

"The Color of Fear": students, community discuss racism

By Maxwell Reitman
STAFF WRITER

"This is going to be a powerful experience for those of you who haven't seen it," said Latino Community Program Coordinator and anti-racism team member Jorge Zeballos as he introduced guests Victor Louis and Hugh Vasquez of the film "The Color of Fear."

Louis and Vasquez briefly spoke about their experience in making the film, but were ultimately more focused on creating an open and accepting place for discussion on the film itself.

"We have been taught from birth, and some of us from conception, to be divided against one another," Louis said, prepping the audience for the film.

He invited audience members to "provide a space of amnesty" for their peers as they began to dig into the complicated topic of race.

"There is an unknown with what we're going to dig in with," Vasquez said, echoing Louis.

Vasquez continued to emphasize the importance of being open and honest during the conversation, so that genuine

change could take place.

In "The Color of Fear," which came out in 1994, eight men from North America (two African Americans, two Latinos, two Asian Americans, and two Caucasians) are brought together by director Lee Mun Wah to have a dialogue about the state of race relations in the USA. Many people value the film because it puts the problem right out there in highly visible ways.

The film primarily focuses around how these individuals felt (or didn't feel) the presence of institutionalized racism in their lives.

A lot of the discussion centered on David (one of the Caucasians in the film) and his lack of comprehension about the problems with institutionalized

racism in America.

"The film was made without any preparation, without any script; we're not actors," said Vasquez, re-emphasizing the genuine nature of the film and the experience.

After the film, the audience broke into pairs and told each other how they felt about the experience, what it meant to them, what conflicts they had with the differing views expressed, and how they

felt the film reflected the world around them, before moving into a larger group discussion.

Strangely enough, the conversation remained either very abstract or grounded in the individual's experience. No one talked much about the state of race relations in Greensboro, or even at Guilford.

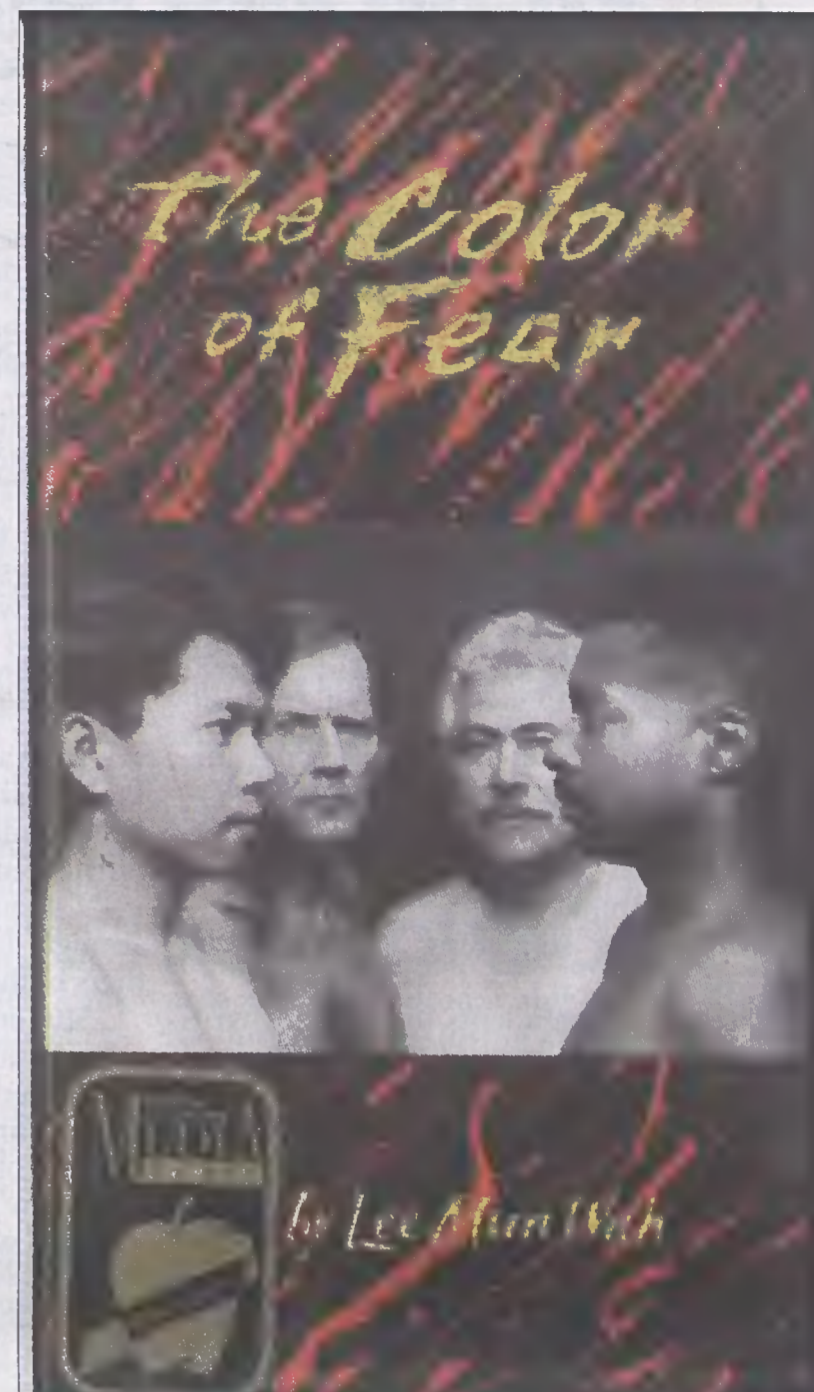
Mostly the group was accepting of each other's faults, but there were a couple of times that people tensed or felt the need to respond directly to something which they disagreed with.

