

# Student retention falls short of national average

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Copy Editor

Between 70 and 80 percent of freshmen entering schools comparable to Guilford complete their full four years at the same school.

An average of the past five years shows Guilford's retention rate to be 58 percent.

In an explanation of why students choose to leave Guilford, Dick Dyer, assistant to the dean of students, said that Guilford needs to be more responsible in some areas, but that there are other areas beyond the school's control.

Dyer said that some students come to Guilford with no idea of what they want to do, and when it hits them, the school doesn't have a related major. Some come

here with no idea what they want in a school. A student may decide that he or she doesn't like the South, or maybe the goal is a larger institution. Other students come to Guilford just to raise their GPAs before attending a more prestigious school. These things, said Dyer, the school has no control over.

Dyer did stress the school's responsibility for new students having bad experiences with courses, residence hall life, or professors. If a student leaves for any of these reasons, he said, there is a problem.

Dean of Students Nancy Cable Wells said that expenses are not a major factor causing students to transfer. She said studies have showed that most students who transfer from Guilford go to more expensive schools. She did not think transferring was a big problem, calling it an "institutional trend."

career library research, and career computer research.

Kaplan also hopes to expand the college's alumni network by surveying the over 15,000 Guilford alumni throughout the country. She stressed the importance of establishing feed-back from past alumni and improving alumni loyalty.

"I believe reviving the alumni network is vital," said Kaplan. "If we have a stronger alumni network, we will be able to make a difference in our placement services."

With the improvement already planned in alumni input, Kaplan hopes to also get the faculty involved in joint programming with career development so students can be more aware of the job opportunities related to their academic majors and minors.

Dyer said that to prevent retention problems, Guilford should be very clear with what it has to offer. The college should tell people that at a small school there are limited majors and small circles of friends. "It isn't for everyone," said Dyer.

For many, Guilford is ideal. Dyer said that Guilford is great for students who want to be involved in activities and who want to have a chance at leadership.

He said that Guilford needs to be careful in describing itself so students find what they expect upon arrival, and added, "We need to be vigilant in seeking the student who will thrive here."

Cable Wells said that the school has already started doing this in the past four or five years. Retention involves helping students make choices and helping them be creative, she said, not in holding them there for the money.

Richard Ford, director of residential life, said that college should be a community of learners, and if people feel they are learning, they will stay.

Cable Wells felt that a common misconception is that retention is a students affairs problem. This is not true, she said; all constituents at an institution should be involved. Positive interaction between faculty and students has a large bearing on retention.

The thrust of Guilford's retention program is on understanding the admission, re-admission, withdrawal, and leave of absence processes.

According to Cable Wells, the program will focus more ardently on four tasks in the future: 1) engaging students in programs and activities earlier, 2) enhancing student-faculty interaction, 3) attracting students that are well-suited to Guilford, and 4) shaping financial policies for school allegiance.

Two student-faculty groups have been formed to study retention; the Enrollment Management Committee, chaired by Cable Wells, and the Admission Retention Committee, chaired by Professor Bill Stevens.

## Career development

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figures are going to improve in the future. I'm already seeing more people using our career library and SIGI Computer."

But Kaplan was careful to point out that her job was not to find students employment, but to help students in their career decisions. She stressed the importance of students initiatives in examining career options.

The Career Development Center generally assists students with career planning and implementation of various learning and career goals. Specific services the center offers include assistance in job finding techniques, employer recruiting,

## Roommate hell has set in

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vomit splattered across your face and bedspread), then now's the time to say something. We're all behind you!

After you've tried to communicate openly with your roommate about the existing problems and separation is inevitable, divorce proceedings can begin. First, you must talk to your residential assistant and then the hall director. Your hall director can approve a room switch within his residence hall as long as all four involved

students are for the switch. If you want to switch rooms with someone in another building, you must obtain hall director support and approval from Residential Life.

Your roommate may not be your best friend. But as long as the living conditions are satisfactory for both students, I suggest you stick with them. In the words of Cindy Alcorn, "A roommate relationship is like any friendship. You must put time in it."

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