

# Black Student Reflections

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to how Blacks felt about a particular issue. Already on the defensive for having been subjected to such a course, I abruptly replied to the question, "that I could not speak for the Black race and the opinions that I state are those of Alicia

Chandler, a person who happens to be Black." I was forced to repeat this statement in several courses that I have taken here. I often wondered why was it that if a classmate of mine was white, he/she was never asked for his/her opinion as a spokesman of the white race. White students were asked for their individual opinions. However when I was asked a question it was not my opinion that was asked for, but that of the entire diversified Black race. Why???

A related academic problem was in the area of course content. I found very few of my courses including material that was significantly related to the black experience. This is a problem I have had to contend with during my four years at Guilford. I questioned and questioned my English professor why we (the class) couldn't read some Black plays or poems sometime, as to only reading works by Anglo Saxon authors. I really didn't appreciate this and found his unwillingness to include works by Black authors even more insulting. Whenever the opportunity presented itself I wrote and read something that was Black! I have found that only through individual initiative does the Black experience become academically relevant. I must raise the issue as to whether it is the desire of this institution to perpetuate this idea.

Guilford has not developed and to my knowledge is not even attempting to develop any type of Black curriculum. The administrators and faculty often suggest to those of us wanting such exposure to take a course at one of the Black schools in the consortium. To me this is a means by which the administrators and faculty avoid fulfilling their responsibility to Black students. They are just passing the buck! I wanted to go to Bennett or A&T University I would have gone there. Since I chose to go to Guilford I feel the school should have made some meaningful effort to establish some type of Black curriculum on location. Looking at Guilford's curriculum today, I still feel that Black studies are still an area of considerable

need by both administrators and faculty. For sixteen years of my life I have been subjected to reading about the white man's history and I feel that I should be given the opportunity to choose whether I want to take U.S. History or Black History or even Black Literature rather than just English Literature. At Guilford though, I didn't have such a choice, but yet I am expected to take a course that has no readings of interest to me and still make a passing mark. And this I have done!!! Nevertheless without this option I feel there is a lack of sensitivity by this institution to my educational needs.

This limitation of things of interest to Black students is not only apparent in the academic structure, but it is quite evident in the social atmosphere here at Guilford as well. It is very clear that the majority are the rule at this school and there is not a great deal of concern or even sensitivity about those needs or those special interests of Black students by the majority white population at Guilford. The only time I have witnessed a concern about Black student's needs is when Black students have asserted themselves to make these wants known. Is it necessary for Black students to protest and raise hell in order to be recognized? I ask you why is it that a Black person has to be present at a meeting to assure that Black's needs are not disregarded completely? All the responsibility for making sure our academic as well as our social wants and needs are met, has fallen completely in the hands of Black students. I constantly hear remarks by those persons in positions of planning these social events, "that no Black persons were present at a meeting to express their opinions." I ask these officials do we (Blacks) always have to be at a meeting to assure that our presence on this campus is taken into account? I feel that any responsible person that is in a position of administrating, representing and planning for the student body of Guilford should make an effort to know the needs and wants of the majority as well as the minorities. Based on the visible actions of such officials, that have been in these positions during my four years at Guilford, I assessed the situation as having either of two courses. The administrators in decision-making positions are unconcerned about the

needs of Black students or simply disregard their presence. I wonder if any of the events that have occurred during the Journey into Blackness weeks would have been possible or even considered if BASIB (Brothers and Sisters in Blackness) didn't exist? To BASIB: I extend my appreciation for making it possible to be exposed to some Blackness during my four years at Guilford. Thanks! To the Cafeteria: Why is the Soul Food Dinner limited just to the Journey into Blackness Week?

