

## Patrick Cannon scandal taints Queen City

Former Charlotte Mayor Patrick Cannon and I attended the same high school. I remember he came to school almost every day in pressed jeans, a blazer and tie. He was constantly on the National Honor Society and a member of almost every club you could imagine. He was handsome, charismatic, ambitious, driven.

Cannon rose to success after overcoming obstacles, such as the death of his father at a young age, being raised in subsidized housing by his single mother and poverty.

Cannon fought hard to become the Queen City's third black mayor, triumphing over his opponent by only a short lead. Most of Cannon's former classmates, including me, supported and rallied for him. He was elected mayor of Charlotte on Nov. 5, 2013. Then, Dan Clodfelter was crowned mayor on April 7, 2014. Wait. What?

Cannon was arrested after he was secretly recorded by the FBI accepting over \$48,000 in bribes and perks in exchange for pulling strings with the powers that be in planning and zoning. He resigned amid a firestorm of federal corruption charges, the target of an FBI sting that began in 2010. He served a whopping five months in office, and now faces 50 years in prison.

Let's face it. The mayor was caught with his hand in the cookie jar. How could a person so smart do something so dumb?

"There are probably a number of reasons, all of which most likely have something to do with a lack of character, greed or lust for power," said Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science Robert Duncan in an email interview.

'(T)he corruptive power of money... is slowly turning our democracy into a plutocracy.'

Robert Duncan, visiting assistant professor of political science

our democracy into a plutocracy. If money could be taken out of the equation, our elected leaders would truly represent the voters and not some wealthy special interest."

It would have been helpful if Charlotteans were made aware of Cannon's atrocious activities before his bid for mayor. According to the FBI's affidavit, the probe unearthed significant evidence against Cannon well before the November 2013 mayoral election.

"The investigation on Patrick Cannon should have been cleared up before he took office as mayor," said junior Joshua Weil, president of Guilford College Democrats in an email interview. "It could have saved the city much embarrassment and taxpayer dollars."

Thanks to the FBI dragging out its investigation for three years, Charlotte will be remembered as the city whose mayor was arrested. But hey, misery loves company, right?

Cannon is not alone in his misdeeds. He is a member of the same elite club as Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Governor Mike Easley, Rep. Terry Spicer, U.S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. and Gov. Rod Blagojevich. All these politicians were convicted on federal corruption charges involving bribery and abuse of power.

Why do so many politicians fall to corruption? Stupidity.

Over and over, politicians take bribes and abuse their power thinking they are going to be 'The One' who gets away with it.

Stupidity.

The moral of the story is: there are no short cuts to success. You can't make an A on the test if you don't study. If you want to succeed, work hard and be honest. And remember, we, the American people, are depending on you.

## War on drugs: what has it accomplished?

Last Sunday was April 20, and I'm sure many Guilford students were 'celebrating' the day. So, let's talk about drugs.



BY JAKE DELAHANTY  
STAFF WRITER

The war on drugs has been a massive failure. I know it, you know it.

Its goal was to reduce drug abuse, crime and drug availability while creating more treatment options for abusers. Were any of these goals reached?

No. So, what has the war on

drugs resulted in? It has quadrupled the number of people in prisons since 1980.

"There's no reason to think that there's really a connection between the crime rate going up or down and the amount of people in prison," said Professor of Justice and Policy Studies Jerry Joplin. "There's no evidence that you're going to control deviant behavior by punishing people."

I agree. If you want to address drug abuse, throwing people in prison doesn't work.

In addition, I'd argue drug abusers shouldn't be going to prison at all. It's a victimless crime. Unlike murderers or rapists, drug abusers are not hurting anyone but themselves.

Despite this situation, the country seems to be heading in the right direction. Recently, Congress has considered lowering drug sentencing on drug abusers and drug dealers.

"Certain types of cases result in too many Americans going to prison for

far too long, and at times for no truly good public safety reason," Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. told the U.S. Sentencing Commission last month. "Although the United States comprises just 5 percent of the world's population, we incarcerate almost a quarter of the world's prisoners."

