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Salute to a term well spent

By MICHAEL J. KRUSE
Senior Staff Writer

SGA President Jesse Coleman Burk, a.k.a. Bustgr, has never done anything according to precedent.

Just look at his wardrobe — an animated, sometimes blinding, array of colors and patterns.

Just listen to his voice-mail message — a vintage Buster-esque Elvis rendition.

And just watch him run an SGA meeting — by his own admittance, the formalities of parliamentary procedure are not his strong suit.

So it's no surprise that Burk, who will deliver a State of the School Address tonight as his term enters its final weeks, ran Davidson student government in his own way over the past year, straying from the more rigid style of his predecessors, Bill Gullan and Warren Buford.

"Warren was a very determined individual," Burk said in an interview last week. "He knew what he wanted to do and he accomplished his goals. As well as with Bill, but I think to a lesser degree."

"I didn't follow an agenda that had been set months in advance. That's neither good nor bad. That's just different."

Shortly after he was elected, Burk told the Davidsonian that "helping and asking people's opinions" allowed him to continually earn campus political success, pointing to his role as class president his freshman and sophomore years.

Indeed.
"I think that Buster has been a very thoughtful president," said senior Matthew Hobbie, who will soon step down from his post as Union Board president. "He takes everyone's view into account."

"I have marveled at his facility at

moving a meeting along," President Bobby Vagt said, "pushing disparate opinions here, urging compromise there."

"He was very much a people's president," added Ann Harriot Fisher, who served as vice president under Burk and ran for president in the most recent elections, which were held yesterday. "He was so open to listening to what everybody else wanted to do."

Added Junior Class President Chris Tuttle: "He's very accessible and very friendly. He goes around and asks people what they think."

What Burk certainly didn't do, though, was emphasize particular personal aims or policies. Rather, he simply attempted to listen to student sentiment — and then go from there, wherever that would potentially take the SGA.

The efficacy of such a strategy was questioned throughout Burk's time as president.

"He was very open to people's ideas," Hobbie said, "but I didn't think there were very many of his own."

"The common man motif is great to run on and it works," said Independent Senator Jesse Smallwood, a sophomore. "But when it comes to legislation, something else is often needed."

Ironically, though, the byproducts of Burk's laissez-faire attitude — whether actually intended or not — may prove to be his administration's greatest legacy, as it thrust the power back into the SGA Senate, its various committees, and ultimately, the students.

"The committee system has been really successful," Burk said. "That's been exciting."

Last semester, the Solidarity Committee painted the construction wall by the Union. And COMA — Council on Minority Affairs — is organizing the upcoming Diversity Week celebrations

after five or six years of relative inactivity.

In short, Burk, precisely by not setting a specific point-A-to-point-B agenda, created a more open SGA.

"He had a lack of direction, but that's what he wanted," said Senior Class President Tim Saintsing. "It gave senators more control. Each individual senator was setting the agenda."

"His policies, or lack thereof, made me realize that you can still get the job

done with individual senators. He threw a lot of power to the senators, which I think is an awesome thing. That's what his administration brought about, and I'm appreciative of that."

As Dean of Students Tom Shandley said, "Buster, in my mind, is an enabler. He has enabled a lot of other people in student government to rise up and take on leadership roles."

"It's not my SGA," Burk explained. "Somebody might take that

attitude, but it's not mine. I'm not like a CEO, more like a head producer. It's not like I did all this stuff."

But the Burk administration did accomplish many of its tangible goals.

The Vamanos Van, originally Buford's idea, came to fruition this year.

The Kiosk, a place to hang flyers in a more organized manner, will likely be built after Burk is already out of

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◆ Buster Burk, SGA President, will deliver his State of the School address tonight at 8:15 in the Morrison Room.

Diversity Week to facilitate interaction beyond boundaries

By SCOTT GEIGER
Staff Writer

Into the second semester of its most active and promising year, the Committee on Minority Affairs (COMA) is sponsoring Diversity Week, Jan. 26-31.

Although COMA has been an SGA committee for five years, this is the first year Davidson College will celebrate Diversity Week with events ranging from a movie night to an International Café at the Outpost to a Diversity Forum with Assistant Chaplain Brenda Tapia.

"The committee has worked long and hard to address the needs of the Davidson student body," says Allen

Lee, Chairman of COMA, "and we hope that Diversity Week will begin to find the answers to the questions that we all have."

"It is imperative that all members of the Davidson family realize how important it is to effectively utilize the diversity we have on this campus." Lee also would like to clarify that Diversity Week is not just about race or ethnic blood but also different sexual orientations and the entire spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds that coexist on the Davidson campus.

An event called "Dorm Storm" kicked off Diversity week on Monday at 9 p.m. Dorm Storm involved groups of three or four volunteers meeting with each hall.

The Dorm Storm hall meetings were expected to last approximately 15 minutes, during which the volunteers listed and explained the schedule of events for Diversity Week.

Today, Jumpin' Java takes a twist as International Café takes over the Union Outpost. The night will feature an open microphone for those who wish to read poetry or give their thoughts on the many facets of diversity. Also, international coffees will be available at no cost.

Wednesday promises to differ somewhat from the rest of the week. On this day COMA will ask students and faculty to step outside of their comfort zones to take up the Campus Question, "How do we improve interactions be-

tween different worlds (such as ethnic, sexual, racial, and social)?"

"Many times we overlook or ignore the difficulties we have with people," says Lee. "Beginning Wednesday and every day thereafter, we want the student body to start to overlook these difficulties and begin to politely question and observe, because we all have something to learn from one another."

COMA hopes that the Campus Question will help initiate discussion in halls and classrooms.

Wednesday's Ask Yourself... hopes to pique student minds as a preparation for Thursday's showing of "The Color of Fear." The film begins at 8 p.m. at the Union Outpost and is spon-

sored by the Dean of Student's Office. Refreshments will follow the film, along with a discussion led by Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Minority Student Affairs Ernest Jeffries.

Friday night, Diversity Week heads down the hill to the Black Student Coa-

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"He fulfilled every single campaign promise he had. He just told us that he was going to listen to everybody. And he did."

TIM SAINTSING, SENIOR CLASS PRESIDENT, COMMENTING ON BUSTER BURK'S CAREER AS SGA PRESIDENT