Guilford's seemingly apathetic attitude toward Blacks seems to have been extended over to those in the community, especially those business merchants. My freshman year here the drug stores in this area carried very little or any Afro sheen, afro combs, Black greeting cards or even Black magazines. It was as though Blacks didn't even exist in the Guilford College community. One thing that is worth mentioning is that the owners of these drug stores were quite willing to order any product a Black student wanted since the stores didn't have the particular product in stock. In addition I must say that this situation of Black products in the neighboring stores had changed to the extent that the owners are starting to stock these products right in the store. Before this effort though it was as though Blacks didn't even exist in the Guilford College Community. This non-recognition by the community of Black students and other students is quite apparent in the transportation area also. I didn't really fully realize the impact of buses not running on the weekend out in this area until my junior year. Evidently Duke Power Transit Co. doesn't realize or simply doesn't care that there are those students at Guilford who aren't fortunate enough to have cars and without this bus service we are cut off from the rest of Greensboro. More importantly though I wonder if Guilford would have any real impact on Duke Power's transit policies, but it would show me that Guilford cared about the few of us who suffer because we don't have cars. This lack of recognition of Blacks at Guilford is not just limited to this immediate community, but it is also apparent in other areas of Greensboro as well. It has been my experience during my stay here at Guilford that whenever I went out to a club and told

people I went to Guilford they usually remarked by saying, "I didn't know Blacks went to Guilford."

Guilford College is not only a school, but it is also a place of business. Just like any other business, it seems to me that Guilford would try to be appealing to as many consumers as possible. However based on the small numbers of Blacks that have entered and stayed at Guilford during four years, this school seems to lack that appealing factor that interest Blacks to come and stay here at this school. Furthermore while on the subject of business, I positively urge the business office to hire someone with a background in *human relations*. Let me note that I realize that Guilford College is a business with bills that must be paid and this payment of bills is largely dependent on the fact that students pay the money they owe the college. All this I realize, but as a student I did not appreciate being sent letters that I felt were threatening in the way they were written because my parent was delinquent in his payment to the school. At times I felt Guilford's actions indicated they were the only place my parent had to make payments. Whether the wording in these notices was meant as an intentional threat or not, that is the way I viewed them. This was the case when statements as the following were included:

*If payment on your bill is not made then your name will be sent to the academic dean for withdrawal from school;*

*You will not be allowed to preregister until your bill is paid;*

Are the circumstances of not being able to preregister or being kicked out of school suppose to make the money for the payment instantly emerge? Well if this is the function of such notices then they are not working because if your parent doesn't have the money at that time then he/she just doesn't have it. We who are subjected to such maneuvers by the business office are the ones that suffer, especially since in most instances Guilford probably gets its money. Does the business office care if you miss out on the opportunity for enrolling in the class of your preference because they wouldn't let you preregister? Do Guilford care about your education or is their primary goal to get their money???

With all of the academic, business office and general life pressures that one

is subjected to at Guilford and other schools as well, I can truly understand why a person would drop out of school. The person who said that today's young people have it easy didn't go to college! Before bringing this article to a close I would like to ask the board of trustees and any other policy making body at Guilford to remember that people (students) are socially interacting beings. For me socially means in the classroom as well as at a keg party. For the four years I have been here these policy making bodies have become more stringent about enforcing those rules which they feel will help subside the partying component of this interaction. I guess they figure that the enforcement of such rules will encourage students to study more and party less. If this is the true intention of these policy makers I don't appreciate this legal regulation of my behavior. The occasions when I want to engage in either academics or partying should be my choice not the trustees, as long as it does not annoy any other person that lives in my immediate environment. I am sure there are other students as well that are quite aware of the additional rules that have been applied as far as partying is concerned. For me some of the rules have dampened the social atmosphere too much and now Guilford is more dull and boring socially than ever before.

Finally in parting I would like to recognize that I had some good times here, especially during my first two years. I have met many new and diversified people that I consider as friends. Then again I have met those I have no desire to meet or see again. Without any hesitation I can honestly say if I had to choose to go to college again, Guilford would not be my choice. Furthermore as I leave here I can state emphatically that I would not advise another Black student to come here unless Guilford (not BASIB) starts initiating some changes that have Black student's interest in mind. For the most part Guilford has been an experience for me and now it is too late to wonder if it is an experience I could have done without. Guilford, Binford Hall and its residents have been a part of my life for four years and I leave this school and the experience that I have endured with no turning back and with a big smile on my face!!!

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Class of 1977