

'Strangers' find friends at dinner

Alumni prepare dinner for students

Laura O'Connor
Contributing Reporter

Eating dinner with twelve unknown people may sound a bit unappetizing. However, last year more than 80 students participated in Dinner with 12 Strangers, a dinner event designed to enable students, faculty and alumni to learn more about each other and the problems and issues they face at the university.

The dinners take place in an alumnus's house. The hosting alumnus prepares a home-cooked meal.

Eight students, the alumnus and his or her spouse, and a faculty member and his or her spouse constitute the 12 strangers at the dinner party.

"It gives the faculty and students an opportunity to talk personally without a classroom atmosphere," said junior Adrienne Stone, a member of the Student Alumni Council and co-chairwoman for this event.

"The dinner gives the opportunity for the faculty to talk to students in a relaxed atmosphere and to learn about the experiences of the students," said Ralph Black, a visiting instructor of English, who was a faculty member at last year's dinner.

The purpose of the dinner is for the students to talk to the faculty member and the alumnus and express their concerns about the university.

"Last year, we talked about student and race relations and campus activities," Stone said.

When Black met with the students, he found that the atmosphere and conversation started out very civil.

"But then the conversation changed in mood and the students started to express their experiences at Wake. They had a lot of questions about the community. In particular, they felt that the campus was segregated into groups." Black went on to say that these were not necessarily racial groups, but social groups.

Among Black's group, they discussed how the system should and could be

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changed since the students were not satisfied with it. Although there seems to be no direct communication between the "strangers" and administration to remedy the problems discussed at the dinner, Black was asked to fill out a questionnaire about the event.

Black said he was pleased to know that students are conscious of their community and take responsibility for their own education.

"The dinner brings people together in a setting that they would not normally be in," Stone said.

Previous faculty guests have included Larry West, a professor of German; John Dawson, a visiting assistant professor of economics; and Clay Hipp, the judicial adviser. It is not yet known which faculty members will appear at this year's dinners.

The SAC sends letters to faculty in different departments, encouraging them to become involved with the dinners.

Dinner with 12 Strangers started three years ago.

Last year, according to Stone, there were 11 dinners, and the SAC plans to have at least that many again this year. SAC sponsors the dinners.

Fliers are distributed throughout the campus and sign-up sheets are often given to group leaders of clubs, sororities, and fraternities.

Students can become involved in this event by signing up or by contacting Adrienne Stone at Ext. 1468.

Open curriculum program offers flexibility to students

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level courses that standard core requirements or even find a class that counts towards more than one divisional requirement.

"For example, if a student found a philosophy-religion course that they wanted to count for both divi-

sional requirements ... they can get two birds with one stone," Rupp said.

"It was like being able to take electives that I would otherwise never have been able to take," Frey said.

"It gives you a lot of freedom and you get to make your own choices

about what you can and can't do. I substituted for almost all of my divisionals," Bumgardner said.

This program is especially useful for students who are double majors or planning to study abroad, but generally open curriculum students are overachievers.

"They're people who are very

strong students, which is an indication that they are capable of crafting their own schedule," Rupp said.

"It's not a program for all students," Welsh said.

Open curriculum is not for students who wish to entirely avoid certain subjects or to squeeze in required courses before graduation.

"Open curriculum does not require a one-for-one substitution of courses for divisional requirements, but it is important that no major area of study be eliminated," Welsh said.

"The substitutes I made were in the same division, but a bit more like what I was interested in," Frey said.

"They encourage students to apply early in their time here ... especially freshmen," said Rupp.

Any student wishing to take part in the open curriculum program can find an application in the dean's office. Applications are accepted each semester. This semester's deadline is March 16.

Female student leaders find campus receptive to women

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very representative of the women's leadership talents on campus. I think some of that is because traditionally the administrations, of almost any type, have not been run by significant numbers of women," Bumgarner said.

"But I also think that, until recently, the university hasn't really made an effort to be aware of what they can do to make it a more conducive environment for women leaders," she said.

Bumgarner said the report issued by the commission on the status of women helped recognize the problems women at the university face such as salaries, equity and inadequate child-care policies.

Though women have made much progress as leaders at the university, it has not eliminated some negative attitudes and opinions of male students. While this problem seems to be getting somewhat better, it is undeniable that it exists.

Bumgarner, who served on the commission for the status of women, said many female student leaders said they had inappropriate comments or actions directed at them because they were women.

"I think Wake Forest is making an honest level to alleviate this, and I commend that, but I also think that there is still a lot of outright bias, and there are a lot of things that are part of the system that we're not always aware of, that can be impediments to women. But being aware of that is the first big step, and I think that is changing for the better," Bumgarner said.

On a more positive note, the number of positions in which women are able to take a leadership role is constantly growing, which provides a powerful voice in issues and policies affecting all female students.

Junior Tina Carlucci feels that her position as SG speaker of the house, along with her past SG work, has allowed her to bring important women's issues to the attention of the administration. She also feels that the representation of

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Junior
SG Speaker of the House

women in SG is traditionally quite strong.

"Being a woman in my position gives me the ability to address issues that affect women, which affects the type of legislation that we pass. Also, when I'm negotiating with the administrators, it enables me to articulate common female concerns. I have insight to problems that affect women on campus, such as safety, and that is a real advantage in regard to bringing appropriate issues to the forefront," Carlucci said.

Although the female leaders on campus are enthusiastic about the level of representation that they hold, some are dubious of situations in which women executives are chosen to give a more "politically correct" appearance to the organization at hand.

"I don't think there should be situations where someone is saying 'Well, we need to have a man and a woman ...' but I think of Wake Forest as a somewhat conservative place where men are still running the show, and I'd like to see women have an opportunity to take more dominant positions," said senior Sari Rose, the president of the Golden Key National Honor Society.

"There are only two or three women deans here, and it would be nice if it were more equal, but women shouldn't be hired because they're women; they should be judged by their qualifications by the same standard that men are," she added.



Noel Fox/Old Gold and Black

Sophomores Amanda Pruitt, Sonja Tatoyan and junior Catherine Justice look up materials in the Z. Smith Reynolds Library.