

# NEWS

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INEQUITY

## Administrative pay rises, faculty pay goes unchanged

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

financial officers at baccalaureate institutions was \$145,000. But in 2012 - 2013, Guilford paid its vice president for finance \$165,653.

**A Disturbing Discovery**

Much of the information about administrator pay was already available to the community because the IRS requires nonprofits to make their 990's public. So, when faculty members were interested in the 2013 - 2014 form filed Feb. 13 of this year, they went to Interim Vice President for Finance Jimmy Wilson '84.

When Wilson provided them with the forms, they were stunned by what they saw. Nearly every administrator saw an increase in reportable compensation over the previous year. All told, total administrator compensation increased 12 percent over the previous year's filing.

"The faculty were concerned, because faculty salaries have been frozen and faculty positions are being cut," said Clerk of Faculty and Professor of Geology and Earth Sciences Dave Dobson, who asked Wilson for the form. "The institution is undergoing budget restructuring and all that, so it seemed like a bad time to be significantly increasing administrator pay."

Faculty sprang into action. A faculty meeting was called for March 25, during which many faculty members expressed outrage and began to plan their next step. Some faculty went as far as to call for administrators to return the apparent bonuses.

**Questions & Answers**

The question on everyone's mind: why were these compensation increases paid out as Guilford plunged into a financial crisis?

According to Fernandes, who has been working with the board of trustees on this issue, the compensation increases go back to 2009 - 2010. At that time, President Kent Chabotar was planning his retirement from the presidency.

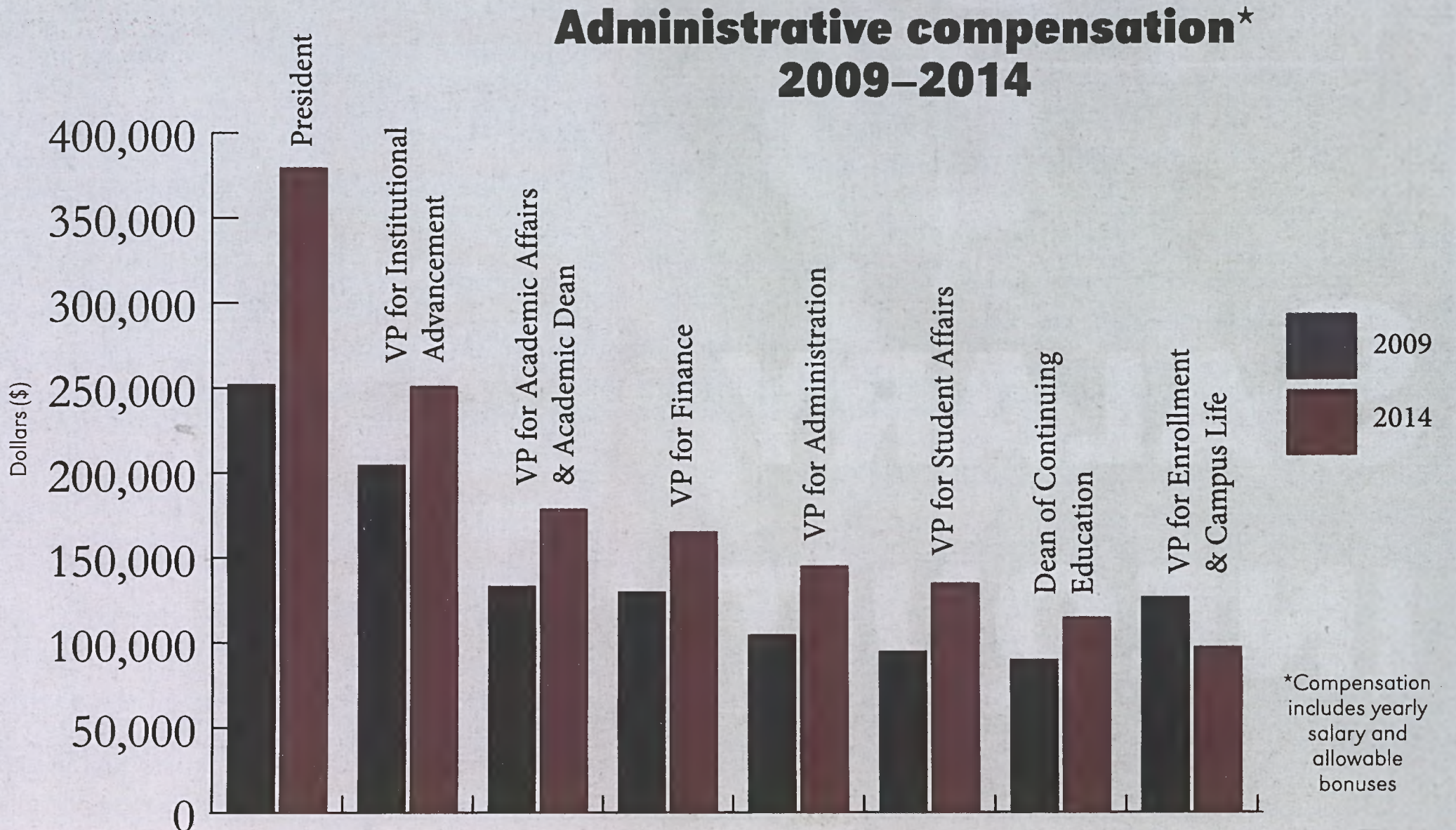
"Because everything was going so well, there was concern that maybe some of the senior staff members would look for another job and go to another job because they knew that President Chabotar might be thinking about retiring," said Fernandes. "So, President Chabotar recommended to the board that each of the senior officers be offered a retention agreement."

