

Judicial Affairs needs more inclusivity

Any educational institution must hold itself accountable to its community through consistent, critical reflection. Guilford, with its noble core values and declarations, should be especially scrutinized.



BY
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One of the places we can examine where Guilford's actual priorities lie is within the final APSA report.

The report approved cutting both the length of the Understanding Racism workshop and compensation for faculty who contribute to the workshop. It does not include anything about adding required sensitivity training or multicultural education workshops as parts of all employees' jobs.

Another approved recommendation from the APSA report concerning the Judicial Affairs Office reads, "Current data collection and analysis should include repeat offenses information."

Collecting such data targets students who have been documented multiple times, and weeding out bad apples should not be the approach to restorative justice.

Senior Cory Collins, who has been through the Community Accountability Project, felt the office should not judge students in this manner.

"I think they should function on a case-by-case basis," said Collins. "Don't hold anything against anyone who is going in there for the second or third time. You still have to be sensitive to what people are going through."

APSA's recommendation does not reflect what the community is asking for and eerily echoes how law enforcement works outside of Guilford.

"As a society, our decision to heap shame and contempt upon those who struggle and fail in a system designed to keep them locked up and locked out says far more about ourselves than it does about them," wrote Michelle Alexander in her book "The New Jim Crow."

The APSA recommendations reveal through omission both what the administration wants to do and what they do not care

to research.

"Students of color have shared stories of perceived unfair treatment," said Jada Drew, director for educational initiatives and partnerships, in an email interview. "As I believe their stories are valid, as a college, we must begin to collect systemic demographic data indicating race, sexual orientation and gender to support these stories. The data will also allow us to collectively create inclusive policies and practices."

The administration appears uninterested in listening to what community members feel the judicial system needs.

Drew's recommendation is in accord with one of the objectives in the Diversity Action Plan of 2009: "By 2015, the College will enhance inclusiveness in the College environment by creating institutional policies and practices that sustain and advance equality for all students, staff and faculty."

All students I interviewed agreed hiring a person of color who is trained in multicultural education and/or social work would be helpful to the judicial system.

"I think we need more advocates, and we do need diversity," said Daniel Rhodes, visiting instructor of justice and policy studies, who has a background in clinical social work.

Guilford's Diversity Plan reads, "By 2015, the College will increase the diversity of faculty and staff at all levels based on race, sex, ethnicity, sexual identity and international origin."

The Judicial Affairs Office is in a prime position to facilitate this objective.

"In order to achieve our goal of becoming an anti-racist, multicultural institution, we need to align all of our institutional practices with that goal," said Director for Diversity Training and Development Jorge Zeballos in an email interview.

This goal is not honored in the APSA report.

The Judicial Affairs Office, like many departments at Guilford, has not taken responsibility to work toward creating more inclusive practices and will likely not do so without pressure from the community. The APSA report neglected strategic plans to infuse anti-racist pedagogy into all aspects of Guilford.

It is clear institutional change will not happen unless it benefits those already in power. Administrative bodies must be directly pressured to make change; they are clearly not listening to our words.

This Week's

STAFF EDITORIAL

Black History Month should not be the only time we talk about race

Here at The Guilfordian, we do our best to give a voice to the entire student body. However, like many organizations, we are limited in our ability to accurately represent all voices given our staff's lack of diversity.

A majority of our editorial board is white. We do our best to be aware of the ways our backgrounds influence our decisions about the paper and its content. Yet we still make mistakes and thus reinforce oppressive systems without even knowing it.

At the same time, Black History Month is very much alive and well on our campus with a slew of events. Community members are doing great work in seeking to understand and undo the oppression of black people in the United States while also celebrating the many beautiful contributions of blackness.

But as senior Jodie Ann-Geddes points out, "Black History Month should not be the only time where we feel comfortable as a community talking about the oppression of black people in America."

We at The Guilfordian concur wholeheartedly. Many of us on the staff received depressingly scant lessons on the history of blacks in the U.S. We received sanitized and whitewashed versions of MLK Jr. and Rosa Parks — not to mention the complete omission of Malcolm X — as well as the presentation of Lyndon Johnson as a champion of racial equality laws instead of a career politician whose relationship to the civil rights movement was much more complex.

It is all of our responsibility to free ourselves from the misinformation disseminated in our high school history textbooks and use the abundant resources we have at Guilford to become truly aware of black history.

Not only that, but we must also remember that these issues are not solely historical: they are still alive. One need look no further than the continuing segregation of U.S. cities, the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policies, the outcomes of the Trayvon Martin and Oscar Grant cases and the school-to-prison pipeline.

Ann-Geddes says it best: "When we talk about oppression, we are referring to a system that is perpetuated by silence."

We at The Guilfordian believe that it's time to start speaking up more than once every 12 months. It's time to start challenging ourselves to leave our societally prescribed comfort zones and start combating the systems of oppression that have controlled our human experience for too long.

REFLECTING GUILFORD COLLEGE'S CORE QUAKER VALUES, THE TOPICS AND CONTENT OF STAFF EDITORIALS ARE CHOSEN THROUGH CONSENSUS OF ALL 16 EDITORS AND ONE FACULTY ADVISER OF THE GUILFORDIAN'S EDITORIAL BOARD.

About our core values: Stewardship

"The next president has the exciting opportunity of shepherding the College away from the corporate mentality so pervasive in higher education and setting a leading example for other institutions."

— Department Chair and Assistant Professor of English
Diya Abdo

"(The next president) should focus on making us more like what Guilford College once was: a unique and vibrant place of higher learning, where merit and effort determined success."

— Sarah Welch '13

The Guilford core values are the cornerstone of Guilford College. They stand as guideposts to all who pass through our brick-layered buildings pursuing an education based on Quaker principles.



BY **ROBERT
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STAFF WRITER

As the presidential search committee considers who should lead this institution into the future, the voices of Guilford are drowning in the din of bureaucratic ambivalence. Recently it was announced that the search may be made private, which would appear to violate a cardinal tenet of Quakerism.

Seeking to raise the chorus of opinion among our community, The Guilfordian offers a running series focusing your opinions on the future of Guilford College in relation to the presidential search.

We asked members of the Guilford community the following question:

The Guilford core value of Stewardship is "the activity or job of protecting and being responsible for" Guilford. In what ways can our next president steer Guilford build upon this guiding principle?

"A step towards stewardship would be to invest in some new dorms and overhauls of current ones. I remember hearing about mold in Bryan (dorm) a lot this year (...) Building a fountain while students suffer from health hazards is bad optics; it shows a lack of stewardship of current students."

— Senior Michael MacVane

"(Stewardship) is every bit as valuable to the College as our endowment. Indeed, it is our endowment!"

— Director of the Friends Center & Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter

"Stewardship at Guilford is an essential element of our school. I'd like to see higher investment in internships, career development and gaining real life experience."

— Lucas Kempton '04