

## — Letter to the editor —

### Guilford's Witch Hunt

During the last week of my recent political campaign in Carrboro, this message was posted in an online discussion group.

*Now let's turn to the question of Guilford College. In my opinion, you are barely avoiding being fired from Guilford because of your disruptive opposition to the Anti-Racism Curriculum at Guilford. Which of your 'progressive ideals' are you advancing by opposing an Anti-Racism Curriculum?*

I know neither this author's identity, nor the author's link to Guilford College. What is going on with an Anti-Racism Initiative that generates such behavior?

First, let's clarify one point. When the faculty endorsed the Anti-Racism Initiative in spring 2002, I did not oppose it. That is because three months earlier, when speaking on a related issue, I was intimidated into silence by anonymous faculty detractors who sent two colleagues to tell me to be careful about what I said.

A second point of clarification: When my history courses cover racism and other hate, I explicitly deplore it and encourage my students to draw historical understandings to prevent it in the future.

The problem I've seen with the Anti-Racism Initiative is that it identifies racism as being everywhere, with little distinction of truly egregious racism from underlying perpetuation of differences in opportunity. The United States has serious ongoing problems with racism.

A 20-year-long self-examination of Guilford's race issues not only blurs the distinctions between injustices and broader inequalities, but also creates an atmosphere for hunting down heretics.

By all means, when racism rears its ugly head, we need to confront it head-on.

But when someone, like myself, insists on evidence - either for specific incidents of discrimination or so-called "institutional racism" -

and then gets dubbed an *anti-anti-racist*, the whole anti-racism cause is undermined.

Guilford needs to make a distinction between offering a "safe" place for *students* to discuss their feelings and beliefs, and offering a place for *employees* to analyze other employees in terms of racial predilection or even prejudice. I know that colleagues at one or more Anti-Racism Initiative meetings have scrutinized me in these terms. That is unjustifiable, and it is wrong.

I have a right to be treated as an individual, without prejudice to my sex or ethnicity.

I have a right to have my words analyzed on their own merits.

I have a right to speak out for transparency and evidence, without having my job threatened, without having my co-workers call for my dismissal.

I have a right not to be harassed by my co-workers, in person or behind my back.

I have a right to be informed immediately and in writing when any such offenses take place.

I have a right to be anti-racist, without professing this Anti-Racist Initiative.

And I have a right not to have to attend forums and meetings after voicing these observations and concerns.

The atmosphere at Guilford sometimes feels like a witch-hunt, and in the interests of transparency and openness, I would rather field written responses, preferably published. Fair and open treatment is a fundamental guardian of progressivism. Racism will not be stamped out by backroom backstabbing. That kind of behavior needs to stop now.

Working together, we can combat prejudice, and promote harmony. We can resist inequity, and increase opportunity. We can celebrate diversity, and cultivate our shared humanity.

**Jeff Vanke**

## Sound Off

### Staff Compilation

*Guilford students frequently strut their stuff around campus in the buff. But whether sunbathing or streaking, community members have varying opinions regarding how much is too much to expose. We asked students to sound off on campus nudity.*



There is absolutely nothing wrong with being naked. You are born naked, you die naked, bathe naked, and make love naked. If you can't be comfortable with a naked body, that's a bad thing.

**James Cliff is a Sophomore**



"There are only a few streakers on campus, but Guilford gets the reputation for being full of naked people."

**Amalie Malochée is a Senior**



"I feel strongly that nudity is O.K."  
**Max Scott is a First-Year**

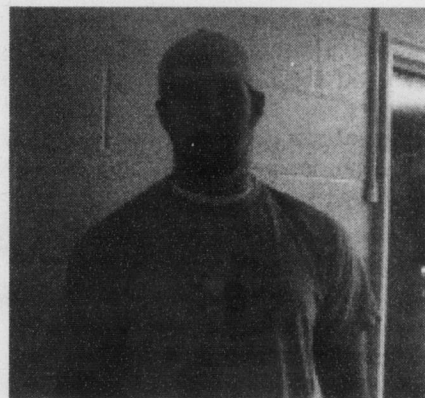


"People have the right to do what they want with their bodies, but people should be respectful of the feelings of those around them."

**Ricky Gandhi is a Senior**



"I like being naked!"  
**Annie Erbsen is a sophomore**



"People do it all the time, but I don't pay attention to it. Seeing a bunch of guys naked all the time would make me uncomfortable, but it doesn't really matter."

**Chris Gammon is a Sophomore**