

Was the search process open to student input?

BY ALEXANDRA HARIDOPOLOS
STAFF WRITER

"It's a wonderful process."
"A thoughtful process."
"We've got great candidates."

Coming out during a forum in their final decision meeting the evening of April 7, trustees reflected positively on the consensus process of choosing Guilford College's next president. Some community members, however, were not as impressed.

Many disputed whether the structure of the process actually encouraged community participation or not.

"Interviews were at times a lot of people had class, and they were for such a short amount of time," said sophomore Alex Barbour.

One 40-minute open forum session per candidate was set aside for students. Faculty and staff were offered two hour-long open forum sessions: one in the morning, one in the afternoon.

Considering that earlier stages of the search process were closed, many found the open on-campus sessions to be progress for the College's aim of transparency. Yet, some wonder where the line between full transparency and token participation lies.

"I didn't think it was very considerate to have the sessions at a time when a large portion of students couldn't attend, and such a brief window of time to complete the surveys," said senior Zak Larrabee. "It is almost like they opened the process simply for a façade of inclusivity."

Dave Dobson, professor of geology and earth sciences and member of the presidential search committee, was sympathetic to the trustees' time restraints.

"I wish the process could have allowed for a little more time for community members on campus to give feedback to the board, but I understand why they were on such a tight schedule," said Dobson in an email interview.

On the day of each candidate's visit, a survey was sent out through The Guilford Buzz and was open for less than 24 hours for community members to share their thoughts on the candidate. Nevertheless, some students felt their voices should have been included in more direct ways.

"Students shouldn't be limited to just giving feedback," said senior Sol Weiner. "We should actually have a vote or some place in the consensus process."

Associate Vice President of the Office of Communications & Marketing Ty Buckner referred to himself as "a messenger," since he is responsible for disseminating information from the trustees and administration to students, faculty and staff.

During the week candidates visited campus, Buckner posted Buzz announcements reminding people about the interview sessions and surveys. When asked if he had heard concerns from the community about not having enough time to engage with candidates, Buckner responded:

"I am mostly involved on a day-to-day basis with folks in this (Advancement) building," said Buckner. "I stay pretty close to what I'm doing, and I haven't sought out people's opinions."

Carole Bruce, trustee and presidential search committee chair, declined to comment on the process. Joseph M. Bryan Jr., trustee and chair of the board of trustees, was unavailable to comment.

Some faculty on the search committee brought forward a concern to Buckner and Bruce that The Buzz was an imperfect method to communicate the Survey Monkey feedback opportunity.

Additional methods that could have been used to spread the word about the process include tabling in Founders Hall, reaching out to club leaders, using social media or publishing announcements in The Guilfordian.

Still, many were grateful to have been included in the process that originally might have stayed anonymous for confidentiality reasons.

"I feel we laid it out pretty well for people," said Buckner. "We do it in the same way, so everyone has a shot at it."

Questions about how an open search process did not ensure full community participation have been raised nonetheless.

"When you think about how few students were actually able to attend the open forum sessions ... give feedback, how many students knew there were surveys, and then on top of that, time restrictions, it just seems like it was set up so they wouldn't receive much community input," said junior Sara Minsky, a co-facilitator of Students Allied Against Privilege and Supremacy.

Jane Fernandes to succeed Chabotar

BY VICTOR LOPEZ
SENIOR WRITER

After a week of deliberations, this Monday the board of trustees selected Jane Fernandes as the College's ninth president, making her the first female ever to serve in the role.

As her first step, Fernandes is set on getting to know not only the campus community, but also the Greensboro community.

"I will need to build relationships with the business community and create friends of the college," said Fernandes in a phone interview. Born deaf, Fernandes is able to communicate by phone using an interpreter and special software that turns spoken words into text.

Gathering the perspectives of everyone on campus, whether students, faculty or staff, tops Fernandes' to-do agenda.

Though she will need to become intimately involved with Guilford, she said that her learning curve would take no longer than "two months to a year."

"Some decisions I may have to make right away," she said. "Others will come after hearing a full range of perspectives. Hearing those helps us get to a place where a solution can be found."

