

Student senate proposes bold change to campus pot policy

It's no secret that Guilford College leans further to the left than most of North Carolina. However, it may surprise students to know that North Carolina's marijuana policies are more liberal than Guilford's.



BY NICOLE ZELNIKER
STAFF WRITER

"If you have what is considered a slap on the wrist, and it has been expunged from the record in (North Carolina), should that count against you (at Guilford)?" asked Aaron Fetrow, dean of students and vice president for student affairs.

Guilford's current policy is, quite frankly, ridiculous and hypocritical. Students are given two strikes over their four years at Guilford and they're out. This is even more unreasonable considering that having a marijuana violation in North

Carolina is equivalent to drinking underage — an act students can be charged with at Guilford multiple times before suspension.

The student senate has been working on a proposal to change this policy.

"The idea behind the proposal is that Guilford's marijuana policy be no harsher than the North Carolina legislature's and keeps up with the current political climate," said Julia Draper, junior and chair of judicial affairs.

Students all over campus are enthusiastic about the proposed change.

"Students here have been hospitalized (for alcohol poisoning)," said first-year Madison Giles. "It's not fair for someone who's smoking and gets caught to get more points than someone who's drinking. They're pretty equally bad, so they should be judged equally."

The proposal is even supported by the administration.

"I'm glad that this committee is working so hard to solicit student input," said Director of Student Leadership and Engagement Steve Moran. "I think the great thing about Guilford is that all students have an opportunity to be heard on issues that they are passionate about."

As for the old marijuana policy, Fetrow has some insight as to why it's so outdated.

"Times have certainly changed," said Fetrow. "Part of the background of the rule is that we have been way up on the list of the biggest marijuana schools. At that time, it wasn't legal in any other state in the country. The legal landscape around it was different."

The one fear seems to be Guilford's reputation.

"We could take some criticism from conservative alumni groups," said Fetrow.

However, one anonymous student thinks this shouldn't be an issue.

"There's a lot more to Guilford than that 'stoner vibe' that we were known for years ago," said the student.

Another fear is that students will get no punishment, but that's not the case.

"We're still going to enforce the rule," said Fetrow. "We're still going to put students through education as a result of a violation."

As long as said rule becomes more reasonable, students don't see a problem.

"Having some kind of punishment is not a bad thing in an educational setting, but it should be around what it is for alcohol," said the anonymous student.

Students and faculty are hopeful that this proposal will prevail. Why shouldn't it? It will change Guilford's judicial system for the better.

Core Values: DIVERSITY

Diversity is defined as the quality or state of having many different forms, types and ideas.

In what ways do you believe that the next president may help our college achieve this core value?

"It is easy to form alliances with people who have common interests. It is harder when you share no interests with another person. But Guilford College is about ... focusing on diversity through the understanding that your future, and the future of other students who are going to our college for different reasons, are intertwined with each other."

— Lucas Kempton '03

"We have to create an environment in which all feel safe and free to express themselves while, at the same time, remembering who we are as a Guilford community, informed by Quaker testimonies and our core values. The person at the top helps set that atmosphere."

— Max Carter, director of the Friends Center and campus ministry coordinator

"As we build our enrollment, our Quaker principles must always guide us while the diversity of opinion under that umbrella should be encouraged."

— Brent McKinney, Guilford College trustee

"The majority of our current senior administrators are white men. The desire for diversity should not only apply to faculty and students. The new president should appoint senior administrators who also reflect this core value."

— Diya Abdo, department chair and associate professor of English

"In my opinion, diversity should be defined as the differences in thought and action that individuals bring to Guilford based on their race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin and political beliefs."

— George Guo, professor of political science

"I don't feel there really is a lot of diversity at Guilford ... Many people come here and find that 'diversity' is limited to CCE students and athletes."

— Ben Ransazzo, sophomore

BY ROBERT PACHECO
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COURTESY OF TOM CLEMENT