The retention agreements stipulated that if the officers stayed until 2013 - 2014 when Chabotar announced his retirement, they would receive a payout ranging anywhere from about \$15,000 to \$50,000.

Offering retention agreements at all has struck many in the community as unusual. Retention agreements are more common in the corporate world and are used to keep the best executives together during acquisitions and away from competing firms.

"I'm not aware that it's done in higher education," said Fernandes. "In my experience, I've never been at a college that used retention agreements at a time of presidential transition."

Now that the agreements have been paid



out, a number of recipients are leaving or have left. Aaron Fetrow, former dean of students and vice president for student affairs and Gregory Bursavich, former vice president for finance, left Guilford after receiving their payments last year. Additionally, Academic Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs Adrienne Israel announced her intention to step down at the end of the spring 2015 semester.

Fetrow declined to be interviewed for this article, citing the non-disclosure clauses in the contracts he and his former co-workers signed with the college.

The spike in Chabotar's compensation came from a different source. As part of his contract with the College, he had a deferred compensation plan. Each year Chabotar remained president, Guilford would contribute a certain amount to the plan and after a certain number of years, the plan would pay out a lump sum.

In 2013 - 2014, Chabotar received a payout of about \$88,000. This was not the first time either; he received a similar payout in 2010 - 2011.

"Deferred comp is sort of a retention agreement in a way because it's putting something out there to make it attractive not to leave your employment," said Wilson. "If you're trying to keep a president or somebody like that, it's obviously a big incentive not to leave."

Chabotar declined to be interviewed, citing

a lack of knowledge, but encouraged students to listen to information coming from the administration.

**Current Cuts**

Guilford's budget crisis has affected everyone on campus. The religious studies department has already announced that they will no longer teach Islamic and Judaic Studies.

"From the perspective of the College, it's really a big loss," said Betsy Mesard, visiting assistant professor of religious studies. "The department is pretty important, given that it's a Quaker school."

Some faculty and staff have already seen their positions jeopardized.

"We've already seen cuts to the faculty, including in our department: a colleague who's having a baby a month before Guilford is terminating her position," said Associate Professor of Religious Studies Eric Mortensen. "(It's) very painful."

The colleague in question is Mesard. "This is my first year and my only year, it turns out," she said. "(My position) was approved during the final year of the previous president, but the new president reevaluated all of those positions and (mine) was not reapproved as a permanent position."

The same has happened to not only new faculty members, but also long-serving faculty. Fernandes told the faculty in a meeting on

April 15 that Guilford will have to eliminate the equivalent of 40 full-time staff positions and 17 full-time faculty positions. She emphasized that no programs or departments would be eliminated, but that everyone must do their best to save money.

**Equality, stewardship, community**

On April 8 in the West Gallery of Founders Hall, the Clerk's committee hosted a forum open to the community to discuss fair and equal compensation policies for Guilford. Faculty, staff members and students, including Fernandes, attended the forum.

Members of the committee presented alternative compensation structures used at other liberal arts colleges.

"I think it's wonderful to compare, but what we have to do at Guilford College is discern our values and our principles, what we want on this campus and become the model for other campuses," said Project and Communications Manager Delilah White.

Many shared their concerns about the salary policies currently in place.

"There shouldn't be faculty and staff members who are struggling to make a minimum wage a living wage," said junior Teresa Bedzigui. "There shouldn't be a culture of faculty members not being able to speak their minds."

One of the results of the forum was the setting up of a committee to directly address pay inequity at Guilford.

"Now will be the time that people come together to address long overdue concerns," said Teresa Sanford, IT & S applications administrator. "I saw a real surge in unity to get that done."

However, some feared that progress would be lost amidst the flurry of committees.

"I was one of the people that said, 'Let's push it to the board (of trustees) and have them come back and do the right thing about salaries,'" said Professor of Mathematics Rudy Gordh. "If they don't, I think we should revolt."

Community members have questioned if the core values actually influence institutional behavior.

"Equality, although not directly related to these budget cuts, is still a problem at Guilford," said Mortensen.

Others believe these core values are long gone and that a new set prevails.

"I came up with a list that I call 'rotten-to-the-core values,'" said Professor of Art Roy Nydorf. "Anti-community, elitism, hypocrisy, inequality, anti-ethical, poor stewardship, insensitivity and inhumanity."

"All this information has been a great big secret, so it's shocking as it's coming to light. It makes me sick."

