

J-Term approved for two-year extension as pilot program

BY BANNING WATSON
STAFF WRITER

From Oxford to Shanghai, to the Netherlands and Italy, from Tai Chi to woodworking to bloodstain pattern analysis, January Term has something for everyone. It is good then that it might be here to stay.

J-Term began in 2013 as a pilot program planned to expire in 2015.

However, a two-year extension of the program was proposed in May and approved by Guilford College's then-President Kent Chabotar in June.

"It's beginning to take a clearer and more experiential shape," said Jack Zerbe, professor of theatre studies and study abroad director. "We are inventing structures that support it and committees that examine it, but those things are in the state of becoming. We need more time to study and enhance it in order to know how successful it ultimately can be."

The mission of J-Term was to bring college life and real life closer together and, according to the faculty and students who've participated, it is succeeding.

For Assistant Dean of Career and Community Learning Alan Mueller, J-Term helps fill a gap between the traditional liberal arts curriculum and what employers want from graduates.

"In job interviews, students are rarely asked about classes they took," said Mueller. "They are always asked about experiences that they have had. J-Term is this great place where the learning from the liberal arts can come alive in experience that translates to the job market."

According to Guilford's statistics, participation in J-Term courses increased from 176 to 292 students from 2013 to 2014 with the percentage of students taking four-credit courses increasing from 42 percent to 53 percent. This may be due to the introduction of a flat rate of \$500 per course in 2014, as opposed to \$1,400 for four credits in 2013.

From faculty to students, there is an overwhelmingly positive reaction.

"For students I've talked to and myself, it was a really good experience," said sophomore José Oliva, president of Community Senate and Roads to College coordinator. "It's great being

able to focus all of your time and attention on one thing rather than being divided like the average semester."

Professor of Chemistry Robert Whitnell agreed.

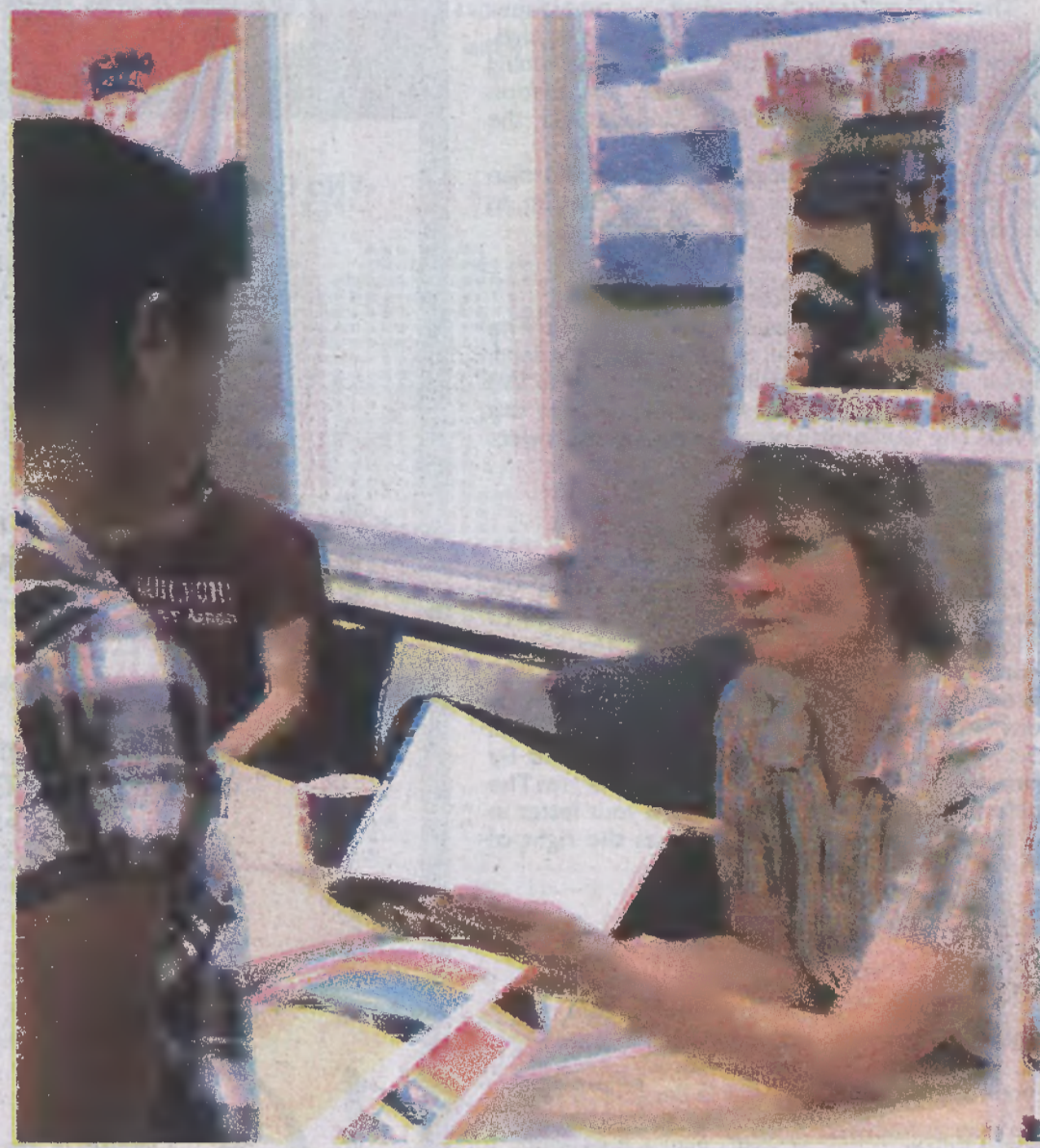
"The hope is that it will continue to live up to its promise of being a place for innovative, experiential courses and activities that could not be readily accomplished during the regular semester," said Whitnell.