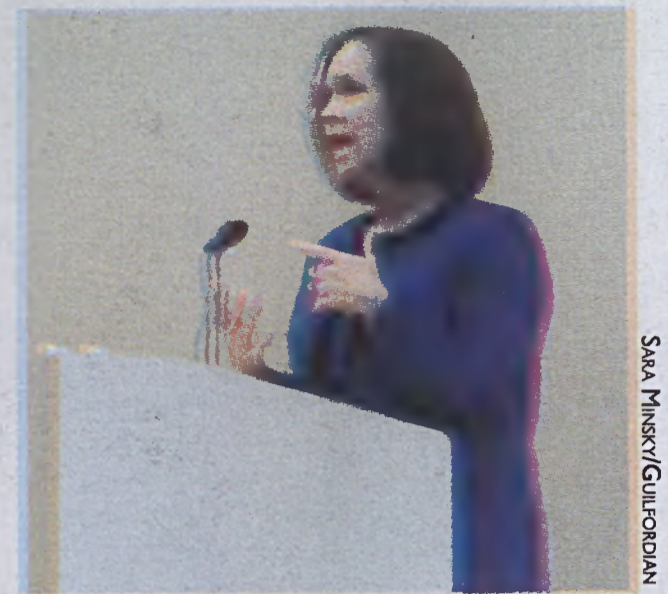
Lionel C. Johnson, a trustee and parent of two Guilford graduates, said that after the lengthy deliberations, the board chose the right candidate.

"The board wanted the next leader to bring Guilford into the 21st century in a way that represents the ethos of our college," says Johnson. "Jane will challenge students, faculty and staff to reach that goal."

Deena Zaru '10 agrees with Johnson.

"I'm very proud of Guilford for selecting its first woman as president," Zaru said. "As a Guilford alum, I value Guilford for being a place where people with diverse skills can succeed, because the College is guided by the belief that the institution should accommodate community members and nurture them."

"Selecting Jane Fernandes as president is the ultimate living testimony to this belief."



Jane Fernandes came to Guilford April 2.

Samir Hazboun, senior and president of Community Senate, is optimistic about Fernandes' arrival.

"Seeing the elders in this community reenergized was all I needed to be very excited about Jane coming to Guilford," he said.

Bryan Series turns the tables on '60 Minutes' stars

BY ABE KENMORE
STAFF WRITER

"We never get asked questions," said Steve Kroft of "60 Minutes" at the Community Center during the afternoon of April 8.

That was about to change.

Both at the Q&A session on campus with students and staff and during the Bryan Series presentation at the War Memorial Auditorium that evening, Kroft and his colleague, Leslie Stahl, spent most of their time in Greensboro answering questions.

The afternoon session on campus allowed community members to ask questions directly. Among other topics, Kroft and Stahl discussed how they found the subjects for their stories and the experience of working for a balanced news show in a market dominated by Fox and MSNBC.

For the evening session, Justin Catanoso, director of journalism and associate professor at Wake Forest University, interviewed Stahl and Kroft. They answered his questions conversationally, swapping stories and interrupting each other on occasion.

"They had a kind of chemistry I wasn't expecting," said Catanoso in a phone interview. "As nervous as I was, they were a little more nervous because they are more used to asking the questions than answering."

The conversation ranged from sharing anecdotes about former producers and colleagues to reminiscing on how they joined "60 Minutes" to discussing stories they had covered.

One of these notable stories was a segment Stahl had done on Guantanamo, which included a walk through the prison while detainees shouted protests through the door.

"It was one of the most emotional moments I've had on camera," said Stahl.

She was struck by the fact that all the guards wore Hazmat suits to protect themselves from the detainees' throwing feces.

"I felt for the young soldiers who were guarding (the detainees)," said Stahl. "They let us in (to the prison) so we could tell their story."

Much of the evening was more lighthearted in tone, however, particularly the stories about their "flamboyant" former executive producer Don Hewitt.

"He never walked; he ran," said Stahl. "(He) never talked; he shouted ... (and) you were expected to shout back," said Stahl.

Both reporters praised his ability to look at their stories with "fresh eyes" and find what they had missed.

"Jeff (Fager, the current producer) is almost as good," said Kroft, before amending, "He's as good, actually," while the audience laughed.

The evening ended with Catanoso commenting that, were this "60 Minutes," the famous stopwatch would be reaching the top of the hour.

"(By now) the network computer would have cut us off," said Stahl. "You'd be watching 'Good Wife.'"

Although few members of the Guilford community attended the evening session, those who did, enjoyed it.

