

Transfer talk amongst first-years shows lack of fulfillment within community

You might have heard the grumbling. Someone in your life at Guilford has probably talked openly about transferring, especially if you are a first-year student like me.



BY IAN PENNY
STAFF WRITER

While I am not bothered too much by the comments themselves, they do indicate something boiling under the surface — I think Guilford might not be doing its best in retaining students.

"The retention rate we speak of, to be clear, is of all full-time first-year students that begin one fall (are here as of Oct. 1) and return again for the next fall (Oct. 1)," said Assistant Academic Dean for Academic Support Barbara Boyette in an email interview.

In 2008, the retention rate dipped to a 10-year low of 68 percent. The following year, the same measure spiked to 80 percent. Recent years have seen retention hover above 70 percent.

That means around 30 percent of incoming students each year are leaving, and I'm willing to bet there are plenty more students unhappy with their situations but unable to leave.

It definitely is not a black-and-white issue, as indicated by the withdrawal survey administered by Campus Life.

"From the withdrawal survey, one of the top reasons students leave is financial," said Boyette. "Some leave for medical reasons, others for 'fit' or athletics."

The right "fit" is primarily what is the most troubling.

"I thought going to Guilford — going to a small school — would create community," said first-year Amaris Prince, who plans on transferring. "Community on campus is lacking."

What I have found — both through on-the-record interviews and off-the-record discussions with students — is that there is disconnect between what is advertised and what students receive.

"They do a good job of telling you they don't sell this place and then sell it," said first-year Danny Wang.

While all tuition-funded colleges are within their right to brand themselves, no student should feel cheated. Guilford should hold an even higher standard for itself as a member of Colleges That Change Lives.

"Yes, Guilford pushes students, but what are they going



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to do afterward?" said Prince. "This school has no balance between academic and campus life."

The Executive Summary of the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement found similar results.

"Guilford students, both first-years and seniors, outperform students at our peer institutions in nearly all academic/intellectual items related to collaboration, creativity, writing, making presentations, studying and synthesizing ideas," the summary stated. "On the other hand, Guilford students, especially first-years, are less engaged in the college's co-curricular experiences such as student organizations and intramural sports."

Outside the classroom, there does not seem to be much to do.

"I have two older sisters; their colleges had extra activities," said Catalina Garcia, another first-year planning on transferring. "Here, you finish a class and you have this big gap with nothing to do."

It bothers me to know that many great organizations and programs exist on campus. The heart of the matter is we, as a school and a community, must figure out a better way to integrate more first-year students.

If we do not address the issue, everyone loses.

"So many people leaving has totally changed the dynamic of the hall," said first-year Chris Honein.

By his count, five people from Honein's First Year Experience class — a living learning community — have left Guilford, impacting his daily routine and life.

The burden falls partly on administration and partly on the students themselves to come up with solutions.

On an institutional level, Guilford should look for ways to modify FYE classes. Student-run clubs should look to do a better job of announcing and putting on events.

Though I am concerned, I am confident the Guilford community can pull together and tackle the complex beast of first-year retention.

CVS pharmacies eliminate tobacco, show societal trends

Bravo, CVS, bravo.

CVS Caremark Corporation recently made the decision to remove all tobacco products from all 7,600 CVS pharmacies and 800 Minute Clinics by Oct. 1, 2014.



BY CONNOR WILSON
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This is estimated to take a \$2 billion dent out of their earnings, \$1.5 billion from tobacco products and \$500 million in non-tobacco products bought by tobacco buyers.

As the first national pharmacy chain to end the sale of cigarettes, CVS has taken a fantastic step to solidifying their presence in the

healthcare market.

"Tobacco products have no place in a setting where healthcare is delivered," said Larry Merlo, CVS president and CEO, in a video announcing the move away from tobacco products.

CVS will also begin backing and funding a smoking cessation program. The hope is to help the one in seven smokers seeking help to finally quit while they are still free of

many of the harmful side effects of smoking, such as lung cancer and COPD.

Coming from a family with 10-plus prescriptions to cash in each month, I feel better knowing that a company in charge of keeping my family sane and healthy is looking out for me in whatever tiny form that may be. I also recognize that I lucked out in relation to smoking.

With a huge history of smoking and addiction in my family medical tree, having such easy access to cigarettes and tobacco

products made it increasingly difficult to say no.

CVS's move not only promotes their stance in the healthcare market, it is also in line with a few major cities like New York City and Chicago who have banned cigarettes in public spaces.

Smoking is one of those few acts not possessing positive effects to outweigh the bad. It relieves stress, sure, but with such a high chance for addiction and rising prices, it ends up causing more stress than it relieves.

Smoking cigarettes in their modern form hold no other real potential than killing. CVS is making the right move by actually making the move towards creating a healthier world.

People who are anxious about this removal of cigarettes, as well as the rising number of cities banning smoking in public places, have argued that this will only create a dangerous black market for cigarettes.

The argument doesn't make sense though. The homegrown tobacco, free of additives and massive marketing campaigns, would be much safer and will be considerably less endangering to the majority of the populace than the form we have now.

Those who have said they are against the ban of cigarettes are the same who are afraid of the government regulating American lives. We need regulation though, so that we do not run into the same situation as Virginia's water supply.

They need not worry, though — this removal of cigarettes is not a government choice but a societal one. It shows that opinions on smoking are turning, that people are ready to quit smoking.

So bravo, CVS. Thank you for making sure that my generation and the next will be one step closer from being rid of COPD and lung cancer caused by cigarettes.



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