

## Emma Watson's UN speech effective, if problematic

Emma Watson, though armed with high aspirations and good intentions, fell short in her speech on gender equality for the United Nations.



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STAFF WRITER

"She missed some marks," said Zana Hicks, junior and president of Feminism Redefined and Allied in Multicultural Equality. "But now we can tell her, 'Hey, you missed some marks.' It's all about learning. Once you're conscious of (what is problematic), then you can learn and grow and become a better activist."

Watson's recent speech at the U.N. headquarters in New York launched the HeForShe campaign.

Watson serves as the U.N. Women Goodwill Ambassador for the organization. U.N. Women and the campaign are the latest effort to recruit men and boys for the cause of gender equality.

In her speech, Watson spoke about the importance of feminism, describing both her own experience and that of others. She then extended a formal invitation for men to join the cause.

"How can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or feel welcome to participate in the conversation?" said Watson.

That was when the trouble began.

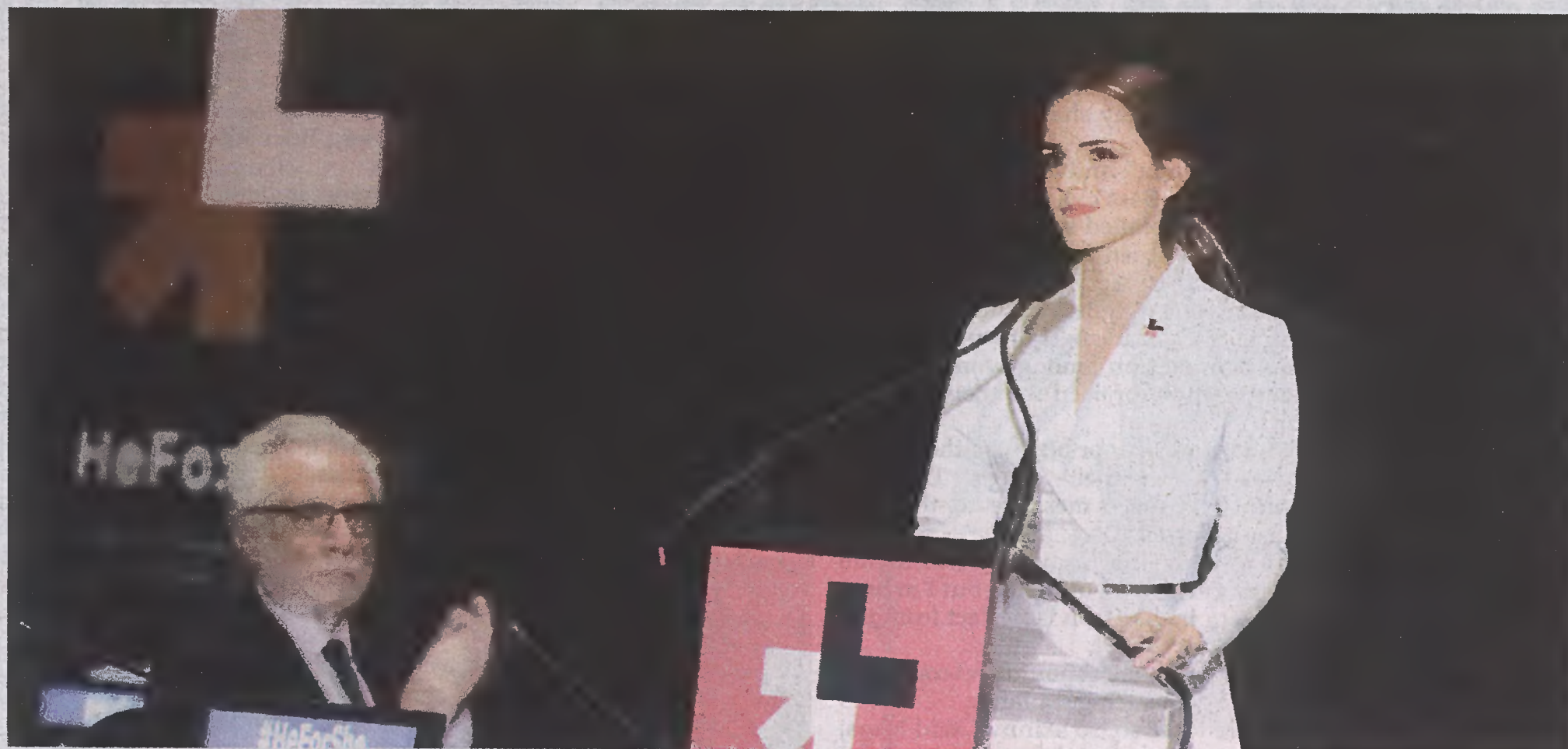
Watson made it sound as though the unnerving lack of men committing to the movement was caused by feminists acting welcoming. The problem was not that men were not interested. It was the women's fault they were not acting on their interest.

Clearly, many feminists found issue with this.

Watson also said men should be involved because of gender inequality's hindrances to men.

Sexism does hurt men, but feminists should not focus on men's problems more than those of women.