"I don't want to be the cliché where I sit around and complain," said Audrey Henneman, a first-year who was fairly vocal during the post-movie discussion, "I feel like this is something I need to (act on)."

Sophomore Grady Gamble, vice president of Blacks Unifying Society (BUS) and member of the Multicultural Leadership Scholars Program, said that he "thought the presentation was excellent because it brought out a lot of emotions that it needed to bring out."

However, Gamble also expressed caution in his optimism. "I want to know if people are bringing out all these emotions but no ... action," he said, noting the difference between talking about social change and really getting out there to do it.

The discussion of "The Color of Fear" may not have been a one-stop fix for all the problems that the film brings up, but it's certainly a step in the right direction.



"We have been taught from birth, and some of us from conception, to be divided against one another"

Victor Louis

When self-interest and the honor code collide

By Matt Boulette
STAFF WRITER

A crowd composed mostly of psychology majors and faculty congregated in the Leak Room on Oct. 14 for a lecture and discussion session with Dr. Stephen F. Davis, a leading psychology researcher.

Davis spoke on the motivations, techniques, contributing attitudes and long-term consequences of academic dishonesty, his talk entitled "Cheating and Education: The Most Dangerous Intersection." The speech was also the capstone to Davis' day on campus, during which he lunched with psychology

majors, discussing career goals and life after Guilford.

Davis was introduced by Jennifer Scott, who described meeting with him as an "honor" and praised him both for his extensive publication of articles and textbooks and because "he took the time to help (students) along in research."

Davis discussed a recent study on cheating. More than 30,000 questionnaires were administered to college students across the country, with questions about the frequency of cheating in high school. Davis found that 80 percent in each sample admitted to cheating in high school.

On the first questionnaire, between 40 and 60 percent of respondents admitted to cheating on tests, and of this group, half were "hard-core repeat offenders." Techniques for cheating ranged from the mundane, such as looking at someone else's paper or bringing in a cheat sheet, to the more outlandish.

Among the more exotic techniques found were elaborate systems of body postures and pencil-symbolism, test theft, paper-smuggling, plastic wrapped memos smuggled in by mouth, note laden "paper flowers" pinned to blouses, thigh-jotting/skirt hiking, and a Bond-esque spy cam/alphanu-

meric pager combination (with a man on the outside).

One student in the study described an ingenious scheme in which he "hid a calculator down (his) pants." The role of technology is omnipresent in these plots, as students can take advantage of everything from text messaging to portable music players in order to pull one over on educators.

Plagiarism is also rampant, with sites like "chuckiii.com" offering over 20,000 poorly written papers for free. Sites like this even sell Masters theses and Ph.D. dissertations. It would seem that any yahoo with a credit card and a weak conscience can now buy a degree.

Academic pressures are nothing new, so why the sudden increase in cheating?

"Colleges are becoming harder to get into," observed senior Sarah Shotwell. Davis agreed, adding an explanation of the "neutralization effect," where cheaters feel justified by "unfair" standards or "meaningless material."

Compounded by the demands of finite time, familial expectation and other obligations, cheating for some seems to be the only route to success.

Davis explained that these forces have culminated in a change of attitude. Cheaters are now more motivated by external forces, be it wealth or prestige or just a few

chuckles, rather than the intrinsic gain of education.

Any means of satisfying external forces become acceptable, leading one respondent to the bitter conclusion that "old morals in new times just don't mix."

Davis suggested that faculty, to address this problem in the short term, take some measures to minimize cheating on tests. These include spreading students out, administering different tests, not leaving the classroom, and proctoring the test. Administrative measures, like Guilford's academic honor code, and tight sense of community also help.

"It's such a small campus that if people around you see you doing something weird, they're going to say something," said senior Terry Winters. Davis agreed that Guilford was remarkable in its dearth of academic dishonesty.

"If students are not an integral part (of the honor code), it will not work," stressed Davis, who felt that the "comfort level" for academic dishonesty has grown, and that some schools are tolerating forms of cheating that are "not serious."

"90 percent of students saw no problem in (fabricating data)," Davis said of academic dishonesty in scientific lab reports. "They may get a federal grant...will they cook their data for that?"



LORI HENDRICKSON/GUILFORDIAN

Psychologist **Stephen Davis** talked with faculty and students about his research on academic dishonesty. Davis' visit concluded with his research entitled "Cheating and Education: The Most Dangerous Intersection in the World," which was a preview for his invited address to the Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA) in 2009.