

Elrod, from page 1

College has gone further than federal law by mandating equality regardless of sexual orientation. This is important for openly gay students, faculty, and staff. But it has not done so for gender identity."

Michelle Jester '09 praised the lecture for raising awareness of transgender issues.

"Whether we may know it or not, someone who lives on our hall or the person who sits next to us in class could be tormented by the notion that they were born in the wrong body," Jester said. "It's frightening how hateful people can be to others who are different, but the best way to combat this hatred is with awareness. I think Reverend Elrod's speech did just that."



photo courtesy of Elise Elrod

Elise Elrod spoke on gender identity and discrimination in DFPH last Wednesday.

Aid, from page 1

meet demonstrated financial need through grants and work-study employment only.

Students and families will still be able to take out educational loans from financial institutions as a part of personal financing, but no Davidson student or family will owe the College anything after a student graduates.

According to Vagt, the Board of Trustees has been increasing its scrutiny of the College's financial aid policy over the last four or five years, and the Trustees formulated the new policy during their annual retreat this February.

After considering several options, they decided to eliminate student debt entirely in order to make the strongest possible statement of the College's commitment to making the Davidson education available to all students.

"And [the Trustees] were so happy at the end of it, so happy because of what it means for Davidson. There was that quiet, 'this is the right thing to do' moment."

--Bobby Vagt

"And [the Trustees] were so happy at the end of it, so happy because of what it means for Davidson. There was that quiet 'this is the right thing to do' moment," Vagt, who was present when the Trustees made their decision, said.

If its socioeconomic demographics and annual cost remained constant, the new policy would require the College to distribute an additional \$1.7-1.8 million annually in financial aid.

With the 5.2 percent increase in tuition, however, the annual cost of financial aid will increase by about \$3.5 million.

Because the College draws 5% annually from its investments, the new financial aid packages will require a \$70 million endowment.

The Trustees have already identified and earmarked the funding required to initiate the new program in August, and they have also formally committed to a strategy for raising the necessary endowment.

The new financial aid policy reflects the College's continuing commitment to increasing Davidson's affordability.

In 2006, the College capped the maximum student loan in its financial aid packages at \$3,000 over four years, resulting in an average savings of \$7,000 for need-based students.

Davidson's new policy is part of a growing trend among colleges and universities. Many elite universities, like Harvard, Princeton, Yale and the University of Virginia, have recently instituted financial aid policies geared toward students whose parents fall below a certain benchmark annual income.

For example, in 2004, Harvard announced that students whose parents earn less than \$40,000 annually would attend the university for free and that students with a family income under \$60,000 would qualify for a reduced price.

Shortly after Harvard made its announcement, Yale eliminated its student contribution for students from families earning less than \$45,000 per year.

Public universities, too, are joining the trend.

Beginning with the 2007-08 academic year, Georgia Technical Institute's "Tech Promise" will aid students from families making less than \$30,000 per year by allowing them to graduate from the college debt-free. This will be the first policy of its kind at a public university.

Unlike other colleges that have made an effort to decrease the costs of their institutions, however, Davidson will offer its new financial aid packages to students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, becoming the first national liberal arts college to eliminate loans completely from its financial aid packages.

Only a handful of other institutions across the country have done the same.

Despite the increase in cost to the institution, the College will retain its policy of need-blind admissions. Currently, 33% of Davidson students receive need-based financial aid.

Nationally, college students borrow \$53.8 billion annually to pay for their educations. At the nation's most selective colleges, only 3 percent of students come from the poorest sector of society, and only 10 percent come from the bottom half.

While the College views its new policy as a beacon for other institutions, Vagt has not lost sight of the impact that it will have on Davidson students.

"When the vote passed, I got a lump in my throat and a string of kids' faces passed in front of my face. Kids who couldn't come."



