

FREEDOM OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION POLICY

Statement on Freedom of Artistic Expression

Adopted by the Guilford College Board of Trustees, April 1998

The College's Statement of Purpose asserts that, "As a community, Guilford strives to address questions of moral responsibility, to explore issues that are deeply felt but difficult to articulate and to support modes of personal fulfillment. The College seeks to cultivate respect for all individuals in an environment wherein conviction, purposes and aspirations can be carried forward." (Adopted by the Guilford College Faculty and Board of Trustees, 1985)

Furthermore, the College's policy on academic freedom states, "Freedom to search for truth and to teach without fear of arbitrary interference is the first principle of a community of learning, and Guilford College is fully committed to the preservation of this freedom."

Faculty and students engaged in the creation and presentation of works of the visual and performing arts are engaged in pursuing the mission of the College as much as are those who write, teach, and study in other academic disciplines. Artistic expression in the classroom, studio, and workshop, therefore merits the same assurance of academic freedom that is accorded to other scholarly and teaching activities. Since faculty and student artistic presentations to the public are integral to their teaching, learning, and scholarship, these presentations no less merit protection.

Guilford College provides artistic performances and exhibitions to encourage artistic creativity, expression, learning and appreciation. The College does not thereby endorse the specific artistic presentations, nor do the presentations necessarily represent the institution.

The opportunity to display or perform works of art at the College is made available through several academic processes and procedures in which faculty members and other duly appointed individuals exercise their best professional judgment. Among these procedures are selections of student artwork by faculty, selection of works by the Director and Curator of the Art Gallery, and display or performance as part of an approved course curriculum.

Such authorized display or performance, regardless of how unpopular the work might be, must be unhindered and free from coercion. Members of the College community and guests must reflect in their actions a respect for the right to communicate ideas artistically and must refrain from any act that would cause that right to be abridged. At the same time, the College recognizes that the right of artists to exhibit or perform does not preclude the right of others to take exception to particular works of art. However, this latter right must be exercised in ways that do not prevent a work of art from being seen and must not involve any form of intimidation, defacement, or physical violence.

The College rejects the claim of any outside individual or agency to dictate the appropriateness or acceptability of the display or performance of any work of art in its facilities or as part of its educational program.