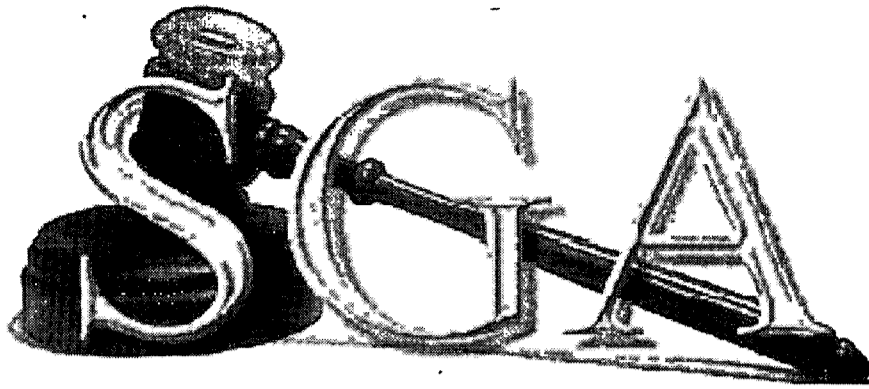


Davidsonian Quote of the Week

“Southerners have never been
black nor white.
We’re southerners.”

-Brenda Tapia, former Assistant Chaplain
and Director of the Love of Learning
program at Davidson College



SGA addresses budget concerns

BY ALISSA CURRAN
News Editor

The beginning of a new semester a minor budget conflict, and the ongoing Real Talk campaign were some of the main issues discussed at the last SGA meeting.

Among the more pressing issues raised at the meeting was the state of the SGA's budget, which is currently suffering from heavy spending during first semester and the cost of CAT TV, an expense they agreed to pick up for a year only.

Additionally, the cost of the buses that took many students to Jena, La. this past fall took a large toll on SGA's budget. Telephone bills and chartered buses to go to basketball games were also cited as contributing to low funds.

The Real Talk campaign, which was voted on by students, has promoted environmental awareness on campus thus far this year and will continue to do so. Laminated signs posted above sinks in many dormitories encourage students to cut water usage in general and especially during the ongoing drought.

Signs were also given to all students living in senior apartments to put up in their dorms.

Also to be discussed in the near future is the concept of more outdoor recycling methods on campus, something students have requested.

Mordecai Scott '10 proposed the idea of a fundraiser for Charlotte's Battered Women's Shelter to be held in the Union atrium in late May. He also asked that others present publicize the Athlete's Formal, which is open to all students who participate in a varsity sport. The proceeds will benefit the Student-Athlete Advisory Council.

Also put forward was the idea for a forum called "What's going on down the road?" which would foster community discussion about the town and development. The Lake Norman Community Development center would be in attendance in addition to many other community members.

Finally, the "Walk Around," an event in which SGA members are encouraged to participate in order to identify unsafe places on campus, will occur at 8 p.m. this Tuesday outside the Union.

Student documentary highlights racism

BY KATHERINE JOHNSON
Staff Writer

On Tuesday night, Austin Bell '10 premiered his documentary "Shock Value: Why Are We Surprised?" The film, part of a series of awareness events celebrating MLK Day, addressed racism both at a national level and at Davidson College. A discussion about race followed the screening.

The documentary featured footage from the Davidson trip to Jena, LA as well as commentary from professors, staff, students and those who shared their thoughts in the free speech booth that was set up in the Union several weeks ago.

The documentary began with Darrell Scott '10, who said, "At this campus we're so concerned with being nice, sometimes we're a little too nice." Many interviewed in the film reflected Scott's sentiment that Davidson students are often too polite, nervous and non-confrontational to discuss racist incidents on campus.

The film revealed that since the Jena 6 incident, 40 to 50 other noose-hanging incidents have occurred throughout the country, and Davidson has not been exempt from grievous displays of hate. According to Ernest Jeffries, Assistant Dean of Student Life, "when [racist incidents] happen on a national spectrum [such as at Jena], local people will get the courage to lash out as well." Recently at Davidson, a racial slur was found written on a door in Belk dormitory, and there have been incidents of confederate flags being both displayed and paraded on campus by students, which Tom Ross addressed in his Inaugural speech.

While Davidson students took a strong stand against injustice in Jena, with 50 students traveling there to protest, many in the documentary commented that students tend to ignore racist incidents occurring on campus. This is largely due to the fact that it is hard to confront problems in your own backyard, but it is easier if there is a degree of anonymity involved in protesting and fighting racism.

According to Professor of Sociology Dr. Eve Veliz, "We want to believe those evil southerners in Louisiana [are racist] and not us." A student from the Free Speech video booth confirmed Veliz's comment, saying that it is easy to criticize someone we don't know personally, but it's harder to confront a good friend after they've told a racist joke. It's much easier to attribute their joke to inebriation and then continue ignoring the problem. But, as another student stated, to choose to do nothing to combat racism is to choose to perpetuate it.

Many of the people interviewed agreed that the racism plaguing Davidson is mostly subtle, subconscious and based on ignorance. A senior gave the example of a white student walking the other way when seeing a group of minority students approaching as an example of a more covert but common example of racism at Davidson. Similar examples include students giving disdainful looks to minority students and asking offensive and ignorant questions.

The film also explored racial awareness on campus and in the nation. Veliz shared surprise that it takes an incident like Jena, which led to media inspired groupthink and bandwagon effects to get people talking about racism. Veliz continued that racism, particularly in the criminal justice system, occurs every day and adds up over time. "That's what surprises me...how we choose to remain ignorant...when really these things are happening every day," Veliz said. She continued that a way to spread racial awareness was to let staggering statistics involving race in the criminal justice system speak for themselves and to let people make up their own minds based on the numbers.

The audience then discussed ways to increase awareness on campus. According to one student, "If we realize [racism] exists, we can deal with it in right way instead of pretending it doesn't exist."

Interesting discussion was raised about Davidson's pre-orientation STRIDE program for minority students and whether or not it encourages self-segregation. Some stu-

dents feel that STRIDE causes separation between minorities and whites. However, one student who had participated in the program said that "Students who will self segregate will do so whether or not STRIDE is in order."

Furthermore, according to Veliz, programs like STRIDE exist at many other colleges, and "easing the cultural transition is helpful" to minority students, who are vastly outnumbered by white students at Davidson.

According to STRIDE's creator, Jeffries, the program was initially created because "we were not retaining minority students." In the program, Jeffries says students talk about making Davidson their own, and as a result of the program, "you have minorities involved in all facets of student life."

Students in the audience disagreed on ways to educate Davidson students about racial awareness both in and outside of the classroom. Some students felt that if white students and minorities befriended each other without necessarily having uncomfortable conversations about race, racism on campus could decrease. After all, students could realize that the reality of going to Davidson College bonds students from vast-

ly different backgrounds. Another argued that "it's time student government and The Davidsonian talked about issues in a way to start conflict; if we do that, this place can change."

Others also suggested argued that change can happen inside the classroom, through social justice and how even one person can cause a ripple effect by sharing such discussions with peers. Veliz commented on a skyrocketing of Sociology majors, which may reveal an increased consciousness of racial issues among students.

Other students suggested that change should come from the institution and that Davidson should host a series of small group discussions in place of classes one day, or on a Saturday, while another questioned whether students would make time for such discussions.

Despite the disagreements on how to increase racial awareness on campus, most audience members supported the film's final message, which declared "we must fight these injustices on more than just one day."

For change to occur, people have to do more than just discuss racism at designated times; they must be willing to take action.



Taylor Blackwell and Brenda Tapia discuss history of race relations in Davidson