

Re: Inclusivity at Davidson

EMILY TAYLOR

Will King, I absolutely agree with you. We unquestionably have a problem with inclusivity at Davidson. However, our most pressing inclusivity problem is not the marginalization of conservative voices, it is the fact that every day students are excluded based on their race, gender, sexual preference, familial income, and a host of other identities. I do agree that conservative voices and opinions can be hard to express here on campus. But when students are still being discriminated against, even inadvertently, because of their identity, *something that is inherent to who they are*, I do not see political inclusivity as the more pressing issue.



There are so many examples of exclusion - both intentional and unintentional - here on campus. Parties that have themes that appropriate other cultures. The allocation of real estate on campus (all of the predominately white PCC organizations have houses, while only one of the minority PCC organizations do). The perpetuation of microaggressions. The financial barriers that prevent students from participating in everything from fraternity formals to out of class research. The heteronormative assumptions implied in events such as 'My Tie' semifinals. The town of Davidson and our campus are both extremely exclusive spaces, one in which only certain populations are welcomed.

There is a difference between the political opinion, that which should be respected and debated in a considerate manner, and discriminatory attitudes, which should not be allowed to be expressed. Gay marriage is not a matter of opinion, like the role of government or even whether Tom Brady knew about Deflategate. It is a matter of civil rights, and the Supreme Court changed this into law only a few short months ago. Yes, we are all entitled to our own opinions. However, you are no longer entitled to express those beliefs when they, intentionally or unintentionally, create an exclusionary space.

Did you ever think about, while you might not feel accepted when expressing your disapproval for

gay marriage, how those of the LGBTQIA community may feel when you express a sentiment that undermines their basic rights? I am glad to hear that it is harder to express these discriminatory attitudes. It means that Davidson has become a more inclusive place, at least on issues of sexuality. I do not see the freedom to express discriminatory opinions as more important than making everyone on our campus feel welcomed, included, and safe.

There is a complex interplay between freedom of expression and creating an inclusive environment. People should feel comfortable expressing diverse and dissimilar opinions; as such a dialogue can create a rich campus culture of inclusivity. It is through this dialogue, which can sometimes be uncomfortable, that learning is achieved. However, your freedom of expression ends where others' personal rights to security, both physical and emotional, begin.

It is unacceptable that students are excluded and discriminated against based on who they are. It is also unacceptable that within certain spaces here on campus, it is hard to express conservative views. However, there is a difference between holding conservative political opinions and holding discriminatory views that make other students feel unwelcome. We can argue about Obamacare or government intervention in the financial industry all day if you want to, but we cannot express opinions that create an environment that intentionally makes certain populations feel unwelcome or subordinate.

I was upset that you wrote an article about inclusivity at Davidson without once mentioning major ways that students continue to experience exclusion here on campus, such as race or gender or socioeconomic status or sexuality. By completely sidestepping these issues and instead focusing solely on political inclusivity, you demonstrate your privilege.

Emily Taylor '16 is a History major from Greenville, South Carolina. Contact her at emtaylor@ davidson.edu.

See me for me

RICKI HOLLINS

College is usually a time when people come into their own and hit their stride as an adult. Here at Davidson, we provide ample spaces of support that are supposed to make our college experience comfortable. When you finally become comfortable with all of your social identities, usually you will have a space to go and be who you are. However, what happens when your identities don't perfectly fit into a space?



I found that I have had to sacrifice parts of myself in order to fit into the spaces that were supposed to be for me. I am an asexual, aromantic lesbian, black, low-income mother from a place in Chicago that I am so proud of (but many wouldn't dream of going to). I started off here with a group of friends with race being our common ground. Although I was happy to be around brown faces on a white campus, my economic status separated me from the group. I did not go to a private day or boarding school, I knew what it was like to go without basic necessities, and to me being at Davidson was pure luck. Many people in my neighborhood never made it out of Chicago. I had no problem talking about my experiences, but I was seen as the minority "stereotype" that many were trying to separate themselves from.

The greatest and most challenging task I encountered here was being a mother and a college student. I was told to transfer because the chances of me finishing college here were pretty low. I remember not being chosen to speak to incoming Davidson students because my experience is an exception, not the rule. I was on my own and had to fend for myself. I had a lot of time to evaluate my life and how I got here. Being a mother did not make my workload any easier, but it made my motivation to accept every part of who I am greater. I began to question my happiness and attraction to men. Coming from a religious family I was not able to even learn about any sexual orientation other than heterosexuality, even though I found women way more attractive. Feeling like I had to be with men was painful, but as a result I now have a beautiful 2 year old daughter. I began to evaluate

my past relationships, looking up terms on the queer spectrum that described me, and talking to peers I knew who could refer me to the right space.

When I was referred to the queer resources on campus, I felt like I would finally find the space I was looking for. Due to the term "intersectionality" being ever so popular in the community, I assumed that all my identities would be accepted. I was wrong. I was constantly questioned about my attractions to women because of my history with men. It felt like I always had to prove that I was truly a non-gender conforming, non-heterosexual human being. I was never able to claim my asexuality because no one understood how an asexual person could have a child. Not only that, but the thought of not wanting to have sex was weird to everyone I told. I got questions like: "What do you mean you are okay with not wanting a relationship? How do you not have sex with a significant other? Ricki, are you even capable of love?" For the sake of my sanity, I exited the final space on campus that was supposed to be for me.

