

AKA's thirteen 'pearls' debut at Davidson

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The desire for a historically black sorority on Davidson's campus began 11 years ago through the vision of several students who saw a need for an organization that promoted sisterhood and service among women. This vision became a reality this past month with the establishment of Davidson's Sigma Psi chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

Now a member of the Davidson College community and Patterson Court, AKA's establishment signifies the changing face of Davidson College student organizations. This past December AKA hosted their first ever probate on Davidson's campus, solidifying the membership of their first 13 sisters.

"One of the high standards of AKA is to give back and alleviate problems concerning girls and women."

-Kim Yarde '11

Given that AKA is historically black, many rumors and misunderstandings arose last semester concerning who this sorority targets to become a member. The group admits that there is some confusion surrounding their place on campus and will be sponsoring several informational sessions to educate the study body on what it means to be an AKA. Additionally, there will be several informational sessions for girls interested in joining AKA this semester.

The current group of thirteen comes from all backgrounds and ethnicities with a unifying interest in upholding sisterhood, scholastic excellence and community service. "There's no bid process or algorithm to becoming an AKA," member and president of AKA Kim Yarde '11 said. Yarde wants the campus to understand that they are a group for all women, and emphasized, "We accept girls of any race."



The thirteen members of the newly established Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Davidson's first nationally recognized sorority on campus.

The days of Rusk, Turner, Connor and Warner being the only options for girls are over.

With eating houses traditionally being the only major social organizations for girls, AKA's presence brings with it a new approach to sisterhood. AKA differentiates itself from eating houses on campus in that their goals of service and scholastic excellence are prioritized above social events. "In terms of planning parties or parties for fundraising, we won't be doing that," Yarde said.

In its first semester on campus, AKA plans to sponsor several drives and fundraisers to support organizations that promote women's rights.

"One of the high standards of AKA is to give back and alleviate problems concerning girls and women," Yarde said. The Flo Crit Home in Charlotte is a potential organization for a community service connection with AKA. Flo Crit primarily does service work to support struggling teenage mothers in the Charlotte area.

As an undergrad chapter, encouraging

technological education is another aspect to the AKA platform of service. Additional events will be focused around this goal of teaching technological literacy to those in need.

Coming up the second week in February, AKA will participate with the Kappas during their "Kappa Week" in a discussion based event that will address the cultural gender-related demands that men and women face today. This event will be interactive and encourages community involvement from both the members of AKA and Kappas as well as the Davidson College community. AKA will continue to co-sponsor events with the Kappas and Alphas in the future.

The 13 "pearls" or members of AKA expressed their excitement for their first semester of activities on campus. Ebony Harley '09 shared her reasons for joining AKA, "The fact that the purpose of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is to encourage high scholastic and ethical standards, promote unity and friendship among college women, study and help alleviate problems concerning girls and

women and is of service to all mankind, is the motivating force for me to be a part of the sorority."

"I know that AKA will always be a part of my life, regardless of where I find myself."

-Ebony Harley '09

Now that Davidson has established its first sorority on campus, students have begun to wonder whether other historically black sororities, such as Delta Sigma Theta will come to Davidson as well. For now though, AKA remains Davidson's only national sorority on campus, one that, as Harley said, "is a real sisterhood and one that extends beyond college and to all corners of the globe, so I know that AKA will always be a part of my life, regardless of where I find myself."

Labyrinth costs

JAMES KNOWLES
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Many students may remember last year's escapade involving a cape, a statue and an Antony Gormley statue. The incident brought about a controversial debate about art appreciation at Davidson. Drama enveloped the arts community on campus in the following weeks, as some faculty and students interpreted the defacing of the sculpture as a breach of the Honor Code, while others saw it as nothing more than typical college mischief.

The dispute remains unsettled today. A new labyrinth situated in Hobart Park, which is slated for completion at the end of February, has created a debate over Davidson's investment in alternative projects not unlike the heated controversy which surrounded the vandalism of Gormley statue.