I completely support this move. I hope someday there won't be any prison sentences for drug abuse, but this is a good start.

Many might be surprised by Holder

makes a lot of sense," said Assistant Professor of Justice and Policy Studies Sanjay Marwah in an email interview. "However, provision of treatments for those who cannot afford it, as well as returning to the same environments contributing to their abuse, makes it likely that many abusers will likely still be caught in broader social control nets."

I agree. Once the system sucks you in, there's really no way out.

You go to prison, serve your time and then you're out. But now what? You have a record as a criminal, and you're in the same environment that contributed to your offense in the first place. No one is going to hire you for a job above minimum wage, so you're stuck, unless you commit crimes like stealing or dealing drugs. And then you're back in prison.

The perpetuating cycle has claimed another victim.

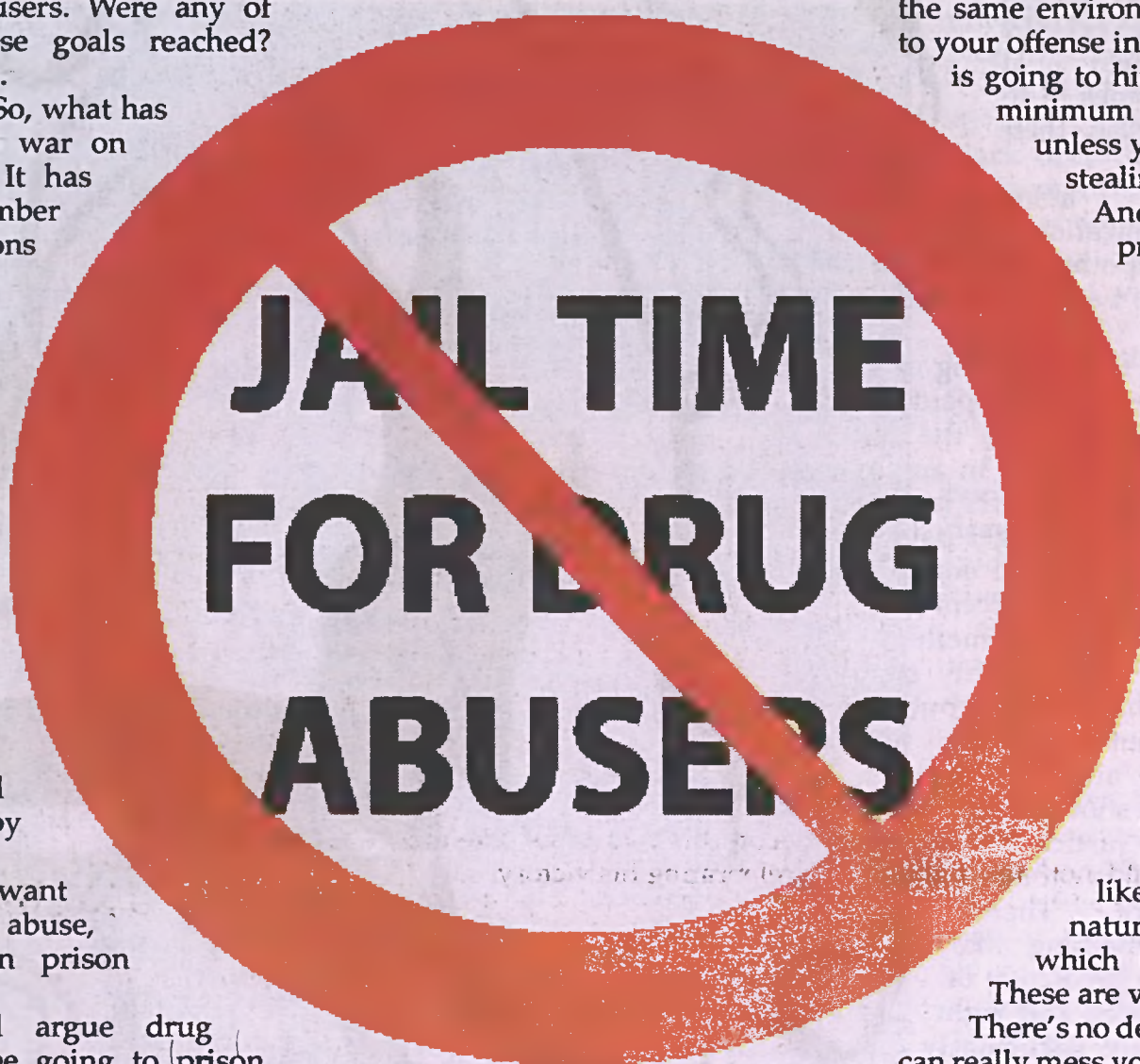
The war on drugs is just a mess. It hasn't reduced drug use, but it has caused a lot more suffering.

