

Students address homophobia and the Court

BY CLINT SMITH
Staff Writer

Last Sunday, a discussion called "Courting Homophobia: Is there gay life on Patterson Court?" was held to address the problems homosexual students at Davidson encounter with regard to joining fraternities and eating houses or attending parties on Patterson Court.

The discussion was put on by the Patterson Court Council (PCC) and facilitated by Duncan Bowling '09, a Health Advisor. The discussion was conducted by a panel of students from a variety of Patterson Court organizations.

On the panel were Paul Stroup '09, PCC President and Kappa Sigma member; Blake Poole '08, Sigma Phi Epsilon member; Duane Gregg '08, Phi Delta Theta member; Coleman Hubbard '09, Kappa Alpha member; Charley Grant '08, Pi Kappa Alpha member; Anne Stevens '09, Rusk House President; and Elaine Hargrove '09, Turner House member.

The dialogue began with students coming to agreement that there is a growing population of gay students on Davidson's campus. One of the first questions raised was how to make gay students feel welcome as a part of fraternities and eating houses.

One student claimed that even if a homosexual student were to make it through the rush and initiation processes, the way that fraternities are set up, it only takes a few people to deny acceptance to a pledge.

Cameron Barr '09 claimed that many homosexual students are instantly turned off to the possibility of joining a fraternity due to the unwelcoming "macho man" environment of many frats. "Beating my chest, drinking beer, and talking about all the girls



Georgia Ringle addresses the issue of homosexuality on Patterson Court with students at the "Courting Homophobia" discussion

I hooked up with this weekend isn't a situation I think that many gay students would feel comfortable in," he said.

Another question posed was the topic of gay individuals feeling comfortable taking a same-sex date to a Court party. The group went on to discuss how they feel it is more socially acceptable for two women to make out on the Court than it is for two men.

Some possible solutions that were tossed around included making each eating house and fraternity create and sign a declaration that maintains that they will be open to all

groups of people regardless of race, sexual orientation, etc.

Students also argued that students should take it upon themselves to stop friends from using slanderous words or actions that may be unwelcoming and offensive to homosexual peers.

To finish the segment on a more positive and hopeful note, Charley Grant '08 said that he "came out of the closet" in September while already an active member of PiKA. He claimed that except for one incident he has received nothing but support from his broth-

ers.

"Until this year, there was one male who could say he was the only openly gay member of fraternity," Bowling said.

"Now, that's definitely not the case as many fraternity members have come out of their houses. Clearly, gay students are

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While it is unclear as to whether or not many of these issues were definitively resolved at this discussion, once things were clear, questions were certainly raised. Students left the event with a broader understanding of struggles faced by their fellow peers.

This discussion, "Courting Homophobia: Is there gay life on Patterson Court?" came to close with a resounding "Yes, and what can we do to support others?"

'Take Back the Night' provides emotional outlet for community

BY ELLEN VISER
Staff Writer

There are students walking around campus carrying the burden of rape or sexual assault. These students are searching for a release of this weight, and the Take Back the Night rally last Wednesday provided this opportunity.

Held in the Lilly Family Gallery, this rally was a chance for first- and second-hand victims of rape and sexual assault to share their stories to a sympathetic, caring audience.

Take Back the Night is a national movement meant to empower victims to regain control over the crime against them by verbalizing their experience and sharing it with others.

Take Back the Night rallies occur all over the country in the form of candlelight vigils, marches or, like at Davidson, survivor testimonials. The movement places a great emphasis on the healing power of speaking and sharing.

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-Georgia Ringle

The Davidson rally began with a walk around campus.

The group left a trail of carnations as a physical representation of the power and beauty of the meeting.

Back in the Lilly Family Gallery, an open-microphone session began. Many students

came forward to share (some for the first time) their experiences with rape or sexual assault.

Davidson's Health Advisor Georgia Ringle sees these rallies as both a powerful and an effective way to release some of the victims' burdens.

"It is often easier to find your voice in front of a sympathetic crowd," Ringle said. "It's amazing what can happen when people get together and talk and share and release."

"People tell me each year that they feel so much better, feel so much more empowered after sharing their experiences at these rallies," Ringle said. "Telling your most intimate things helps release yourself from being a victim."

These rallies are especially important on college campuses. "We don't live in a bubble," Ringle said.

"We need to know that there is sexual assault and rape on our campus. But it's also important to stop pretending that we are all perfect people and understand that for victims this burden is a significant part of who they are. It starts to shape their lives and relationships, and without help, can overwhelm them."

Davidson has many resources for helping both first- and second-hand victims of sexual crimes.

First Responders is a campus organization dedicated to the 24-hour support of victims, but Ringle emphasizes that nearly all college officials, from professors to health advisors to campus police, are eager to talk with students about their experiences. She encourages victims to speak with anyone they trust because talking is the only way to begin healing.

"The worst thing for a victim to do is not to seek help," Ringle said.

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consideration.

"The exposure brought to Davidson College from our men's basketball team is simply priceless," said Chris Gruber, Vice President of Admissions and Financial Aid. He added, "Let us not forget that one year ago, Davidson became the first national liberal arts college in the country to eliminate loans from our financial aid packaging, meeting 100% of the demonstrated need with grants and campus employment."

"Add the richness of our financial aid packaging with the success of this team, and the full academic experience of Davidson is well positioned to receive a bump in our yield."

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Davidson revealed its decision to applicants the Thursday, March 27, before Friday's game against Wisconsin. Already in the Sweet Sixteen, Davidson had little to no opportunity to shorten the list of accepted students, which had been locked at least a week in advance. Also, because Easter fell on the day of the Georgetown game, the College was closed on Monday, effectively making a change in decisions almost impossible.

Several other colleges and universities have also faced potential yield increases in the past, including Butler University and George Mason University.

George Mason recently made a splash in the NCAA tournament in 2006, when their

11th-seeded team secured itself a Final Four berth.

The following fall, George Mason saw 24% growth in applications after five straight years of 7-10% application growth.

According to Dr. Andrew Flagel, Dean of Admissions and Associate Vice President for Enrollment Development, "Mason has about 4,500 students on campus and is quickly moving to 7,000, and campus students saw a huge surge in energy and spirit."

As an urban university of about 18,000 students, George Mason does not offer much of an indication as to what Davidson might expect.

Butler, on the other hand, resembles Davidson in terms of size. A private school of roughly 3,600, Butler is situated in Indianapolis metropolitan and houses around 61% of students on campus, including freshmen, sophomores and juniors.

In both 2003 and 2006, Butler's major basketball program vaulted into Sweet Sixteen as a surprise upset.

Courtney Tuell, Butler's Director of Public Relations, hesitates to cite basketball as the sole or even foremost reason for an increase in applications (4,956 in 2006 as compared to 4,626 in 2006).

"Even prior to the basketball success in 2006-2007 we had higher levels of interest in Butler as judged by campus visits and the number of applications," Tuell said.

She listed a new residential apartment village, the celebration of the school's sesquicentennial and visits by former Presidents Bush and Clinton as other possible explanations.

As for Davidson, the upcoming week will gradually dispel the mystery of the 2012 class. The official deadline nationwide for freshmen deposits, known as the National Candidate Reply Date, is May 1, after which Davidson may utilize its wait list, if necessary.