

DAC-sponsored forum discusses College's future

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On Wednesday afternoon, as snow began falling outside, junior Ines Sanchez de Lozada asked a small group of students, faculty and staff, "What do you want Guilford to be?"

Feb. 12 marked the first of four community forums this semester, which intend to create a space that allows for open conversation about Guilford College's core values, passions and priorities as well as strategies to unite the Guilford community.

Organized by a co-curricular subcommittee of the Diversity Action Committee, the forum was inspired by community involvement during the Administrative Program and Services Assessment forum and the community's desire for more transparent dialogue between students, faculty, staff and administrators.

"I have been at Guilford for eight years ... that's the first time in my eight years that I've seen such a large segment of our community come out to anything," said Jorge Zeballos, director of diversity training and development, of the APSA forum. "It was great to see that sense of investment."

APSA discussions confirmed the necessity of a consistent open space for the community to voice concerns and collaboratively work towards finding solutions.

After brainstorming individually, sophomore Kiernan Colby kicked off the forum with an inquiry about the current presidential search.



Community members met for the first of four forums to discuss how to improve the community.

"I want to know what we can do to promote transparency in the search for a new president," said Colby.

That the presidential search may be closed to the public — including the student body — concerned many in attendance at the forum. Only the presidential search committee and two

student representatives would have communication with candidates.

Junior Daniel Raeder spoke about the presidential search meeting he attended that addressed these issues.

"It could be a necessary evil," Raeder said.

The best possible candidates are those

who are more likely to seek out the position if it doesn't mean compromising their current job.

Discussion transitioned as first-year Nahja Zigbi-Johnson brought up concerns about tours and the admission process.

"I've talked to some people who work in admissions and do tours, and they've voiced concerns about admission tours not properly representing the campus and the student body," Zigbi-Johnson said. "That's directly affecting who's coming to Guilford, and it's changing Guilford each year."

Steve Moran, director of student leadership and engagement, provided his own advice.

"When I go to ask somebody for something I want to see changed, I find a way to frame it that helps what they're trying to do too," said Moran.

As the hour came to a close, students broke off into smaller groups. Snippets of conversations could be overheard of researching the presidential search and talking to Dean of Admission and Financial Aid Andrew Strickler, while others gasped at the large amount of snow that had quickly accumulated.

"It was really empowering to see so many people who are so genuinely interested in making Guilford a better place," said first-year Elena Robles. "I think it went really well, and I think it's important to have these discussions."

This community forum set the tone for future open discussions amongst all community members who are passionate about creating a culture of transparency and openness at Guilford.

EXHIBIT

'None of the Above' illustrates dangers, victims of school-to-prison pipeline

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

white stripes, each stripe containing a different sentence.

"For the white, there was a poem, and for the brown there was a (different) poem," said Parrott. "(It was) a really good representation of the differences between the communities."

For the exhibit's opening reception on Feb. 20, community members gathered to hear 19 monologues read aloud by Guilford College students, faculty, staff and alumni, along with members of the broader community. The monologues were adapted from oral histories collected by Hidden Voices and Guilford students.

Senior Phyllis Campbell, who was interviewed for one of the monologues, encouraged everyone to attend the opening reception.

"This stuff is someone's actual life story; that's what I like about (Harris)," Campbell said in a phone interview.

