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that, to some degree, the same types of prejudices and differences exist here as anywhere else in the country," Brookshire said. "We have the same social triggers here as we do anywhere else."

Salter adds that while it is important to have focused discussion within minority groups,

"It's essential to stress that diversity should not only be discussed in a forum or after a racist event happens. If you only address diversity in that light, it seems like a hassle."

-Erika Dean '05

diversity issues affect the entire community.

"People always walk into our cafeteria and ask why all black students sit together," Salter said.

"I walk in and see a bunch of white students sitting together."

Several minority students expressed a sense of exhaustion connected to feeling that they are obligated to speak for a certain race or minority group.

"Not only are you highly visible because of your skin color, you are constantly breaking stereotypes," Brookshire said. "I keep wanting to tell people that I'm not the 'black view,' I'm Trenita."

By spending the second semester of her sophomore year participating in a domestic study abroad program at a historically black college or university (HBCU), Salter alleviated some of the stress connected to being a minority at a predominately white college like Davidson.

"I've been in situations in classes at Davidson

where I've felt torn between saying what I really think or saying what most black people think on a certain topic" Salter said.

"The most striking difference about my HBCU experience was that I felt more comfortable expressing my own views in the classroom. When I came back to Davidson, I did a lot better academically, personally and socially."

Although Davidson has become more welcoming for gay students in recent years, Matt Talbert '04, president of the Gay Straight Alliance, said that the majority of the student body still remains "unabashedly indifferent" to the challenges facing the gay community on campus.

"Student attitudes toward homosexuality at Davidson can be divided into three main categories: the quiet and indifferent majority, the loud objectors and the loud liberals," he said.

Talbert said that the demands of being a minority student combined with the demands being a Davidson student can be overwhelming.

"For those of us who are in the minority and are outspoken, we are oftentimes seen by our differences and our differences alone," he said. "I personally don't mind the spotlight and the public eye, but it grates on you."

Despite the challenges, the personal nature of Davidson offers students the opportunity to become leaders and enact change in a supportive environment, Paul Wyatt '05 said.

"It's important that we nurture and develop our diversity so it is more than just faces in a crowd," he said.

Erika Dean '05, president of the Black Student Coalition, said that ongoing discussion about issues relating to diversity is vital to building a strong community.

"It's essential to stress that diversity should not only be discussed in a forum or after a racist event happens," she said. "If you only address diversity in that light, it seems like a hassle."

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