According to statistics, the majority of students rated their experiences as successful and stated that it made them feel like self-motivated, independent learners.

In addition, 94 percent of students rated that they would participate in J-Term again.

J-Term has gained significant positive momentum, and this two-year extension could provide the opportunity for students to reach their ultimate potential and independence.

"The challenge for us at Guilford College is to find a way to help our students fly on their own, for them to be more self-directed and independent, and this is a really good device to do that," said Zerbe.



A student learns about opportunities in the upcoming J-Term from Professor Lavon Williams at the Study Abroad Fair on Wednesday, Sept. 3.

Heritage House condemned, forcing out former residents

BY LILY LOU
STAFF WRITER

834 housing code violations. \$59,000 in unpaid water bills. 2,860 calls for the police. These were just a few of the problems that plagued Heritage House before it was condemned on July 30, 2014.

The Heritage House, located on West Meadowview Road, is one of Greensboro's few low income housing units. While in use, it provided homes to many of Greensboro's disabled, elderly and low income residents, but after its condemnation, residents began looking for new places to call home.

"Once the water and power were shut off, it became a health safety hazard," said Donnie Turlington, the city spokesman for Greensboro in a phone interview with the Guilfordian. "With no running water and no electricity, the building could not be occupied. According to state law, the city of Greensboro had the ability to condemn the unit."

In addition to not having power or running water, Heritage House faced many other problems.

"Early this past summer, the city of Greensboro did a surprise inspection of Heritage House and only 39 of the 177 units passed," said Sherry Giles, chair and professor of justice and policy studies in an email interview. "The other units had housing code violations including: unsanitary conditions, broken electrical and plumbing fixtures and infestations of roaches and bedbugs."

Crime also caused issues for the residents of Heritage House. Over the past year, 2,860 calls were made to the police from the apartment complex. Though not all of the calls were for emergencies, it was still a large drain on public resources. According to Turlington, the service cost the city between \$200 and \$1,200 per trip.

"Like many low-income housing areas, Heritage House has been riddled with violence, crime and drugs," said Associate Professor of Justice and Policy Studies Will Pizio.

After the condemnation of the condominium, many residents searched for new places to stay.

"(Heritage House) may not have been adequate housing, but it was housing that they knew of," said Tim Vincent, a representative for Ready 4 Change, in a phone interview with the Guilfordian.

Many nonprofits, such as R4C and the Greensboro Housing Coalition, helped residents of Heritage House find

housing. Those who did not find homes took temporary shelter at the Interactive Resource Center, a Greensboro day shelter that helps the homeless reconnect with their communities.

"The residents who were left over there in the wake of all the issues have been placed in new housing, and in 99 percent of the cases, it's been in far better living conditions than what they had at Heritage House," said Turlington.

Turlington spoke of the issue of crime in Heritage House.

"There's an assessment process that the city is undertaking to make sure that crime does not go to a different location," said Turlington. "The city actually worked with its partners in the community to have a six-to nine-month assessment team checking in on those residents on a frequent basis to make sure that they are acclimating well to their new environment and that there's not crime issues due to their presence."

In an article with The News & Record, City Attorney Tom Carruthers described the future of Heritage House. City Council can allow owners of the complex to fix the building, buy the units from the homeowners association and destroy the building or buy the units and sell the building to a nonprofit housing group.

"On Sept. 17, the Greensboro Planning Board will vote on whether or not to declare Heritage House a 'blighted property,'" said Giles. "If they make this designation, the city of Greensboro can purchase the property, and City Council members seem to be in favor of (this). However, they're not in agreement on what they would do with it after the purchase."

Students can also help by supporting the organizations mentioned in this article, such as the Interactive Resource Center, the Greensboro Housing Coalition and R4C through both volunteering their time and by donating money.

Students can help the residents of Heritage House by donating furniture through the Barnabas Network.

For more information call (336) 370-4002.

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For more information, email Zana Hicks: hickszn@guilford.edu