"Appealing to men's need for feminism undermines serious issues that women face, but it is also not a point worth refuting," said senior Noelle Lane in an email interview. "Men need to be a part of feminism. Diminishing anyone's importance in a social



U.N. Women Goodwill Ambassador Emma Watson delivered a speech at the U.N. on Sept. 20, 2014, as part of an event for the HeForShe campaign.

movement leads to paralysis and inaction."

Through her emphasis of sexism's negative impacts on men, Watson avoided diminishing men's importance, but inadvertently diminished women's.

In a movement that seeks to highlight and dismantle the systems that make women feel worthless on a daily basis, the focus should not be on men.

However, Watson's words may have been effective in getting people who disregard feminism to begin to understand the basic reasons to fight for gender equality.

"I think it was a very astute decision to not blame men," said Professor and Chair of the Theatre Studies Department David Hammond, "but instead to say, 'This is a really bad circumstance for men. You ought to support a change because you will be a better man.'"

(However), I think she did say, 'You're not to blame because you have power, but it's wrong that you do.'

I think that's the first step."

While Watson could have gone further, perhaps her approach was wise.

She went easy on men despite their privilege as the dominant gender because then, men listened to her. In the same diplomatic spirit, she told people that if they do not like feminism, they can simply not use the word.

"It is not the word that is important," said Watson. "It's the idea and the ambition behind it, because not all women have received the same rights I have. In fact, statistically, very few have."

The fact that women have far fewer rights than men is the basis for what many feminists believe. It leads to more controversial or complex ideas, such as intersectionalism, the collaboration between different movements for social justice.

Watson avoided such topics in her speech, sticking to setting people straight about feminism.

"The definition of feminism has gotten out of control," said first-year Liam Dulin. "It's associated with man-hating when it's just meant to be equal rights. It's become a word that's hated when it shouldn't be."

Though Watson's speech was not as

incendiary and game-changing as feminists might have hoped for, people should acknowledge the ways Watson advanced the cause while challenging herself to be more progressive.

As it was, the speech was progressive enough to scare those who hate feminism. The hacking group SocialVevo reacted to the speech with a hoax, threatening to release nude photos of Watson.

This desperate and cruel attempt to control the spread of Watson's message only proves her point that sexism remains rampant and will only subside when people work to eliminate it.

The video of Watson's speech had millions of views, and her visibility is better than ever. Now she has people's attention and is in the perfect position to go a few steps further on her next platform, whether it's the U.N. podium, an interview, or Twitter.

The issue has been broached, and it is again the time for Watson, and anyone else who cares about gender equality, to ask the question Watson posed for those gathered at the U.N.: "If not now, when? If not me, who?"

## Guilford should implement St. Mary's plan to fix wage gap

Equality. Community. Integrity. Those are just some of the Quaker values that Guilford lives by. Given those values, how could we still have a gender wage gap?

This isn't purely a Guilford issue. Today, for every dollar a man makes in the U.S., a woman makes 81 cents.

At Guilford, the problem persists despite the administration making gender equality a priority.

"It's not because we haven't tried," said Professor of History and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean Adrienne Israel. "I made gender equity my priority as far as salaries were concerned."

At St. Mary's College in Maryland, the hope is that a new plan can close that gap, a plan that Guilford should implement.

"We propose to institute a benchmark salary for the lowest paid ... employees to be set at \$29,976," says the proposal. "Other salaries would be subject to minimum and maximum pay levels."

This way, the college can ensure equal payment for all genders.

"Nobody wins unless everybody wins," said Professor and Chair of the English Department at St. Mary's Ben Click on the St. Mary's Wages website. "That's the St. Mary's way, and this proposal embodies it."

As a college that values equality for all, one would be shocked to find the proposal ill received at Guilford, but that seems to be the case.

"They're going to have a riot on their hands if they (cut pay)," said Associate Professor of Accounting Garland Granger. "Nobody can afford a cut in pay."

It hasn't always been this way.

"When I was hired by the college in 2007, the average salary of women faculty was a little higher than the average salary for male faculty," said Chair and Professor of Justice & Policy Studies Sherry Giles. "The college had worked hard to accomplish that. (Now,) the average salary for women faculty currently is lower than the average salary for men. I don't know how this change came about, but it is troubling."

Unless those making the most money agree, it is unlikely that we will be able to implement St. Mary's plan.

"The administration would not do that without bringing it to the faculty for consensus," said Associate Professor of

Philosophy Lisa McLeod. "I don't think the higher-paid faculty would consent to that."

But with the consensus process comes conversation.

"Once you reach people interpersonally, they can (change)," said senior and community and justice studies major Noelle Lane. "It's important to sit down with individuals on a personal level."

We also need to look at what each staff member does individually.

"Just cutting men's pay and increasing women's (isn't realistic)," said senior and women, gender and sexuality studies major Hali Khols. "If we looked at everybody's resumes and the responses they were getting in evaluations, we would be able to discern a fair way of payment."

Getting Guilfordians — whether students, faculty or staff — involved is the first step.

"(We need to) make people aware that the gap exists here," said Lane. "Everybody thinks that it's somewhere else. It needs to be addressed."

Through this, we could eliminate the denial that permeates the administration.

