

Guilfordian

Volume LXVII, No. 6

Guilford College Greensboro, N.C. 27410

November 20, 1985

Guilford's Diverse Grading Policies



Jim McMillan, Art Professor

BY HOLLY HOBBS

To the Guilford student, the 16-credit course load is more than just four courses. To complete the homework for and to attend each class requires four different mindsets. Material presented for an art class is completely different for a history class, for a foreign language class, and for a physics class. Not only that, but each professor presents his/her own personal priorities. This is reflected by grading policies and attitudes toward teaching and students, as well as the different courses taught by the same instructor. These attitudes and policies are as diverse as the courses offered at Guilford.

To illustrate the diversities, four professors, Jim McMillan, Art Professor, Sarah Malino, Chairperson of the History Department, Jim McNab, Chairperson of the Foreign Language Department and Sheridan Simon, Chairperson of the Physics Department were interviewed regarding their grading policies and teaching techniques.

Jim McMillan received his B.A. degree in Fine Arts at Howard University in Washington, D.C., and his M.F.A. in Sculpture at Catholic University, also in D.C. He studied in



Sarah Malino, Chairperson of the History Dept.

France at the Academic Julian, received a certificate there, and applied sixty hours to his PhD at Syracuse University in New York.

After World War II, McMillan taught at the Armed Forces Service Institute, to help veterans in upward level degrees. In 1947, he began teaching at Bennett College, between his studies in D.C. and France. He has been at Guilford since 1968.

McMillan's interest was in becoming an artist, but he needed some sort of financial base to do that. After his first student exhibit, he realized his teaching had not come through. "What I saw was little pieces of me." That is when teaching became a challenge for him.

To McMillan, the most important thing about teaching is this challenge. "Something as personal as art requires more than teaching skills and techniques. It requires finding ways of motivation to initiate insight," said McMillan. "The question of evaluation is recognizing the relationship between teacher and student. In the beginning, a student may feel unsure, and the process must be nurtured carefully, for sometimes the creative process may be stifled. The teacher must nurture, cultivate, guide, prod the student,



Jim McNab, Chairperson of the Foreign Language Dept.

to continue that upward spiral (of achievement). With more confidence, the cycle will continue."

On the question of grades, McMillan feels that they are an element of motivation. They define what excellence is. "To use grades as a guide is not necessarily good...but it serves as a reference for the student, hopefully creating motivation," McMillan said.

Establishing dialogue is an important part of McMillan's class procedure. Dialogue clarifies concepts, while not saying how to do assignments. McMillan gives assignments to "integrate the intellectual with motor skills."

Critiques are another important part of class procedure. They allow the student to see his/her own work in the context of the class and to get interchange of how what is visibly presented has come about. "Hopefully the exchange benefits everybody," said McMillan.

McMillan grades on class participation and attendance. Attendance is crucial, according to McMillan. He also grades on the products themselves, the ability to follow through with guidelines. His evaluation is not so much on the "Creative dimension," but on the application of skills and conceptual ideas. Improvement is also considered.



Sheridan Simon, Chairperson of the Physics Dept.

"Each student is an important entity," McMillan said, "Art is an individual expression, but before individuals can express, they must have the fundamentals."

Sarah Malino received her B.A. from Wellesly College, and her M.A. PhD in American Social History from Columbia University in New York. Her dissertation was entitled: "Faces Across the Counter: A Social History of Female Department Store Employees 1870 - 1920." She joined the History Department in 1979.

The most important thing about teaching to Malino is interaction with students. She enjoys getting to know people from different backgrounds, and seeing students unfold and develop their own thoughts and political ideas. Malino sees history as an important source in finding one's identity as an American. The study of non-traditional histories, such as women and other minority groups, "enables people to make political decisions," Malino says. She also strives to help the student develop basic communication skills of writing and logical analysis.

When asked "What do grades mean to you," Malino replied, "A big headache." After further thought, she added, "I like the

process of analyzing someone's work and explaining to them how to take it further. And it is a learning exercise for me." It disturbs her to see students look only at the grades, and not at her extensive comments. She is happy to work with students who want to improve and rewrite assignments.

