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Brothers Doing Positive for diversity

COMMITTEE WORKS TO IMPROVE
RETENTION RATES OF MINORITIES

BY BANNING WATSON
STAFF WRITER

"We're trying to create a brotherhood that is open to every student on campus where we help each other to succeed," said senior Shelton Watson, co-founder of Brothers Doing Positive.

Brothers Doing Positive has technically existed at Guilford since 2009 in the form of a committee under Blacks Unifying Society, now Brothers and Sisters in Blackness. BDP since waned due to lack of consistent leadership with main leaders graduating.

Watson and fellow student co-founders senior Lawrence Blake and sophomore Taylor Knox have worked to revitalize and renovate the program as part of their Multicultural Leadership Scholars Program project focusing on minority male retention rates at Guilford.

"We wanted to transform the program into more of a mentorship," said Blake. "We wanted to give something back to the campus as our legacy. We want the upperclassmen to give back to the newcomers on campus and from there we want to connect with the community through volunteering and working with elementary schools and inner-city youth."

While the group welcomes any students, BDP aims to help younger male students succeed.

"We really want to get in touch with some of the younger male students here and make sure they're on the right track, helping with any issues they have, making them aware of the resources they have at Guilford on and off campus, and trying to get them better prepared for the real world," said Knox.

"I think one of the reasons we're seeing this retention problem on campus is resources. If a person doesn't have the resources to succeed, then that person is most likely to leave the school."

JOSÉ OLIVA, PRESIDENT OF COMMUNITY SENATE

BDP's faculty advisor, JaEric Brooks-Shoffner, administrative and research assistant in the Multicultural Education Department, hopes to see BDP take root in the Guilford community this time around.

"My goal is to see this program become a mainstay here on campus, to have recurring programs and events and for the organization to build partnerships, not only with other student organizations but with administration, athletics and alumni as well," said Brooks-Shoffner.

Barbara Boyette, assistant academic dean for academic support, believes there is a deep need for groups like BDP at Guilford.

"Retention rates in general are a concern at Guilford," said Boyette. "Minority students' retention lags behind white students, but recently people are thriving and staying more. The idea of the group for me is (to) get some

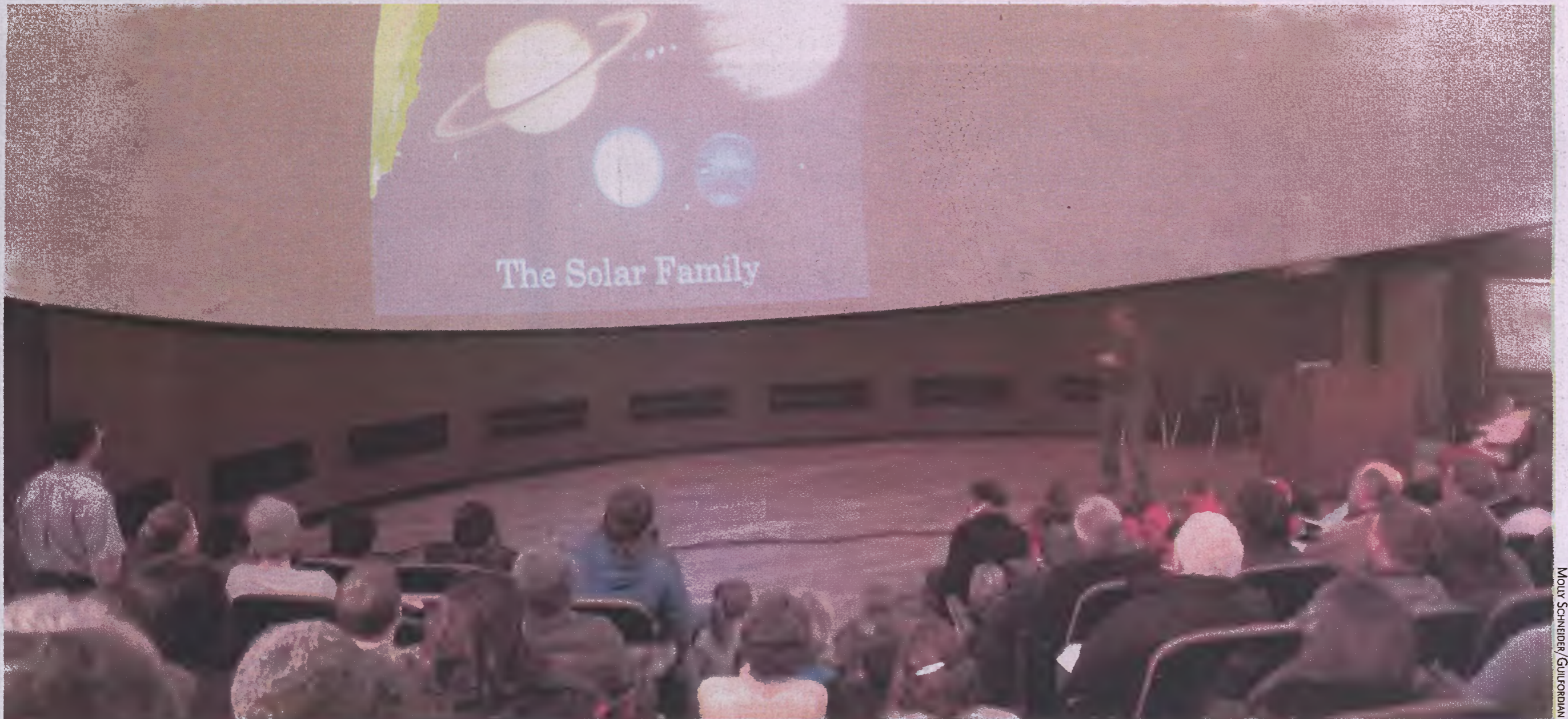
successful men involved in helping other men be successful on campus. Retention rate among men is worse than it is for women, so we're trying to focus on a population we can hopefully make a difference with."

