

Pre-O, from page 1

Davidson]. You really have to explain yourself, and there are some things that you just can't," she said.

Kawabata is currently working to reconstruct Davidson's Committee of Minority Affairs.

Jill Williams, Assistant Director of the Lilly Programs for the Theological Exploration of Vocation, believes that ethnic and cultural orientation should be extended to all students.

"There is no question in my mind that the STRIDE Program is a valuable opportunity for the students invited to participate in it... white students could benefit at least as much, and probably more, from direct conversations about their ethnic identities as can ethnic minority students, who are regularly forced to recognize the ways their ethnic identities shape their lives," Williams said.

As part of an expansion of this discussion to the entire student body, this year Davidson made a two-hour workshop on Diversity a required part of its Davidson 101 curriculum, a series that all first year students must complete. This workshop has been an optional component in previous years.

Why STRIDE?

In 1991, only 53.3 percent of African-American first year students elected to return to Davidson.

This was because black students in the early 90s "were thrown into an environment where there was not a critical mass of minority students," said Jeffries. "There were not a lot of social options."

Pre-Orientation was founded in 1992 by John Eaves, a Davidson alumnus, and designed to

increase this unsatisfactory retention rate for incoming African-American students by providing them with the chance to acclimate to Davidson life.

Upon his appointment to the program in 1996, Jeffries immediately updated it by extending the invitation to all ethnic minorities who wished to participate.

Jeffries created the five-component STRIDE program in 2000 and now works closely with Dr. Nancy Fairley of the Anthropology Department as well as number of faculty and staff members, trustees, and alumni in order to monitor the needs of student participants. Jeffries added that the programs are designed according to student input.

Despite debate, the program's original mission has come to fruition.



Left: Several Members of the faculty and administration, as well as speakers from outside Davidson, helped make Pre-O a success.

Below: Mentor Hannah Yi '07 guides her mentees Mejin Leechor '08 and Minh Nguyen '08 through a Pre-O project.

Bottom Left: Shane Montoya '08 talks to mentor Dario Roque '05 and fellow first years Yancey Flores and Selene Bobadilla during a Pre-O activity.

Courtesy photos



The class of 2008 is the most diverse class to matriculate, and the retention rate of African American students has remained drastically higher than before Pre-O began. One hundred percent of black freshmen to enroll in 2003 chose to return to Davidson.

Davidson is currently home to 129 African American, 76 Latino, 45 Asian American, and nine Native American students.

Role model or too exclusive?

In the last couple of years, Davidson, as well as many other small liberal arts colleges, has wrestled with how to enhance diversity and diversity programming.

Many colleges, such as Davidson, Holy Cross, and Williams College, have defended and worked to increase and improve their minority programs.

Others have decided to open some of their orientation programs, formerly for minority students only, to all freshmen.

Holy Cross has a program called ALANA (African, Latin, Asian, and Native Americans) which is very similar to Davidson's STRIDE program.

Williams College works hard as well to gain minority students and has a comparable minority student population and minority retention rate to that of Davidson's. Williams also has a pre-orientation program called Windows On Williams (WOW) and other programs that promote diversity, community building, and monitor race relations throughout the year.

In addition to these schools, many other colleges offer comparable programs.

Many other colleges are trying to create programs such as these.

Furman University has a one day pre-orientation program for minority students as well as a Peer-Mentoring Program which matches minority freshmen with minority upperclassmen and strives to give students a sense of community and family.

However, Idella Glenn, the Director of Multicultural Affairs at Furman, still knows that there is a long way to go.

"We have looked into Davidson's pre-orientation program and plan to use it as a model for one that we wish to develop here at Furman," Glenn said.

She recognized and praised Davidson's success with STRIDE and wishes to expand and develop Furman's current program into one that is comparable to STRIDE.

In contrast to working to expand the strictly minority programming, other schools, such as Yale, Princeton, M.I.T., and the University of Virginia, are opening their formerly minority-only programs to anyone in the freshman class who wants to participate.

Last February, Gila Reinstein, a Yale spokeswoman, said that they were opening several minority programs, including the minority pre-orientation program, to all freshman to avoid being condemned as discriminating against non-minority students.

This change is a direct result of the US Supreme Court ruling last June concerning policies at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. These rulings, according to the dean of Yale's undergraduate college Richard H. Brodhead, made it "harder to justify programs that separate student communities instead of building them into an interactive whole."



Study
In English
Abroad

The
Swedish
Program

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY

COME TO AN INFORMATIONAL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14, 2004

4:00 P.M.

CHAMBERS, ROOM 3136

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact your Study Abroad Advisor or
The Swedish Program, Hamilton College, 198 College Hill Road, Clinton, New York 13323
(315) 737-0123 www.swedishprogram.org

Public Policy

Literature

Economics

Film

Psychology

History

Sociology

Art History

Women's Studies

Politics

Environmental
Studies