"It's really depressing," said Early College junior Becky Webster. "It's a difficult problem that's not going to end anytime soon."

One more thing I'd like to highlight is the nature of drug crimes, which I touched on earlier. These are victimless crimes.

There's no denying that some drugs can really mess you up. But if you decide to use a drug like heroin or meth, that's your choice, and side effects of the drugs should be enough of a punishment. Going to prison and ruining your chance at a decent job for the rest of your life is overkill.

The war on drugs needs to end, and those who support prison sentencing for drug abusers need to think hard about what they're actually accomplishing.



Campus Life  
is pleased to welcome  
Kim Conway &  
Jane Ehrenfeld  
from the Department  
of Education

They will be on campus April 25 to facilitate small group forums aimed at discussing the best practices for the prevention of sexual violence. This visit is a welcome addition to our Year of Consent campaign, and is an opportunity for collaboration and improvement for our policies regarding education, prevention, and response to intimate partner violence, harassment, and sexual violence/misconduct.

Jane and Kim are interested in hearing from our students and we encourage you to attend and share your thoughts and experiences. Small group forums have been scheduled, as well as open office hours for one-on-one meetings in a private setting.

Group H: Open Forum  
1 p.m.-2 p.m.

Open Office Hour:  
2 p.m.-3 p.m.

Friday, April 25

This Week's STAFF EDITORIAL

## Reflecting on the issues that made up Volume 100

You might not recognize it quite yet — after all, denial is a powerful force — but the school year is almost over.

This right here is the penultimate issue of The Guilfordian for the 2013-2014 academic year. We only have one more of these for you before we all dive head-first into the panicked frenzy of finals season.

If this were a movie, now is the time when we'd cue a slow-motion, black-and-white montage with Green Day's "Good Riddance" playing softly in the background. After all, we've been through a lot together this year.

Last year, Kent Chabotar announced that he would be retiring, spurring the presidential search. We devoted ourselves to covering the process, from the search committee formation to the interviews of the final candidates. We are now proud to welcome Jane Fernandes as the future president of our college.

Once the APSA committee shared the first draft of its plan for budget shifts, we did our best to help you give feedback so we could come to solutions that made sense for us as an institution.

You voiced concerns about the judicial system, and we turned a critical eye to the ways in which the system handles sexual assault cases and race issues. Although there is still much progress to be made, we take pride in opening the dialogue to the community.

Our community continued to endure a difficult financial situation this year, and several sectors of the college felt the strain of a shrinking budget. We examined the gaps between administration, faculty and staff salaries, as well as the phenomenon of deferred maintenance and the role of adjunct professors.

We hope we can keep these vital conversations flowing. But for now, the final clip is fading to black and the credits are about to roll. We hope you had the time of your life.

REFLECTING GUILFORD COLLEGE'S CORE QUAKER VALUES, THE TOPICS AND CONTENT OF STAFF EDITORIALS ARE CHOSEN THROUGH CONSENSUS OF ALL 15 EDITORS AND ONE FACULTY ADVISER OF THE GUILFORDIAN'S EDITORIAL BOARD.