José Oliva, president of Community Senate, also pointed to the absence of such a program as a concern for Guilford.

"I think one of the reasons we're seeing this retention problem on campus is resources," said Oliva. "If a person doesn't have the resources to succeed, then that person is most likely to leave the school. What has happened in the past is that there has not been a solid mentoring program for people of color who can help navigate the culture."

"Being a minority on campus at Guilford is very difficult and looking at the diversity of the staff at Guilford, there are very few people from minority groups working closely with the students."

Guilford's Cline Observatory open house reaches New Horizons



On Feb. 6, the physics department hosted their monthly open house at the Cline Observatory located in the Frank Family Science Center to let community members get a chance to see the facilities.

BY LILY LOU
STAFF WRITER

Have you ever seen a cluster of stars being born, seen Jupiter through a telescope or even been up to Guilford's Cline Observatory? You may soon have an opportunity to.

Every month the Guilford College physics department hosts an open house at the Cline Observatory. On Feb. 6, it hosted another one. The show began at 7:00 p.m. with a presentation on Pluto and NASA's New Horizons spacecraft in the Joseph Bryan Jr. Auditorium.

The topic of these presentations changes each time, but Pluto was chosen because the New Horizons spacecraft will encounter Pluto in July after being launched nine years ago and traveling over three billion miles. The presentation gave basic information and a background on Pluto.

"I was never really told why Pluto became a dwarf planet, and I thought it was great that they explained what defined a planet," said Tina Barber, a Gibsonville resident.

After the presentation, attendees went up to the observatory for a viewing through telescopes while videos about Pluto were projected in the Joseph Bryan Jr. Auditorium.

"You've seen pictures of Saturn and Jupiter, but to look through the telescope yourself is somehow different," said Associate Professor of Physics Don Smith.

This experience changed many people's perspectives.

"(Looking through the telescopes) makes you feel very small," said senior Alex Garrison.

The open houses are free and welcome to the public.

"The best thing about the open houses is seeing people who have not been exposed to some of the astronomy and all the oohs and

ahhs that come along with that," said CCE junior Joseph Holmes, who helps run the event. "Especially with children. Children are particularly enthused by it."

Once a year, Guilford coordinates with local schools and invites students to enjoy the event. During this event, Guilford invited students from Jefferson Elementary School to learn about Pluto.

"I like the kids being here," said Keith Holliday '76, former Greensboro mayor and member of Guilford College's Board of Visitors. "It's very healthy for Guilford College to be a part of the community and to have these young people getting excited about real science instead of seeing it on a computer screen."

Many adults and students also came to this event.

"I was surprised that the turnout was so great," said Greensboro resident Alex Schwitter. "I was so happy that people took

an interest in science."

Guilford's open houses have advanced from when it began as a telescope in an open field.

"Over time the program has gotten more sophisticated," said Glaxo Wellcome Professor of Physics Thom Espinola. "We're able to show people more and handle more people. There's no longer a line trickling out to a telescope."

The next Cline Observatory Open Houses are on March 28 and April 11. The topic for March is still undecided, but in April the topic will be the sun, and the observatory will host a sunspot viewing.

"It's a wonderful opportunity," said Smith. "Both the planetarium and the observatory are fairly rare for a college our size, and I hope more students will come and take advantage of it because, especially in urban environments these days, you just don't get to see the sky very often."