

Letter to the Editor: recent alumnus hopes that new president brings a new direction

Dear incoming President,

I am writing this letter concerned about where the current administration has taken Guilford College but with hope that you will redirect Guilford to align with its Quaker heritage and unique spirit.

I am concerned about the gratuitous Chabotar-era administrative raises, while staff and faculty salaries have remained stagnant. I am concerned about the lack of both transparency and faculty support that has led to many of our most gifted professors leaving the college — see Diya Abdo's and Maria Rosales' recent open letter to The Guilfordian. I am concerned that, in the face of budget shortfalls and a decade of stagnant faculty/staff salaries, our president, who could be collaborating with donors to allocate gifts to the areas of the greatest need, has accepted "restricted" donor gifts to build a steamy rock fountain, a brand new golf center, repurposing the formerly, multi-use community field into a driving range, and building a new baseball stadium fence.

When President Chabotar

arrived in 2002, Guilford was "rudderless, dilapidated and broke," to use his own words. Chabotar initiated a period of austerity by cutting endowment spending from 14 percent down to about 5 percent, a necessary move.

This austerity, however, did not extend to his top administrators. These pay hikes mirror the rising wage inequity gaps of the broader economy and smell like the post-2008-financial-crisis Wall Street executive bonuses.

I've heard administrators justify the high vice president pay by saying we need to be competitive for the best CFO or Academic Dean. But, in what other area of Guilford are we competitive with our deep pockets? None.

Faculty and staff take a significant pay cut to teach at Guilford because they believe in the mission of the College and the community. On average, students at Guilford receive a discount rate of about 50 percent of tuition, enabling students of varying socioeconomic statuses to attend Guilford, thus enriching the cultural, racial, ethnic and ideological diversities of Guilford.

If you, the incoming President, were to accept a pay cut and fill

the newly vacant vice president positions at a lower pay grade, this would show the community your humbleness and consideration for the well-being of the community before the well-being of your office. If you raise faculty and staff salaries and respect the collective faculty and staff voice, this will increase faculty retention and make the community of faculty and staff stronger, and thus better prepared to support students.

The compensation of our administrators should not be multiples of our faculty and staff salaries, and donor gifts, restricted or not, must reflect the ideals and priorities of Guilford. Guilford is an educational institution. Please make the Guilford budget reflect that ideal, and please encourage the spirit of giving towards exciting new academic, scholarship and experiential (which includes athletic) programs instead of submitting to colonial philanthropy, where legacy through monument trumps the often subtle yet vital needs of the greater community.

A concerned but hopeful recent alumnus,
Tom Clement

Core Values: Justice

The quality of being fair and reasonable and the administration of the law or authority in maintaining fairness.

In what ways may Guilford College build upon this concept of justice as we move forward into the future? Are we already living up to this value?

"The judicial process at Guilford can be a healing process, part of the transformative education that Guilford College is known for. The school takes great pains to balance the Quaker principles with the requirements of an institution of higher education. The College also supports organizations for conflict resolution ... Justice at Guilford is a rehabilitation process, not an incarceration process. It shows our commitment as a community to take care of each member."

— Jessica Hilliard, CCE SGA board member and CCE representative to Presidential Search Committee

"Guilford College shows its core value of justice in many ways, ranging from the honor code to the repeated work students and staff do to make the judicial code as fair and effective as possible.

"The College does a good job, in my view, of encouraging justice through the incorporation of principled problem solving in the curriculum. The main opportunity for increased justice that I see is to increase the consistency with which justice is considered in decision-making."

— Maria Rosales, associate professor of political science

"Social justice is a very important part of the Guilford experience. I think we could improve by bringing students towards social action beyond the borders of our school ...

"Applying the skills we learn often only happens on campus. Therefore, the scope of the college is smaller than it could be. But, if we were to reach out to the community, then our message would reach a broader audience and we could make impactful change before we graduate."

