

Orientation helps first years adjust to college life

By Alex Thibadeau
STAFF WRITER

"A Ferris wheel!" I exclaimed as I pulled into Guilford's campus on Aug. 22. Lights flashed and students roamed down the main boulevard of campus for one of the largest events of CHAOS 2009.

The acronym "CHAOS" (Community, Health, Advisement, Orientation, Services) cleverly describes the crash-course initiation into Guilford life for new students. With an "Out of this World" theme, students and student-leaders deemed this year's CHAOS a huge success.

"The most exciting activity was the carnival, which was an all-new event that involved a wide-range of games, a moon-bounce, and a Ferris wheel," said senior CHAOS leader Katie O'Boyle. "The turn-out was higher than anyone's expectations, and a lot of the upperclassmen came out and enjoyed themselves too."

Sophomore CHAOS leader Courtney Mandeville saw overall improvements in the program. The staff kept the popular events from the year before, while making adjustments to past controversial events, such as the talent show.

This year students and CHAOS leaders met daily for small-group sessions, which allowed students to convene in a personal environment. Each group was expected to come up with a short skit to share with their

entire class. The skits were Mandeville's favorite activity.

"I had to dress up as a girl. My housemates straightened my hair, and I shaved my beard. It was good for me because it put me out there and allowed me to do something ridiculous. One of the freshmen did it with me, which was really cool because I think it helped him break out of his shell," said Mandeville.

First-year Gabrielle Lahowitch similarly felt that CHAOS and the CHAOS leaders' pep helped break the ice for the incoming students.

"The CHAOS leaders had a lot of energy, which was a good thing because incoming freshmen may be a little nervous. It's the leaders' job to make the first-years the most comfortable," explained Lahowitch.

First-year Sam Becker, who is new to the South and to Guilford, fell in love with the school and the friendly community during the CHAOS program, but felt that some of the CHAOS leaders could have been more outgoing and inclusive of more students during the small skits.

"Not everyone was involved in the skits and I think there could have been a better way to get more people incorporated," Becker reflected. "And it is important to get close to the people that you're going to be with for the next four years."

First-year Courtney Whitley found that some of the CHAOS leaders were reluctant to express enthusiasm about CHAOS and Guilford in general.

"Some of the CHAOS leaders did not want to interact with people, but felt obligated," said Whitley.

However, Whitley felt that most of the

CHAOS leaders were a great source of support and information.

"They really enforced that we could ask them anything and it would be OK," Whitley added.

CHAOS was a period of growth for the both the new students and the leaders. Mandeville felt that being a CHAOS leader allowed him to not only acquire an abundance of free T-shirts, but to build public speaking skills and confidence.

A leader for three years, O'Boyle views CHAOS as a great way to build strong relationships.

"At first you're a guide and a source of information, but by the end of the week you become very good friends with the freshmen," explained O'Boyle.

While "the newness was exhausting" for first-year Lahowitch, she also admitted that CHAOS was a great way to meet people. Some of the open discussions, such as the annual "Todd and Amy" discussion about alcohol and sexual consent, introduced Lahowitch to Guilford's values and practices.

Becker was just glad to have a few days to learn his way around campus before classes started. CHAOS also dispelled the myth to Becker that Guilford is singularly a hippie-dippy, artsy-fartsy school, as he began to get a taste of the unique and diverse atmosphere of Guilford during CHAOS.

With effective activities and a hard-working staff, CHAOS 2009 created wonderful opportunities for the incoming students to join the Guilford community and way of life. Welcome, Class of 2013!

CHAOS

Guilford College CHAOS 2009



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(Counter-clockwise from left) First-year Chaimaa Azizbi belly dances at the Open Mic on Aug' 29. Noe Takahata (left), Canna Zehng (center), and Hoa Hoang (right) enjoy a meal in the cafeteria. Van Koodin, a first-year, plays to a chorus of friendly cheers at the talent show. Dante Whitmore follows with a strong vocal performance.



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