Any images the word "labyrinth" initially evoke in your mind should be forgotten. This labyrinth is not a maze. There are no freshly trimmed hedges, twisting turns or dead ends. The \$30,000 labyrinth is a nicely paved thirty feet in diameter, with an intricate chartre design inlaid in the pavers.

Although it just looks like a path, now, the brick design, once finished, will become the path that leads participants to the center, a place of introspection and lightenment.

The aim of the labyrinth is to provide the Davidson community at-large with a private space of reflection; chaplain Spach, one of the foremost supporters of the project, describes the labyrinth as "a tool for mediation and spiritual reflection."

The construction of the labyrinth follows the complete renovation of its neighbor Hobart Park, the small, fenced-in enclave near Baker parking lot. The renovation included laying new sod and creating a paved pathway across the site, transforming the once rugged holding area into a proper park.

The debate over the labyrinth began last semester over the issue of the allocation of funding from the SGA and the

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Keeping Davidson small as it grows

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"We must remain a village and not become a suburb," former mayor Randall Kincaid said concerning the future of the town of Davidson. These guiding words flashed on a screen during a power-point presentation by Lauren Blackburn, a Davidson Town Planner, to a group of around 100-citizens on Monday evening. This meeting was the first Comprehensive Plan meeting in 2009 that included all seven town-planning study groups on the subject.

These study groups will address different topics as the town looks to systematically plan for its future by developing a Comprehensive Plan over the next year and a half or so. This plan will address virtually all facets of small-town life here in Davidson, and the study groups will address diverse topics such as environmental sustainability, community character and growth management.

According to the packet handed out to attendees at the meeting, "A Comprehensive Plan describes a vision for the long-term future of a town or area considering its regional context and growth trends." Blackburn said that this is a broad and flexible, long-range plan. "This is going to be a living document that will inform officials in the future", she said.

The meeting, unlike the orientation meeting in late 2008, was an introduction to the history and principles of planning in the

town, as well as a primer for the direction of the Comprehensive Plan and the topics each study group will discuss in the upcoming months.

Blackburn said that the Plan is intended for when current area growth ceases. She mentioned that while many other local municipalities, like Cornelius, are running out of land capital to develop because of their tremendous and rapid growth, Davidson still has much undeveloped land. This gives the town an opportunity to officially decide what form it would like to take once the growth stops. Blackburn said that while the town's current population is right under 10,000 people, the town's population size could triple in the next twenty-five to thirty years.

Kris Krider, the Planning Director for the town, gave an overview of the eight principles that guide the town's planning at the beginning of the power-point presentation. These include preserving "Davidson's status as a small town," preserving "substantial amounts of open space" and re-establishing "our historic diversity of people," according to the power-point presentation.

In order to facilitate the goal of re-establishing diversity, Krider cited a town law that requires every developer to set aside 12.5% of all new developments as affordable housing (the definition of affordable will be reviewed by a study group). Another planning principle states, "Development must proceed no faster than the town can provide public facilities." This principle takes concrete form

in the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), which, through its mandates, essentially ensures that communities develop as a whole instead of in parts.

These very specific goals demonstrate concrete steps that the town is making to maintain its unique character. "We are one community," said Blackburn. "We want Davidson to look like Davidson."

This goal has taken several forms, including ordinances like the APFO, rules about building construction and appearance and other rules and regulations. Commercial buildings have to be a minimum of two stories tall, and Krider pointed out that high quality materials are required. Drive-throughs are also prohibited, although this has not hurt local businesses. Krider cited the example of CVS Pharmacy, which doubled its business when it moved to its current location in Davidson, despite the fact that, unlike most other CVS stores in the nation, it does not have a drive-through.

Blackburn pointed out that monuments at the entrances of neighborhoods are prohibited in Davidson, emphasizing the town's conviction that Davidson is not just a group of citizens in disparate neighborhoods but is a cohesive community. Blackburn argued that while developers might not like the extensive regulations the town has adopted, the majority of citizens appreciate the laws.

The Comprehensive Plan hopes to be the next step of many in maintaining and enriching Davidson's unique character.