SGA holds emergency meeting to pass bylaws

BY JORDAN WALL
Staff Writer

Student Government Association (SGA) President Chris Burton '08 called an emergency meeting of the Senate last Wednesday due to the men's basketball team's participation in the NCAA Tournament, which was expected to cause low attendance at the regularly-scheduled meeting on Thursday evening.

At the meeting, the Senate addressed the bylaw revisions, which finally came to vote after a year of work.

Prior to spring break, the Senate voted the bylaws to a referendum of the student body, but the referendum vote had to be voided because the initial voting system allowed a single voter to cast more than one vote. Consequently, the Senate again had to vote to send the revisions to a referendum.

An unusually high number of senators were absent from the meeting. Some were sick; others were on their way to the NCAA Tournament.

Tensions ran high at the meeting. A number of students, including FIJI senator J.C. Boyle '08, raised opposition to the bylaw revisions.

Burton admitted that the meeting was "a rough start for SGA." However, he said that the "conflict on Wednesday night in no way reflects the manner in which this administration operates."

Boyle, along with Michael Gordon '08 and Sam Spencer '07, voiced opposition to the bylaw revisions, as they include neither rules for the Senate Court nor an enumeration of Davidson students' rights. Several other senators argued that such an enumeration would be redundant, as the College's constitution already states those rights.

"I can understand why they wanted the inclusion of those rights in something more visible and accessible than the [College's] constitution," Burton said. But he also

claimed that the manner in which Boyle, Gordon and Spencer presented those opinions made the meeting difficult.

Boyle, for his part, claimed that the SGA bylaws were full of "typographical errors" and that the majority of Senators did not care about their content and only wanted to push the revisions through.

"The Senate irresponsibly passed what they knew was incomplete and full of errors. To my eyes they are more concerned with public perception than with meaningful reform" Boyle said.

Despite the opposition, the bylaws were passed to a campus-wide referendum. The referendum also passed, and now the bylaw changes are official.

During the meeting, the senate voted to hold an impromptu Executive Session—a senatorial mode in which only Senators and affiliates of the Senate may be present. Non-elected students were asked to leave.

Burton stated that an Executive Session is a rarity but that it is sometimes necessary when individuals cannot "present their differing opinions in a respectful manner."

"I don't have any regrets about the decision to go into an Executive Session because we needed to get a clear count on senators in order to establish quorum," Burton said. "We could not do this previously because of the non-senators' distractions; however, we did not discuss anything pertaining to the bylaws. As soon as we had finished locating senators, we allowed them [non-senators] back into the room, where they had more than 30 minutes to discuss their view."

Burton added that his administration plans to abide by an "open-door" policy in which differing opinions will be welcomed and encouraged, if they are presented in a respectful manner.

This week's SGA meeting is scheduled for Thursday at 9 p.m. in Chambers 3155. Topics will include re-charting organizations and an Athletics Committee update.

Outpost, from page 1

Dining Services used the brief delay as an opportunity to work out kinks before the official opening of The Outpost.

"I think the students are really going to be surprised by how nice the building is. The design is as flexible as possible, so groups like the Union Board will have a lot of creative latitude in creating programming that is appealing to students."

--Wilson McCrory '07

"We had a soft opening of about 50 guests to test the equipment and menu," Director of Dining Services Dee Philips said. "That was possible because we did not sell the food."

Despite the holdup, those involved with The Outpost remain optimistic about its future.

"I think the students are really going to be surprised by how nice the building is," Wilson McCrory '07, Chair of the SGA Auxiliary Services Committee, said. "The design is as flexible as possible, so groups like the Union Board will have a lot of creative latitude in creating programming that is appealing to students."

Once completely open, The Outpost will operate Wednesday night through Saturday night.

Each night, doors will open at 10:00 p.m. and the café will serve baked goods and drinks until the grill fires up at 11:00 p.m.

The Outpost will close at 2:00 a.m. on Wednesdays and Thursdays, but remain open until 3:00 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The menu will offer an array of late-night favorites and breakfast items, including pizza, quesadillas, hash browns and eggs.