

## Israel leaving deanship after 13 years

COLLEGE WORKS TO DEFINE IDEAL QUALITIES FOR ISRAEL'S SUCCESSOR

BY BANNING WATSON  
STAFF WRITER

On Oct. 22, President Jane Fernandes announced that Adrienne Israel will be stepping down from her post as vice president for academic affairs and academic dean after 13 years.

"The decision to step down was one that I made several years ago," said Israel. "I told our last president if he wanted to me to serve, I would, and I would help the next president make the transition."

One of the earliest African-American faculty members hired by Guilford, Israel came to Guilford in 1981. She was the first African-American professor to receive tenure and the only African-American to become vice president and academic dean.

Israel spoke of Guilford's future.

"I think one of the big challenges going forward is deciding whether we want to go to the next level of excellence, and are we going to pursue it sincerely," said Israel. "Do we want to be well-known nationally for the excellence of our program, or do we want to stay a hidden jewel? We have to decide whether we want to be great or just good."

Israel will remain academic dean until the end of the 2014 - 2015 academic year and then return to her faculty position in the history department. She will also oversee the coming re-accreditation process by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Israel has led the school through the process in the past with extraordinary success.

"I expect we may have some challenges with our next report, and I thought that, since Adrienne already has all the information we need, she'd be in a good position to do that," said Fernandes. "Because we have some financial challenges, I want to make



Guilford's academic dean, **Adrienne Israel**, is stepping down after serving 13 years.

sure that we meet all the accreditation standards, both required by the federal commission and by SACS, and I think she can be a big help doing that."

The search for the next academic dean is currently in its conception phase as Fernandes meets with the faculty to determine what qualities they would like to see in Israel's successor.

"I would like a really positive synergistic relationship with the new dean, somebody who makes the faculty feel more empowered about working here than we have recently," said Dave Dobson, clerk of the faculty clerk and professor of geology and earth sciences. "I think it's an opportunity to refresh, renew and move forward."

"I'm grateful for Adrienne's wisdom

and long service to the College, and I wish her the best with what she's doing next. I've enjoyed working with her, but I'm also excited about who we turn up with in the next phase of Guilford's story."

Barbara Boyette, assistant academic dean for academic support, also voiced her hopes regarding Israel's successor.

"(We need) someone who is a great time manager, with great communication skills, who can handle multiple problems at the same time while leading the college to do our very best work," said Boyette. "This has to be a person who clearly has spent time in the classroom, knows what the issues are with teaching, someone who has leadership experience. Otherwise I think it would be a bit daunting."

WADUD

## Amina Wadud's words resonate through campus



**Dr. Amina Wadud** gave her lecture on Tue. Oct. 28, 2014.

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and dedicated much of her life to a pro-faith perspective on feminism, writing books such as the "Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective" and "Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam."

Senior Mary Heisey introduced Wadud.

"I was freaking out," said Heisey. "I was really nervous to introduce her. Her work is very impressive to me, and I just didn't know if I could do her justice."

"Afterwards, I went to ask her to sign my copy of her book, and I didn't even have to ask, she just grabbed my book and started writing. I was struck by how easygoing she was. She loved Guilford. She said that Guilford students ask the best questions out of all undergraduate student environments she's been in."

Director of the Friends Center and Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies Max Carter attended Wadud's lecture out of an interest in Islam and its impact on the world.

"I resonated with her presentation and have used some of her insights in further conversations," said Carter. "One quote, especially, resonates with me: 'Be proactive; if you react to a thing, you empower that thing.'"

Many professors teach about Wadud in their classes, including Visiting Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Betsy Mesard and Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Jill Peterfeso.

"She has said and written many things that resonate with me, but probably more significant is her approach," said Mesard. "I think it is rare to come across a person who combines serious scholarly rigor, moral clarity and practical sensibilities in the way that Amina Wadud does."

"In that class, (Religion in the U.S.), we investigate how religion and religious identity are 'practiced and performed' in an American context," said Peterfeso. "Dr. Wadud's prayer is a wonderfully helpful example of how some individuals who love their faith tradition and who believe deeply challenge the status quo in provocative and public ways."

The day after her lecture, Wadud sat in Abdo's class on Arab and Islamic feminism. She enchanted students with stories of her life, such as participating in the March on Washington with Martin Luther King Jr. when she was 10 years old.

"I remember it was hot, and we did not have a cool sign," Wadud said.

One of Abdo's students, junior Naomi Madaras, appreciated Wadud's interactions with her and her classmates.

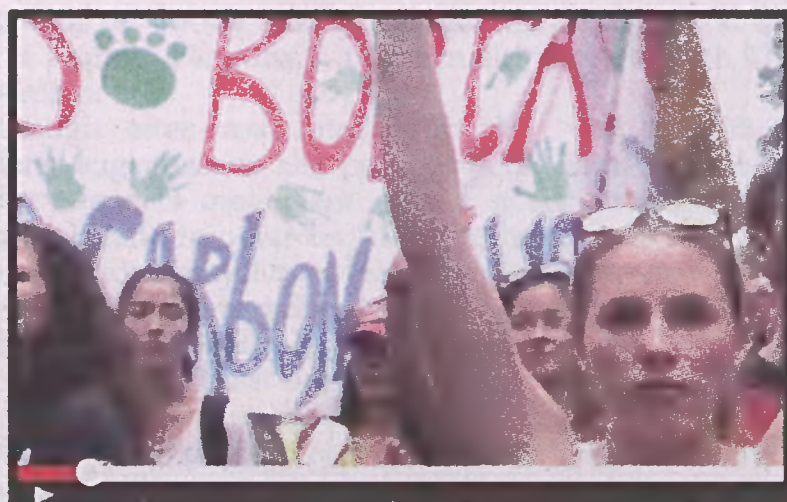
"Unlike other speakers I have known, Amina showed no sign of patronizing or belittlement and took our questions seriously," said Madaras. "I felt she answered thoroughly, showing a deep care for the dialogue."

Perhaps a story that exemplified her beliefs the best was about how she wore her hijab. When going through security in the airport, she would refuse to take it off. Once on the plane though, she would remove it. Wadud found that the hijab was a choice. She had to take the hijab off sometimes but only when she wanted to.

"American by force, Muslim by choice," she said.

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