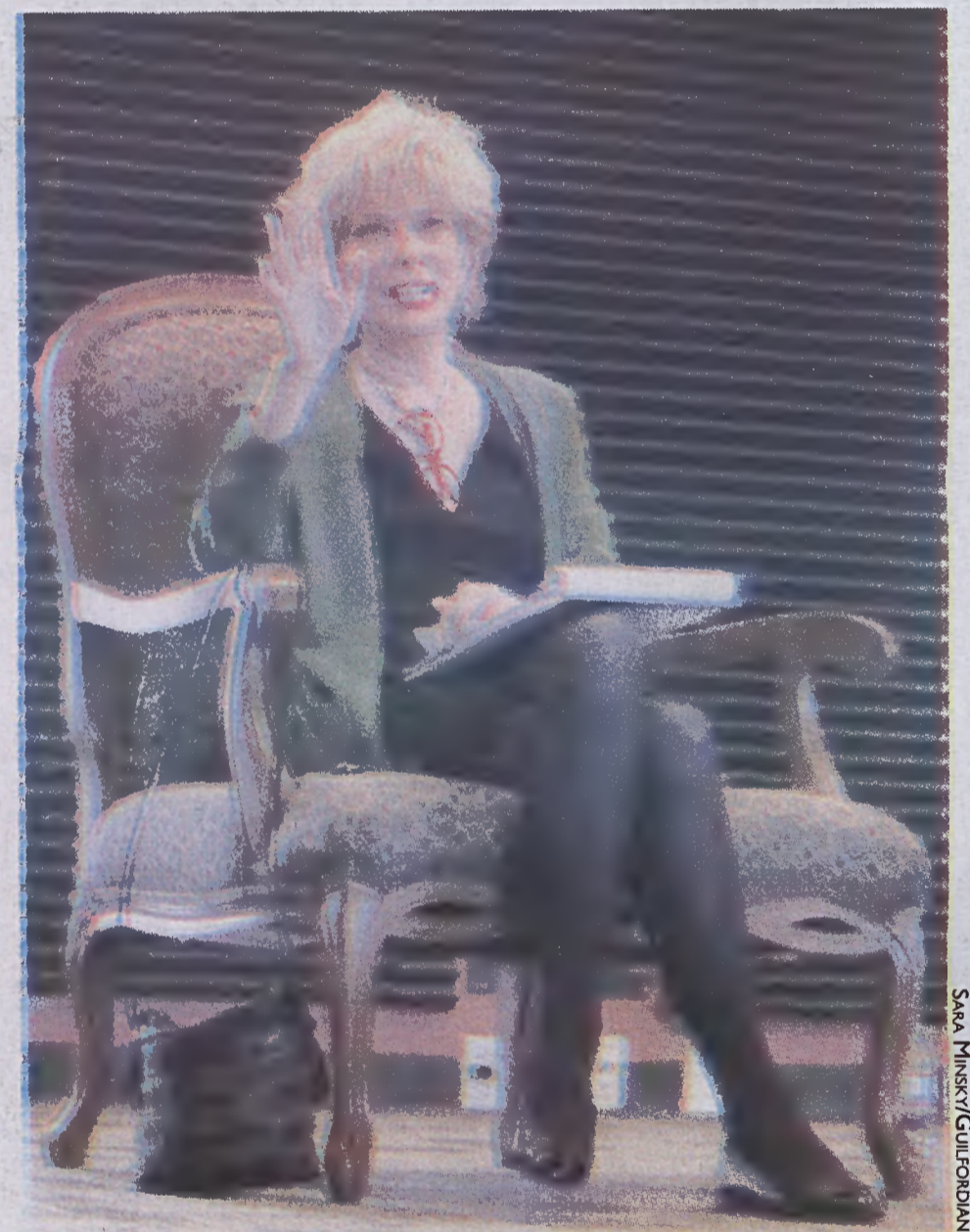
"I like that they went in depth with the content they covered," said first-year Nathan Lee.

Others appreciated the personal stories the reporters shared.

"For me, I'm more of a storyteller, so hearing people's stories is important," said Milner Hall Director Jake Reardon.

At the end of the evening session, President and Professor of Political Science Kent Chabotar named next year's Bryan Series presenters.

They include, among others, filmmaker Ron Howard, novelist Margaret Atwood and journalist Anderson Cooper.



At the student session, Leslie Stahl and Steve Kroft fielded questions from students and other community members. They shared lessons they have learned from their years in the journalism field.

