

Vagt approves Gender Resource Center

By CARRIE ARTHUR
News Editor

On Thursday October 15, President Vagt approved the proposal for the Gender Resource Center, which will be located in the old RLO office in Belk. The plans for the center began last year, and Vagt's decision was the culmination of those plans. The Gender Resource Center committee plans to hold a grand opening celebration there on Saturday October 24 during the Coeducation Celebration.

The center will host organizations such as the Women's Issues Committee, the Rape Awareness Committee, the student health advisors, the Gender Studies concentration, the Eating Disorders Group (part of the Women's Issues Committee), the Bridges program, and hopefully FLAG. In addition to hosting these organizations and future groups that grow from it, the center will be open to anyone interested in issues of gender. A library with gender issues literature, referral services, counselling services, an alumni/alumnae database, art gallery space, distribution of women's health information, and a calendar of women's issues events will all be part of the center. Ann Culp '00 of the Gender Resource Center committee feels that it "will create a central focus."

Tommy Ross '99 also of the Gender Resource Center committee said that the center and committee hopes "to build a community where gender relations are not constrained by different biases and unhealthy modes of interaction that currently constrain the campus."

The immediate goals of the committee include generating student, faculty, and staff involvement and finding sufficient funds. Although Culp said, "student involvement has been extraordinary," Ross thinks, "the big challenge will be getting students involved." They both feel that faculty and staff support is essential because of the smaller turnover of faculty and staff members. Many faculty and staff have already offered their support. Ross said, "for the most part, the faculty and staff network is already in place." Culp echoed Ross, "we've received a lot of support from various members of the faculty and staff. A lot of people have been looking forward to this for a long time."

To realize the goal of involving more people, committee member Elisabeth Malphurs '99 plans for "services coordinated within the center will go out to reach people." Ross hopes that "exciting programming" will attract people: "people will come to programming more than the center at first. Hopefully, they'll see what the center has to offer."

In addition to attracting students, faculty, and staff to programs, the committee wants for some faculty, staff, and student health advisors/peer counsellors to hold office hours at the center. A work

study student may possibly be on staff at the center next semester.

To acquire funding, the committee hopes to combine the donations of several sources. Malphurs is focusing on the immediate needs for the beginning fundraising: "we need physical things—furniture, a file cabinet." Because Culp said that currently "nothing is down there (at the center)—no furniture, no paint for the walls, "the opening during the Coeducation celebration will also include small fundraising from alumanae by possibly auctioning off parts of future furniture. The committee also plans to apply for a SGA charter and then for ATC emergency funding. Although the Dean of Students Office does not have much money to give the center, Culp said that President Vagt, Dean Shandley, and the administration "have been extremely supportive of the idea." Ross added, "the President and the Dean of Students Office have made a personal commitment as well as an administrative commitment to see that the center is successful."

In response to criticism of the center being unnecessary, a feminist haven, or exclusive, Culp said that it "is open to everyone." Malphurs wants to center even to expand beyond the boundaries of the college community: "we eventually see the center being opened up to the whole community." She continued, "the Bridges program holds great promise in including people from diverse backgrounds of the college community." Culp feels the center is important because "it demonstrates that we value our community; we value various needs of our community." The center is "a challenge to the community to look at things like gender and to use it (and) to think about voices in the classroom, Patterson Court, day-to-day life at Davidson." Culp summarized, "the College has that issues of gender are important enough to create a space."

Malphurs feels that the change in the original name of Women's Resources Center to Gender Resource Center signifies the inclusiveness of the Center. She said, "issues that should be called gender issues are called women's issues," and Malphurs wants to center to address "issues of femininity and masculinity."

Looking to the future, the committee is currently forming a ten year vision statement that Ross said "will provide for the future, not year by year." This mission will hopefully guarantee the center's success, unlike the failed previous center, about which Malphurs said "no one knows because it wasn't documented." Malphurs and Ross want the center to be "a campus institution," instead of an organization. They intend to use the current center as a "proving ground" to "demonstrate the need" and then to move to a bigger space.

The center will officially open on Saturday, October 24, and Culp, Malphurs, and Culp invite everyone to use the new resources.

