

# Administrator Spotlight: Gardner Roller Ligo

Director of merit scholarships was among first female students to attend Davidson

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News Editor

Last week, at the Davidsonian Talk Back on coeducation, the audience was briefly introduced to Gardner Roller Ligo, Director of Merit Programs, in a short video segment. She was interviewed as one of the first female students to attend Davidson. It appears, however, that that was just one of many firsts for her and the College.

Roller Ligo came to Davidson for the first time in 1972 as a part of an experimental exchange between Davidson and other colleges. She attended Mary Baldwin College at the time, and after her one year at Davidson, returned there. All told, she attended three different undergraduate schools. She went on to the University of Virginia, where she earned her M.Ed. with a specialty in Admissions and Student Services.

After she spent time working at both UNCC and Warren Wilson College, Sam

Spencer, the President of Davidson at the time, approached her in 1980 with the intention of securing her as the first female member of the college's Admissions staff. Roller Ligo was one of two female administrators working in Chambers at the time.

She was also the first woman to go on maternity leave as an employee of the college, and she helped write the maternity policy. Aside from her current position (which she is the first to hold), Roller Ligo has also served as Senior Associate Dean and Acting Dean of Admissions.

She emphasizes the "importance of these four years in the life of a young person. It is a time to explore faith, politics, and develop ideas on your own."

She also happens to be married to a member of the faculty, Dr. Larry Ligo, Professor of Art History. Most art history students are familiar with the expansive garden the Ligo family cultivates behind their home on Main Street. Roller Ligo cites her interest in gardening as one of the reasons she and her husband were drawn to each other. While Dr. Ligo works with hardscapes, Roller Ligo is interested in plants. "We like to call ourselves frustrated farmers" she jokes, explaining that her love of gardening might originate in her family's agricultural history.

Ironically, both were at Davidson when Roller Ligo spent her year here as a student, but never met until she returned several years later as an administrator. "Our two different perspectives help us do our jobs better," she explains.

Roller Ligo is particularly interested in admissions and advising students because she wants to be able to provide to students the guidance and support that was not present when she was enrolling in college. "Davidson inspires me daily," she said with a smile. She cites moments when students bring her chocolate to thank her for a particularly good talk, send her video links, or spend the day studying in her garden.

Roller Ligo first came to campus when Chambers had no women's restrooms and women were considered a novelty as students. She is now a part of the same campus, but highlights the progress Davidson has made since then. "I am inspired by the health of the student body compared to when I was a student here. It was a difficult growing period, with lots of angst, tension, and uneasiness. No one can imagine."



Courtesy of Davidson College

## Campus leaders assess diversity

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and very aware of what was going on with the issue," said Mel Mendez '13, who co-organized last spring's major protest. "A lot of them were seniors or alumni and juniors. When those people graduated, you were left with a select few very tired seniors."

"I just can't imagine having to do that all over again or having to continue that fight this year," Mendez said. "To still be fighting after three years at Davidson... it's just tiring."

"A lot of us are leaders in other capacities, and can get a little tired of being 'race people' all the time," said Kaneisha Gaston '13, President of the Black Student Coalition. "It's important, because somebody has to advocate for it, somebody has to remind people if they forget... but, it's like, I want to go play volleyball sometimes."

Considering the untenable fervor of last semester's conversations, the leaders of campus diversity organizations have channeled their efforts into more quietly affecting institutional change. Mendez and Gaston, among others, are working with administrators to change school policies on faculty recruitment and curriculum, two issues that occupied the center of the diversity debates in the spring.

"The level at which it is publicized this year is insignificant compared to last year because we got the attention of the people we wanted," Mendez said. "That includes President Quillen and Dean Clark Ross. Last year's issue was about diversifying faculty and curriculum, so when we asked what we could do about that, there's a much smaller group of students, now that we have their attention, who are working with the administration [more closely]."

"For us," Gaston said, "we found that we had to have individual conversations with faculty and staff in order to get things done."

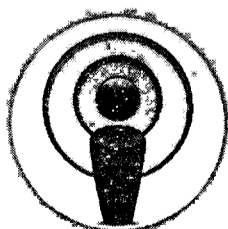
What about one of the major points of contention between majority and minority students, the pre-orientation program STRIDE, which some claim unfairly segregates the student body?

"People have their own biased opinions about what STRIDE is," Gaston said. "STRIDE is literally three days and then monthly enrichment. For monthly enrichment, we'd be like, 'Let's go skating' or 'Let's watch a movie' Not, 'Let's sit around and complain about being people of color.'"

"People have been like, 'STRIDE promotes self-segregation, down with STRIDE!' The thing is: there's nothing wrong with self-segregation," Mendez said. "Anything in extreme can affect the unity of the school, but it's important for any marginalized group, sexually, gender-wise, religion, what have you, that you have those times and moments to be with people like you."

"[Self-segregation] is a healthy experience," Mendez said, "and the arguments against it so often are coming from people who don't feel like they need to find those kinds of communities. Those communities are so important to me. At the end of the day, I want to joke around with my Latino friends, I want to talk about being bi-racial with bi-racial people without thinking, 'Oh, am I going to offend that white person?' I have to think about that all the time, anyway."

"Majority and students of color who care so much what majority people think need to know that there's nothing wrong with self-segregation," Mendez said. "At the end of the day, it's about you, and where you can be comfortable at Davidson."



To hear more from the diversity roundtable, visit [www.davidsonian.com](http://www.davidsonian.com) next week for access to a podcast of the discussion.

## CRIME LOG: 11/5 TO 11/11

CLASSIFICATION	TIME	LOCATION	DISPOSITION
Poss. of Controlled Substance, Poss. of Drug Paraphernalia	11/05/12 1008 hrs	Laundry	Dean Referral
Larceny - Misdemeanor	11/06/12 1330-1430 hrs	Vail Commons	Further Investigation
Larceny - Misdemeanor	10/26/12 2000 hrs - 10/29/12 1100 hrs	Ryburn	Further Investigation
Underage Consumption	11/10/12 2200 hrs - 11/11/12 0048 hrs	Tomlinson	Dean Referral
Underage Consumption/ Public Urination	11/10/12 0045 hrs	Armfield	Dean Referral
Underage Consumption	11/11/12 0005 hrs	Ridge Road	Dean Referral
Public Urination	11/10/12 2322 hrs	Armfield	Dean Referral

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS	NUMBER OF REPORTS
Assist Fire/Medic	1
Vehicle Crashes	0
Fire Calls	0
Vice	0
Alarins	1
Other	0
911 Hang Ups	0
Suspicious Person	0
Noise Complaints	0

**Corrections:** Last week's cover story, "Obamarama!" contained two errors. Rahael Borchers is a member of the Class of 2015 and is co-president of the College Democrats along with Hampton Stall '15. An article in the Oct. 24 issue, "Changes made to study abroad," necessitates clarification. Though the Davidson in Peru program will not run this spring, it will resume in the fall of 2013.