"A lot of the administrators have been clear that they are not choosing to pay women less than men, but there are a number of institutional factors that (are pushing) us in that direction," said McLeod.

In order to do this, we need to work on one thing Guilford has struggled with in the past.

"It would take a lot of transparency," said Khols. "With (that), I would hope that we can reach a consensus."

There is also more that the administration can do to prevent decreasing men's salaries too much.

"The college can set aside funds to draw on to increase the salaries of women whose compensation level is below the average for employees in the relevant category of employment," said Giles.

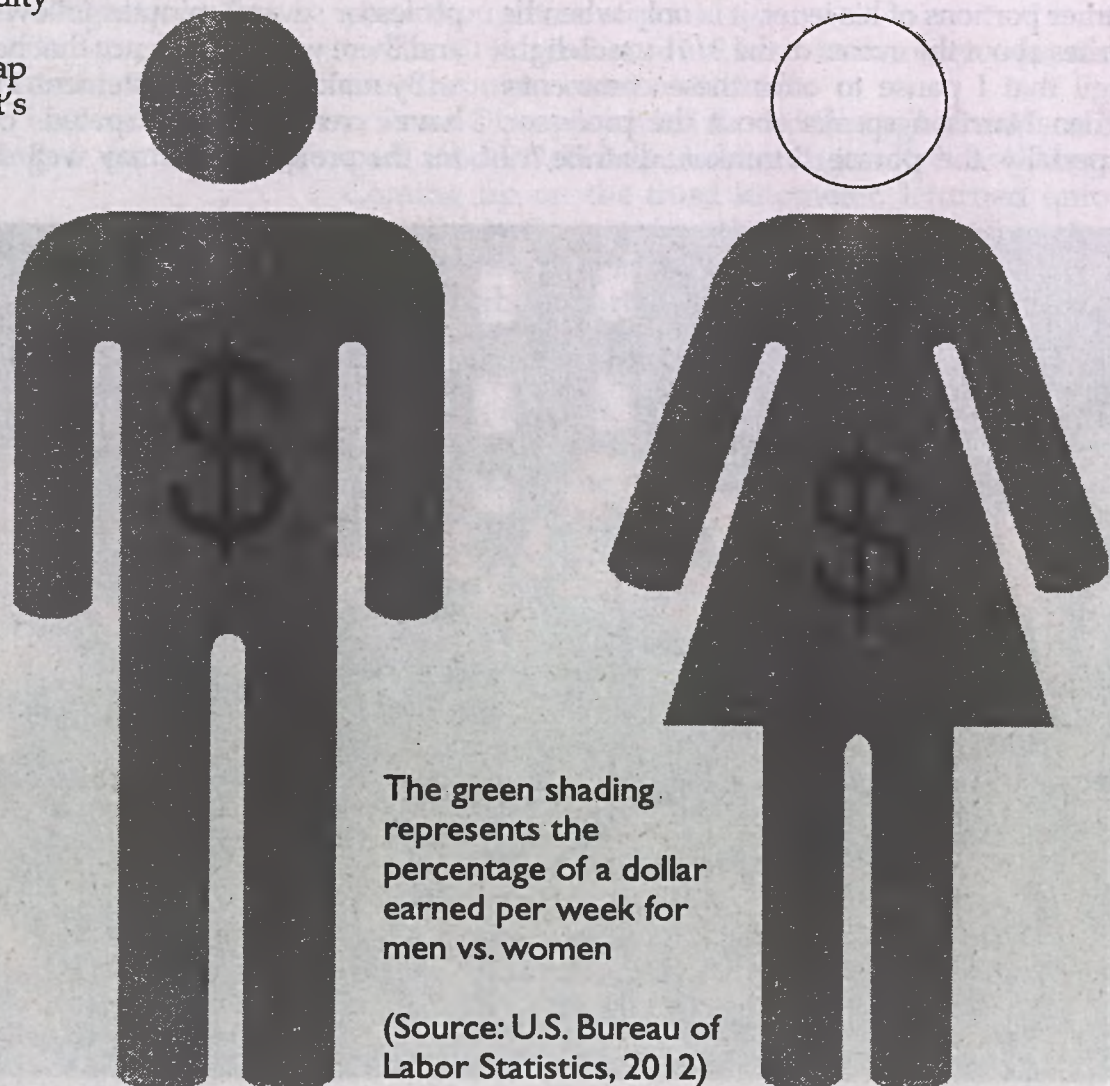
At St. Mary's the plan is already in motion without any problems. Why would Guilford have any?

"Senior administrators from other schools

will undoubtedly ask our (administration) why they would accept salaries below those of our peer institutions," said St. Mary's Associate Professor of Mathematics Sandy Ganzell on the St. Mary's Wage Gap Website. "I look forward to hearing their answer: 'Because it's the St. Mary's Way.'"

Like St. Mary's, Guilford claims to value community above salary. It's time we put our talk into action and fix our gender wage gap.

"Trying things out to overcome systems of oppression is important," said Chair and Visiting Assistant Professor of Peace & Conflict Studies Jeremy Rinker. "Whether or not it would work at Guilford is unknown, but it's something we should certainly try."



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