Malino's class procedure is a combination of lecture/discussion. When she first began teaching, it was purely lecture-style, and she realized that what the students were reading at home were the same things she was teaching in class. So in order to engage her students, she began discussing the material read by students. She also uses many audio-visual aids.

Malino grades mainly on class participation and written work. Improvement of written work is taken into account, this work being in the form of papers and essay-exams. Occasionally, students participate in oral exams.

Jim McNab received his M.A. Honors in French and German at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, and his M.S. in French and PhD in French with a German minor from Duke University. After teaching at the University of Nice and two high schools in France, then Virginia Tech, McNab came to teach at Guilford in 1978.

The most important aspect of teaching to McNab is to provide equal opportunities to a diverse group of students. "Education is the one thing that eliminates social, class, and economic barriers," says McNab.

Grades, according to McNab, are the measure of how students do as perceived by standards set by Guilford. He is not too happy.

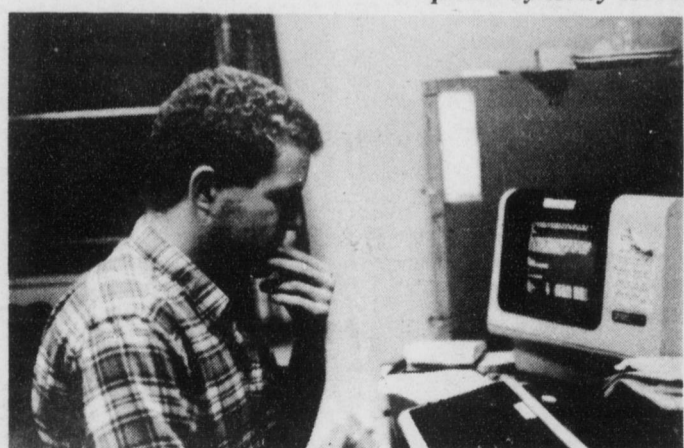
CONT. PG 10

WQFS - The Art of Noise

photo by Holly Hobbs

Beyond entertainment, "The Voice of Guilford College," WQFS offers an accessible learning experience. Senior Reb Blanchard, general manager of WQFS, has taken advantage of this opportunity and at the same time ameliorated "The Voice." "I got caught up in radio at the end of sophomore year and more so last year when I was news director" Blanchard, a political science major, said. Since then he has worked his way up to the top doing something he enjoys and at the same time learning a great deal about communication.

WQFS is completely administered by students. Including the position of general manager there is; news director, Chris Schelin, production manager, Grant Reed, music directors, Tim Savage and Pam Vesilind,



Reb Blanchard at the helm of the good ship WQFS.

and the staff of approximately 40, most of which are disk jockeys. Staff members may choose what

type of work they partake in. This is a change from the past when DJs were required to do a certain

amount of work in news and advertisement in exchange for air time. "This change has provided WQFS with interested workers" stated Blanchard. Students interested in careers such as management, marketing, advertising, and communications can all benefit from the experiential learning at WQFS.

Radio experience opens up many job opportunities. Last May Blanchard was hired by WGLD, a television broadcast station in Greensboro, whom he still works for. "It supported me throughout the summer and gave me ideas for a commercial radio station." Luckily for WQFS, he was able to coerce the chief engineer to come work for WQFS "All the equipment at WGLD is brand new and state of the art so was a lot of fun to work with," he

said while typing the week's schedule into the station's computer.

WQFS, which was founded in 1968, has grown considerably in the past six years. In 1979 it had 10 watts while today it's wattage is up to 1900, with still an option to boost it further. "We are fortunate in that respect" Blanchard said. Last spring, because of his work with WQFS, Blanchard was invited to attend the Inter Collegiate Broadcast System Convention. He worked with college students from all over the nation and picked up many valuable pointers for the station. "It was very motivating to work with 1800 college students

CONT. PG 8