However, I did not come out alone. I met a person who later would become my best friend and chosen family. He was the first person at Davidson to accept all of my identities at face value. All the nights of crying and soul searching have been made in the spaces that we now occupy together. It took four years, but I finally feel like I can be my whole self at Davidson College.

To all of the students, especially first-years: you are who you are. Many people will not like every part of who you are, but always remember that this is what makes you special. You are a complex human being and should never feel like any part of that being is dormant. Instead, it should coexist. Being a mother makes me no less of an asexual, and being low-income makes me no less of a black Davidson student. It is not about finding a space to accept you, but rather a chosen family to occupy spaces with. Your Davidson experience will be so much more valuable because you accept yourself and have others to remind you that that is perfectly okay.

Ricki Hollins '16 is an Economics and Sociology major from Chicago, Illinois. Contact her at erhollins@ davidson.edu.

Meaning Yes/Meaning No: Finding Balance and Finding Yourself

HAILEY KLABO

Being a woman at Davidson is hard sometimes, at least for me. I do not intend to speak for everyone who identifies as a woman in this article, but I have found many of my experiences, thoughts, and feelings echoed in the stories of other Davidson girls. These stories are important, because many times I have felt alone in thinking these thoughts, when so many other people have been thinking the same things. We could have been supporting each other instead of isolating ourselves.



Many women feel pressure here. Pressure to hook up (but not with too many people). Pressure

to get involved. Pressure to do well in classes (but still have time to go out and party). Pressure to go out and party (even though you need to do well in those classes). Pressure to look good, stay fit, and be happy (even though you're stressed from all these other pressures). It seems like finding a balance between all of these is nearly impossible. I did not have a good balance my first year at Davidson. Learning to say yes, and learning to say no, and mean both of them, helped me find a better balance (I am still on the quest for the elusive perfect balance).

My high school health teacher told us to always put ourselves first. If we are not looking out for ourselves, who will? You have to be your own best advocate. These words have always resonated with me. Yet, I have found myself putting others' feelings and wants in front of my own, merely because I do not want to create an awkward conversation or sit-

uation. I do not like confrontation or inconveniencing others, nor do I enjoy rejecting people. For these reasons, I do not say no very often. Once, my adviser took my phone away from me to text the people I was supposed to be meeting with to tell them I could not make it because I had a stats test I needed to study for. She knew I was putting their priorities ahead of my own. In this case, and in others, my not saying no created difficulties and inconveniences in my own life.

I have found that saying "no" can take many forms other than those two letters. It can take the form of getting yourself out of a one-sided friendship with a girl on your hall. It can look like saying "I only want to make out tonight" to a person you have been hooking up with. Or it really can look like "no." Saying yes can look like getting involved, hooking up with someone you've been crushing on

for a while (consensually, obviously!), or leaving the library to go get a milkshake at campus summit by yourself when the pressure is getting to you. I'm still learning, but aren't we all?

If you are a first-year woman at Davidson, I invite you to attend the event "Meaning Yes/Meaning No: Finding Balance and Finding Yourself at Davidson." Come talk about pressures, finding a balance, and in the process, finding yourself, with some pretty amazing upperclassmen girls this Thursday, September 17th in room 209 the Union during Common Hour.

Hailey Klabo '16 is a Gender and Sexuality Studies major from Iowa City, Iowa. Contact her at haklabo@ davidson.edu.

the davidsonian *staff*

editors-in-chief

Will McDuffie
Michelle Wan

news editors

Mary Click
Kate McNaughton

living davidson editor

Sophia Guevara

perspectives editor

Will Weisgerber

yowl editor

Sophie McHugh

sports editors

Ethan Faust
Jason Feldman

photo editors

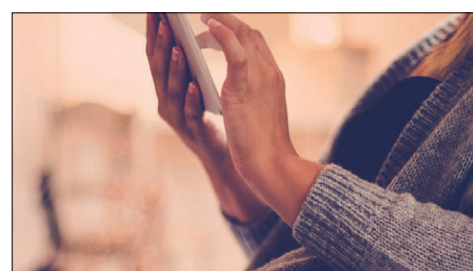
Scott Cunningham
Shea Parikh

web editors

Sabrina Cheema
Emily Kent
Bridget Lavender

graphic design editor

Sophia Smith



LUXURY
Apartments
in Huntersville



Apartments at
**HOLLY
CREST**

MODERN LUXURY + CLASSIC CHARM

No detail left untouched – incredible 1, 2 & 3 bedroom apartment homes with new-to-Huntersville amenities designed to make your life easier. All in a village resort-style atmosphere. Become one of the very first residents of Apartments at Holly Crest in Huntersville!

HOLLYCREST
apartments.COM

16,008 Holly Crest Ln, Huntersville, NC 28078

704.550.8383