— Sarah Welch '13

"(Justice) is more than adjudicating the bylaws. It is incorporating the community into the processes that guide us. I would like to see both the collaboration between the (CCE) SGA and Student Senate continue and hope that they can work to bring the community onto campus for events. That would help with admission and graduation. It would allow Guilford to no longer be seen as a small private school on the edge of Greensboro and as the bastion of free thought and participation we pride ourselves as being."

— Associate Vice President and Dean for Continuing Education Rita Serotkin

NC's voter suppression tactics adopted by other swing states

It's getting harder and harder to vote in the Land of the Free.

New voter suppression laws have recently been passed in North Carolina by Republicans in the General Assembly. In essence, these laws make it harder to vote.

State Republicans claim these laws will prevent voter fraud and bring greater uniformity to the system, but that's just a front for the press.

The real reason these laws have been passed? To keep Democrats out of office.

Here's the worst part: other swing states are now following North Carolina's example.

Governor John R. Kasich of Ohio recently passed a law that cut "Golden Week," during which voters could register and vote early on the same day.

"They know when they are taking away early voting exactly who it's affecting," Ed FitzGerald, the executive of Cuyahoga County and a Democratic candidate for governor, told The New York Times.

Yep, laws reducing early voting affect many people, but they especially hurt low-income and minority voters — a historically Democratic voting bloc.

It's no surprise Republicans would want to reduce early voting. Early voters have won states for the Democratic Party in presidential elections. Just look at North Carolina during the 2008 election. On Voting Day, McCain beat Obama handily, but once early voting was factored, Obama managed to barely snag the electoral votes.

While the reason for the strategy isn't surprising, it's insane that it's actually passing.

It gets worse, though. A federal judge recently upheld laws in Arizona and Kansas requiring voters to provide a birth certificate, passport or other documentation to prove citizenship when registering to vote.

"This is a really big victory not just for Kansas and Arizona, but for all 50 states," Republican Secretary of State Kris Kobach of Kansas told The Associated Press. "Kansas has paved the way for all states to

enact proof-of-citizenship requirements."

He's right; this is a huge victory for Republicans in terms of their prospects for elections. Suppressing Democratic Party voters tends to have that effect.

"It is shameful," said Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Robert Duncan in an email interview. "Our elected representatives should be working to make it easier to vote rather than trying to make it more difficult."

I completely agree, but it appears Republicans are now looking at voter suppression as an actual political strategy. Anyone else getting deja vu from the 1960s?

I also had the chance to talk with those who are fighting for our rights here in North Carolina.

"Notice which states are following North Carolina's examples: we shouldn't be proud of any of them," said Moral Monday protester Whitney Stanley in an email interview with The Guilfordian. "North Carolina used to be considered a fairly moderate state that happened to be in the South. Now, we seem to be the pied piper of ridiculous politics."

So, what will it take to have these laws reduced or repealed?

"Education," said Ashley Pinner, another Moral Monday protester, in an email interview with The Guilfordian. "The lawmakers who enacted this legislation are not going to say, 'Hey, wait a minute, we made a mistake! Let's fix this mess!' The only way to 'fix' this 'mess' is to make sure people know what they have done and who has done it."

I agree. As a state, we may have regressed significantly, but that doesn't mean we get to give up. Getting involved and educating the public are the keys to success in North Carolina and other states.

But, what impact will these new laws have on elections? While it's too early to tell since many of these laws are so new, I suspect the impact will be massive.

In past presidential elections, swing states have been won or lost by just fractions of percents. My guess is that these laws will be more than enough to tip the balance in favor of Republicans in these states.

Until then, try to get involved with the Moral Monday protests or similar efforts if you truly care about this issue.



BY JAKE DELAHANTY
STAFF WRITER

'North Carolina used to be considered a fairly moderate state that happened to be in the South. Now, we seem to be the pied piper of ridiculous politics.'

Whitney Stanley, Moral Monday protester

BY ROBERT PACHECO
STAFF WRITER