

Blake and Currie push through non-discrimination proposal

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Staff Writer

The Student Government Association (SGA) held its first meeting of the semester last Thursday night.

Among the top orders of new business was the voting for a proposal brought forth by members of the Gay-Straight Alliance to add a clause to Davidson's non-discrimination policy to protect the rights of transgender individuals.

Under the current non-discrimination policy, withholding employment or student admission based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability is prohibited.

Katie Currie '09 and Richmond Blake '09, both members of the SGA and the GSA, presented the proposal that gender identity be added to the statement.

SGA voted unanimously in favor of the addition.

From here, the proposal will be delivered to the Board of Trustees and President Vagt, who will make the official decision.

"As with all resolutions passed by the SGA Senate, I will send this particular resolution to the relevant administrators for their consideration," SGA President Mac Skelton '07 said.

"Normally they inform me within a week as to how a given resolution has been received," he said, "I expect this one to be approved rather quickly."

Although there are no known transgender



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students, faculty or staff currently at Davidson, there have been in the past.

According to Blake, the revision of the non-discrimination policy will ensure that transgender members of the Davidson community will be offered a safe environment in the future.

"Instead of waiting to add the clause after an act of hiring discrimination or physical assault occurs, we are taking a proactive stance to avoid all forms of discrimination in the future," Blake said.

Although members of the Sanctuary and Just Peace Clubs were present at the meet-

ing, the GSA had the largest role in the proposal's initiation and follow-through.

"The Gay-Straight Alliance advocates for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community," Currie said. "We want to make sure that the Transgender members of that community do not get overlooked. We started formulating this proposal last semester when it was brought to our attention that gender identity was not included in the non-discrimination policy."

In the proposal, the GSA defined gender identity as "a person's sense of being male or female, resulting from a combination of

genetic and environmental influences."

According to the GSA, the Davidson community is behind in the movement towards non-discrimination for the LGBT community.

In North Carolina and 43 other states, an employee can be fired on the basis of gender identity.

If the proposal passes, Davidson will join 70 other schools, which include many of its liberal arts peers and North Carolina State, in taking a stand against gender identity discrimination and building a more tolerant campus.

The GSA hopes that its stance for tolerance will spread to affect the policies of other schools and communities, the attitudes on Davidson's campus and the decisions of prospective Davidson students and faculty.

"Many prospective students look at the non-discrimination policy, and including gender identity would broaden the variety of students Davidson would appeal to--not only transgendered persons but also to students who feel that tolerance of all kinds is important for a college campus," Currie said.

Blake and Currie said they would be happy to meet with anyone who has questions, comments or concerns about their proposed policy.

"I am confident in my belief that Davidson College will hold true to its core belief of inclusiveness and that it will add gender identity to the college non-discrimination policy not only in word but also in spirit," Blake said.

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