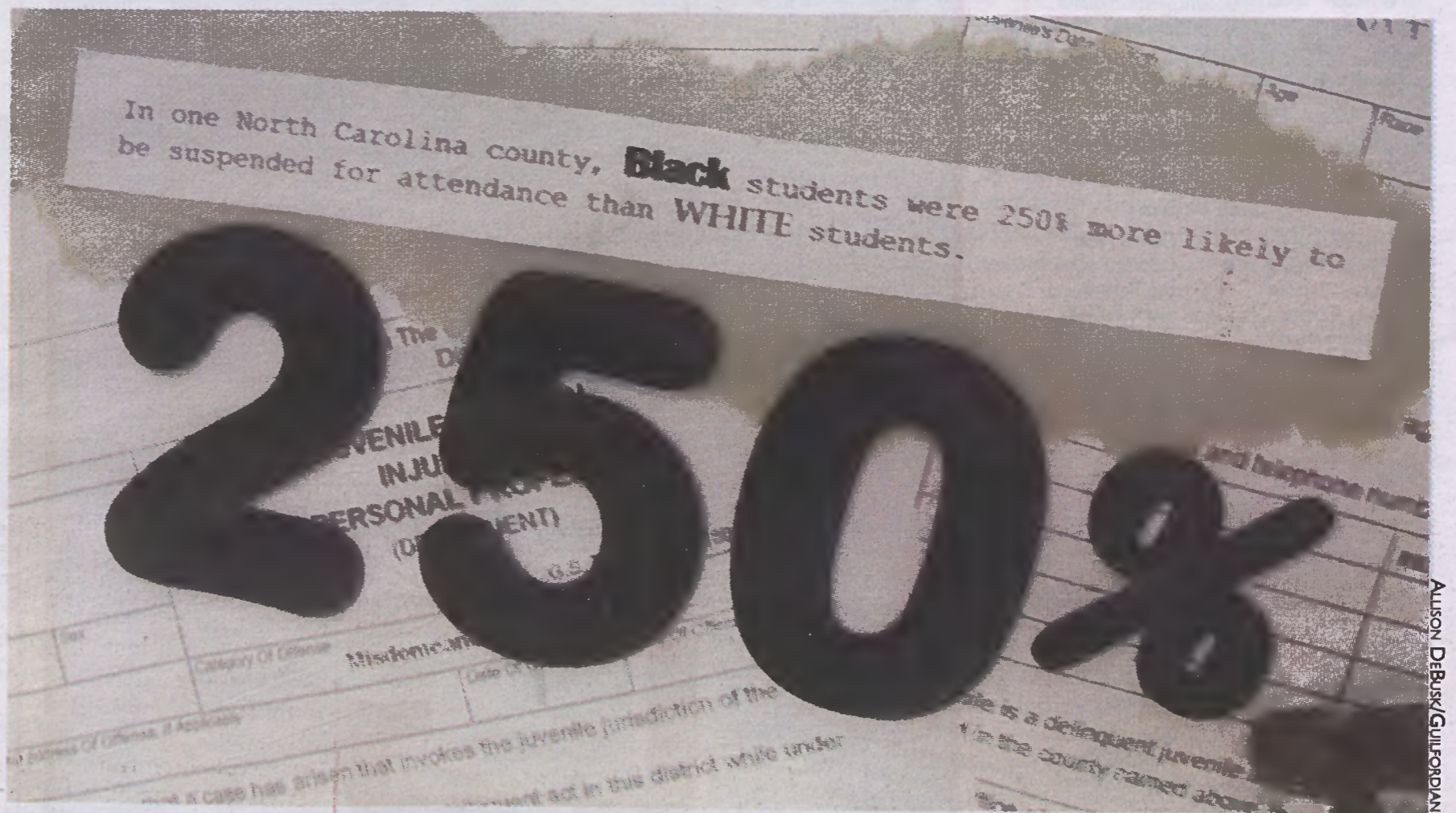
Although the exhibit only covers North Carolina, the pipeline is a national issue.

"The school-to-prison pipeline is very troubling ... because this system is created by private corporations who stand to benefit financially from the incarceration of young people of color," Jorge Zeballos, director of diversity training and development, said in an email interview.

The pipeline has only become more troubling since the introduction of "zero tolerance" laws in schools, which cause students to be suspended or criminally prosecuted for relatively minor infractions.

"Even elementary school children get handcuffed for things they've done," said Sherry Giles, associate professor and chair of the justice and policy studies department.

The exhibit will be on display through March 6.



"None of the Above" features many facts like this to spotlight racism and other issues in the North Carolina public school system.

Giles, who is a co-sponsor of the exhibit, hopes that "None of the Above" will spark more community involvement.

"I think that as a state, as a city, we really need to focus

on these issues, and colleges and students and faculty can be important people in that process of trying to create a change," said Giles. "I'm hopeful for the exhibit contributing to that."