PERSPECTIVES

Campus Transportation

STAFF EDITORIAL

One of the great things about Davidson, aside from the rigorous academics and nationally acclaimed basketball team, is the fact that it is just a short drive to the mountains or to the growing city of Charlotte.

Well, that is, if you have a car.

Though off-campus opportunities for fun and entertainment are tantalizing close to Davidson's campus, many of Davidson's students lack the transportation means to actually enjoy what the surrounding North Carolina area has to offer. It seems a bit incongruous that over 70% of Davidson's student body travels abroad and yet many students barely have the opportunity (or make the opportunity) to travel outside of the immediate Davidson area.

SGA is currently considering bringing ZipCars to Davidson as a possible remedy for this problem. ZipCar, a car-sharing program that has already partnered with dozens of notable institutions ranging from large universities to small liberal arts colleges, would allow students, faculty and staff to rent cars for a $25 year-long membership fee and a $7.50 hourly fee that includes the cost of gas and insurance. Continuing with this year's Engage for Change theme of "The Year of Sustainability," ZipCars would hopefully reduce car emissions by encouraging car-sharing and using low-emission vehicles with high gas mileage.

Although it is unclear whether or not ZipCars would reduce the number of cars on campus and relieve the ever-present/constant parking problem, ZipCars would help students experience the world outside the quaint community of Davidson.

If ZipCars do not come to Davidson, some sort of transportation to Charlotte and other surrounding areas should be provided since public transportation is practically nonexistent. As students, we shouldn't have to rely on the benevolence of friends to get ourselves to a grocery store, to a job interview or to the mall. And our friends shouldn't have to feel obligated to take on an incredible insurance risk by lending out their car.

In as beautiful and exciting an area in which we live, students should have the opportunity to experience and enjoy what the city has to offer.

The Davidsonian
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Atheism deserves place on campus, too

MARIO SILVA
Guest Writer

Davidson College's statement of purpose, originally penned on September 24, 1964, begins with an examination of the college's continuing relationship with the Presbyterian Church. It asserts that the college will continue its "vital relationship" to that sect. It also acknowledges, however, an "openness to and respect for the world's various religious traditions." There is an inherent contradiction in this statement, one that continues to affect the nature of religious discourse on campus. The contradiction is that it does not allow the fostering of "openness" and "respect" for atheism.

In order to rectify Davidson's lapse of support for atheism, I suggest the school include it as a viable alternative to theism in its official statement of purpose and in literature describing religious life on campus.

I contend that atheism is virtually absent from official consideration at Davidson College and that its absence is a fundamental flaw in Davidson's religious discourse. The consequences of atheism's absence are twofold: it undermines Davidson's reputation as a rigorous academic institution, while explicitly discriminating against atheist students. This creates an environment in which real discussion on religious issues is impossible. In the eyes of the school, one side of the argument has already won.

Some may say that the issue of the existence of a god cannot be discussed intelligently. They would subsequently argue that it is a religious issue fundamentally based on faith and cannot be proven or disproven. This may seem like a foolproof argument, but it is not.

The first piece of evidence against this argument is the existence of a religion department at Davidson. If religious questions were immune from logic, an academic department devoted to them would be illogical and useless—which the religion department most certainly is not.

Furthermore, the existence or non-existence of a god has real and physical consequences in the real world. If one believes in an interventionist a god—and therefore in miracles—one believes that physical laws are mutable. This has implications for the studies of all physical scienc Even if one believes in a non-interventionist deity, the bel in a god is not divorced from scientific study. If a god we present only in the creation of the universe, that is a claim th would at least influence the work of cosmologists. Therefo the existence of a god is not an issue divorced from logic inquiry and must be subject to the same rigorous, logical te as any other field of study.

This is especially true at a place as committed to t pursuit of truth as Davidson. One cannot claim to revere tr and foster learning without being absolutely consistent that pursuit. Davidson cannot expect its students to supp mathematical, scientific and philosophical arguments w facts and logic without expecting the same of them in t realm of religion. Not doing so undermines the basis the college as a respectable institution of higher learni Davidson then must acknowledge that the existence of a g is undetermined and support atheism as a reasonable posit to hold. To do otherwise—that is, to continue its pres position—is antithetical to Davidson's academic aspiratio

Davidson must also acknowledge atheism as part of commitment to supporting diversity among students. atheist student feels like a minority no less than a black, or handicapped student. In its statement of purpose, David claims to "[recognize] the dignity and worth of every perso There seems to be an implicit addendum to this commitme that atheist students' views are of less value than Christi Buddhist, Muslim or Jewish students.

Although the policies of the Religious Life Co acknowledge the right of students to "reject religious fa and disallow religious organizations from overt evangeli behavior, this is not the same as supporting atheist stude The official distinction of theism on campus, together w a general religiosity among the student body, creates environment in which atheist students feel ostracized. T situation requires more direct action from the college.

In order to rectify Davidson's lapse of support for athei I suggest the school include it as a viable alternative to the in its official statement of purpose and in literature describi religious life on campus. Further, I call on the student bo to acknowledge that all religious questions should be sub to mindful and logical analysis. As scholars at David College we must always pursue all knowledge—includ religious—with absolute intellectual rigor. In turn, David must support all paths to that knowledge.

Mario Silva '09 is a music major from Bloomington. Contact him at masilva@davidson.edu

Prop 8 win unfortunate loss for equality

ZEKE WEBSTER
Guest Writer

For almost all of us—even some of the most partisan and conservative Republicans—Barack Obama's victory in last Tuesday's election was an historic night of celebration and redemption. Even the happiest of election nights, however, hold some disappointments and setbacks, and last Tuesday's was particularly bitter.

Proposition 8, a ballot initiative that strips gay couples of the right to marry, was passed by 52 percent of the vote in California. Unlike other states that have passed anti-gay marriage initiatives, gay marriage was legal in California until Proposition 8's passage. Since the state supreme court, with the approval of California's legislature and governor, ruled gay marriage bans unconstitutional in May, around 18,000 gay couples have been married in California. Proposition 8 has brought all of that to an end, and it has put the marriages of those 18,000 in jeopardy. Proposition 8's passage means that, even in California, our government will continue to discriminate against gay Americans.

Fortunately, history is on the side of supporters of marriage equality. All arguments against gay marriage are obviously flawed or explicitly religious.

Legalizing gay marriage doesn't mean that churches will be forced to perform marriages they disagree with, nor will it force anyone to abandon prejudice against those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or are questioning their sexuality. It simply means that the government will recognize the validity and value of the families that gay folks have been building.

Who seriously thinks that it undermines the marriages of straight couples for others to have the same right? How can anyone possibly be harmed by allowing others to live and love as they wish? Straight Americans would, correctly, consider it unimaginably unjust if the government told them that their attempts to build loving relationships and families were illegitimate and unnatural. This is why we look b on anti-miscegenation laws with horror and confusion. we could ever have been so wrong about something simple. A generation from now, Americans will look bac Proposition 8 and similar laws in other states the same w

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Every survey of American's attitudes towards gay marr yields the same basic fact. Although it is unpopular younger people support marriage equality overwhelmi Even among conservative evangelical Christians, are far less hostile to gay equality than their parents grandparents. It is only a matter of time before the old g leaves the scene and marriage equality becomes law California it may only take another five or ten years. Th little consolation, of course, for gay Californians that seen their rights denied by their community, or for str Californians that don't want to be a part of organized big Amidst all the other good news of last Tuesday, Calif provided a painful reminder of the obstacles standing i way of full gay equality. But equality is still coming, a people of good will do all they can, then the wait will n too long.

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