that SAASA had tried to accomplish in the past.

But then the question arose of whose job it would be to actually handle all these sensitivity training workshops. Although multiple

faculty members help out with resources for sexual assault survivors, no one can dedicate their full time to the cause.

"It astounds me how thin we stretch our faculty," said junior Julia Draper.

According to Draper, Guilford needs to create a full-time "wellness position."

"We need someone whose job it is to coordinate between faculty and staff, to put out workshops and dedicate their full time to tackle the complex issues of our systemic

culture," said Draper.

Many other students supported the idea of a wellness position.

"I hope that people recognize how many people are affected on campus and that the faculty realizes that students want a wellness position," said senior Faris El-Ali.

After the forum ended, students remarked on how successful it was.

"I felt like it was a really powerful experience," said junior Sam Cole. "It helped people realize that they're not alone, and that there are people here to help."

While there are people who can help, senior and SAASA President Cappa Cheatham, noted that some students still remain quiet.

"Students, faculty and staff spoke out tonight, but there are still students on this campus that are suffering in silence," said Cheatham. "(Sexual assault) is so common here. Every 21 hours a student is sexually assaulted on a college campus and Guilford is no exception. The difference is that Guilford is more proactive than reactive compared to other colleges."

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Julia Draper, junior

these reports on a list of all sexual assault reports.

Others raised concerns that public safety officers are not properly trained in responding to sexual assault reports.

According to attendees, public

SENATE UPDATE

this week's developments

Kent Chabotar gave a presidential address to the student body and also made himself available to the student body for a 30-minute Q&A session.

next week's plans

Students will further prepare for the joint CCE SGA/Senate hosting of board of trustees members Esther Hall and Lionel Johnson on Dec. 2 @ 6:30 p.m. The proposed changes to Community Senate's by-laws by the Steering Committee will be discussed.

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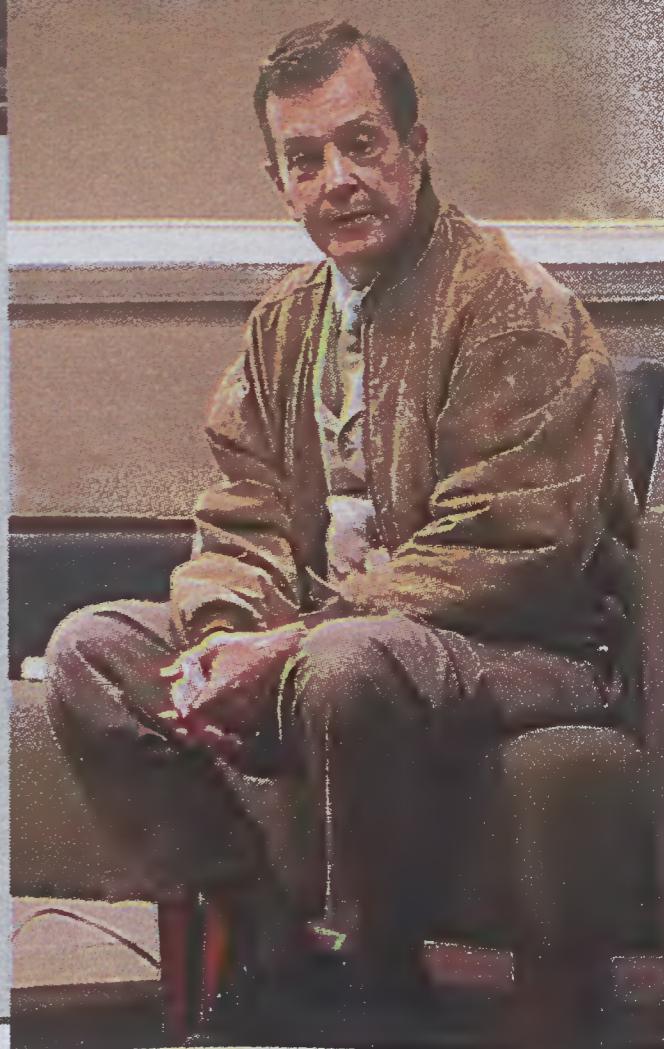
Compiled by Samir Hazboun, Community Senate president

President Chabotar speaks at Senate



Kent Chabotar came to Community Senate on Nov. 18 and answered the following questions in-depth for the first half-hour, before going on to field questions from the student body.

1. What attracted you to Guilford College and its presidency?
2. What was the condition of the College when you arrived in 2002?
3. What do you consider your greatest accomplishments?
4. Unfinished business?
5. Challenges for your successor?
6. What's next for you?



KERA McNICHOLAS/GUILFORDIAN