International festival displays Davidson's diversity

By ASHLEY KING
Staff Writer

Walking up to the international festival, students were greeted at once with an odd mixture of a reggae band's metallic sounding steel drum and a student playing the bagpipes. These diverse sounds were only a preview of the cultural mixture that was to come at the 15th annual International Festival, held in the college Union on October 4th from 11:00 in the morning until 3:00 in the afternoon. International students from across the world displayed items from their diverse cultures and lands.

All of the participating international students were responsible for organizing a booth to represent their respective countries and presenting items such as pictures of landscape, exotic food, traditional clothing, and household items.

The booths were arranged so that different areas of the world were found in different rooms. In the Morrison room, students walked through Central and South America. Upstairs in the Homeroom were the booths for Europe. Across the hall in the Union Conference Room, students perused the presentations of the many cultures of Africa and Middle East. Finally, students from the countries in Asia and Australia exhibited an overview of their homes in the 900 room.

Each booth carried with it the unique personalities and stories of the students who had carefully set them up. Blasting Turkish music, the members of the booth for Turkey spent much of their time dancing around the homeroom. In the 900 room, the Korean booth played Korean pop music which, the presenters explained, was influenced by both Japanese and American contemporary music.

The stories of each country were just as special as the music each booth chose to play. Expressing a story of her people, Dalia Abu-Dayyeh of the Palestinian and Egyptian booth explained that the delicate coffee cups on her table had a special significance for many inhabitants of her native Palestine. These cups held a thick tea which old women would drink and then turn over. According to custom, after leaving the cups to dry, the women would then be able to read the future from the patterns of coffee stains left on the cup. A picture of a large stone structure hanging over the Ethiopian booth told another story. Called

Axum, this ancient structure would dwarf any human being standing next to it, and yet, it was carved from a single stone. Even today, scientists are baffled as to how anyone could have accomplished this feat.

The food offered at the different booths allowed students to explore different cultures' culinary tastes. The Ghana booth allowed students to taste jollof rice which was made from cassava, a root vegetable, while the booth from Malaysia gave students the opportunity to try beans and pork which were wrapped in a sticky rice and steamed in banana leaves.

The festival ended with a flourish in the performances of some of the international students themselves. From 2:00 until 3:00 PM, students gathered in the 900 room to watch different displays of dancing and skills unique to particular cultures.

To begin the show, each country represented at the fair presented its flag in the parade of flags. Walking out proudly with their flags, students told the audience both their name and their country, first in their native language, and then in English.

Following the parade of flags, Mauricio Sauma and Agatha Degasperri displayed their abilities in Latin dancing. After a few songs, they invited the audience to join in, and, following their lead, a line of people tried their hand at Latin dancing.

From Korean tradition, the next performance on the list was Dahn hak, a combination of martial arts, meditation, and breathing exercises which is known as Tai Chi in the United States. Led by Jihoon Hwang, three of his students followed him in the exercise which consisted of a series of smooth and forceful movements set to Korean music and the beat of a drum.

Following the Dahn hak, professor Jan Blodgett displayed her talent of belly dancing in a whirl of color.

The United States was even included in this mix, as two students played the harmonica and guitar to demonstrate traditional blues and country music from America.

The next performance was a traditional dance of Spanish and Mexican origin. Called the sevillanas, four women, Nora Kizer, Felicia Leborgne, Agatha

Degasperri, and Professor Bollo-Panadero danced gracefully to Spanish music.

The final performance of the afternoon was a group of five Davidson men who played African rhythms on their drums. The performers were Nowell Zimmerman, Allen Lee, Bo Huston, Ragy Ragheb, and Taylor Herbert. With punctuated rhythms and dancing, this group invited the audience to come dance with them. By the end of their performance a group of about 20 students gathered around

them to dance.

Sponsored by the ISA and the Cultural Events Committee of the Union, the international festival invites Davidson students to experience others cultures and ways of life.

Through the time and dedication of many international students, this festival shares with the college community the diverse foods, clothing, music, and ways of thinking that help to define the different peoples of the world.

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