

Bond places rhetoric over intelligence

On Nov. 11, Visiting Batten Professor Tim McGuire delivered a lecture in which he spoke out against the "shrillness of debate" that "threatens political discourse in our country."

Just a day later, NAACP President Julian Bond delivered a lecture that was a good example of McGuire's problem with public debate in America.

Indeed, Bond's style of argument has much in common with loudmouths like Ann Coulter and Michael Moore, who have brought debate down to the level of Three Stooges-esque eye-poking and hair-pulling.

Let's look at a few notable examples where Bond made outrageous statements—without the facts to back them up.

He accused Republicans of appealing to those who "reject democracy and equality."

I can only presume that his reasoning behind this claim was an even more exaggerated claim: that Republicans want to remove all the advances blacks have made in civil rights since the 1960s.

Strangely, the only specific Republican policies he mentioned in this regard were vouchers and affirmative action.

There must be more to civil rights than school vouchers and preferential college admissions and hiring standards.

Bond truly has a pessimistic view of blacks' substantial progress if he believes that these two policies represent the whole of civil rights.

I enjoy it when my beliefs are challenged. That's exactly what Julian Bond didn't do. Instead, he chose to preach to the converted.

Of course, I know he doesn't believe that. He simply is unable to prove his stereotype of conservatives, so he attacks the two easiest targets he can find.

Next, Bond attacked the Patriot Act with a blanket statement that it is destroying our civil liberties.

I asked him a simple question after his lecture: in what specific ways is the Patriot Act destroying civil liberties?

Rather than answering my question, he rambled on about how Bush's proposed strengthening of administrative subpoenas might set us on a slippery slope towards the loss of civil liberties.

In less than an hour, Bond's position had shifted from "Patriot Act is destroying our civil liberties" to "Something that's not even in the Patriot Act might eventually lead to other things that will erode civil liberties."

Finally, he regurgitated the tired argument that Bush's tax cuts are to blame for the United States' recent economic woes.

That position simply doesn't make sense anymore after the amazing 7.2 percent growth in the last quarter.

Instead of explaining how tax cuts did not bring about such growth, Bond pretended that the economy was still in the gutter.

Bond did have some good points: for example, he pointed out that too many people ignore racism as a real problem. But sensible claims like that were mostly lost in the vitriol.

It's obvious that I disagree with almost all of Bond's politics. But that wasn't why I hated his speech.

I enjoy it when my beliefs are challenged. That's exactly what Julian Bond didn't do. Instead, he chose to preach to the converted.

Regardless of ideology, we all should decry Bond's warrantless claims that relied on rhetoric rather than intelligent argument.



MATT BANDYK

In focus: Trustees Christian requirement Religion mandate respects school history

By TREY SKINNER
Staff Columnist

"Intolerance is not a pretty thing, even when it's covered by a pretentious mask of tradition." I couldn't help but vocalize my disgust with this nonsensical rhetoric that closed last week's staff editorial called "Trustees should rethink requirements."

"Uhhhhhhggggghhhhh." It sounded something like that. It wasn't that the article was badly written. It was that it missed the point entirely and said nothing real. Now, before I back that one up, let's clarify the issue for those who came in a little late in the game.

Article I Section 5 of the Bylaws of the Davidson College board of trustees says that all members of the board have to be members of a Christian church. Pretty simple, or at least I think it is. Many voices out there, however, have expressed dissent, to say the least.

The theme of last week's editorial seemed to be adaptation. The editors of the Davidsonian claim that if Davidson doesn't "adapt to the conditions of society," it will, "suffer the consequences."

Maybe it's just me and my conservative upbringing, but whenever someone uses Darwin as the basis of their argument, I'm a little turned off. It's not that I don't like Darwin, he was a smart guy. But when Darwinism is used to argue for an idea that is empirically unfounded, as it often is, I just get a little mad.

Evidence shows that Davidson is getting better. We now are said to offer the seventh best liberal arts education in the country. Are these the "consequences" we have to suffer?

But then there is the issue of hypocrisy. "How can we have a Christianity requirement if we aren't a religious school?"

News Flash: according to the Statement of Purpose Davidson is and has always been a school with "close and strong" ties to the church. An institution committed to a "Christian tradition

that recognizes God as the source of all truth, and finds Jesus Christ the revelation of that God..."

It's amazing that no one knows that we are a school that is dedicated to Christian ideals. We do promote religious diversity and tolerance of other cultures, and rightfully so, but we are an institution devoted to Christian tradition.

Our Christian ideals differentiate us from the hoards of schools too afraid to face religion-- because in intellectual America, Christianity has become an "antiquated" idea.

So why wouldn't we require the people who make key decisions about the school to be Christian?

Certainly non-Christians would work to do what they think is best for the school, but can they be expected to further something they don't believe in?

It's not an issue of intolerance, it's an issue of following our self-proclaimed purpose.

If people want to complain, complain about the issue. Complain about the fact that you attend a school committed not only to education, but also to Christian ideals. That is what we are, even if we try to ignore and blindly deny it.

Our Christian ideals aren't hurting us; they are helping us. They differentiate us from the hoards of schools too afraid to face religion-- because in intellectual America, sadly, Christianity is like leprosy. It has become an "antiquated" idea.

It is not. I applaud the decision of the Board to keep the requirement. If we abandon our roots we will become nothing more than another regrettable first tier PC machine.

To me that's worse than anything Darwin can predict.

Forget the Trustees and fight real battles

In its Statement of Purpose, Davidson "commits itself to a Christian tradition that recognizes God as the source of all truth, and finds in Jesus Christ the revelation of that God, a God bound by no church or creed."



NICHOLAS CARLSON

Applicants beware. The seed ramifications of this dastardly display of Christianity reach further and further everyday.

Dr. Zoran Kuzmanovich can no longer tickle his tongue, saying Lo-Lee-Ta. Uniformed dress at mandatory Chapel begins Monday. Dr. Cynthia Lewis's Shakespearean performances? Bowdlerized. Try taking Critics of Religion now, heathen.

The encroachment is steady, the grip of God is tightening, and for freedom of religion at Davidson THE END IS NEAR. Wait no, no its not.

How do I know? Why, I read the Admission's web-site called "Davidson is..." of course.

While *Davidson Is* "a college campus where century-old trees and brick buildings blend with state-of-the-art technology and top-notch facilities," and *Davidson Is* "a community where almost everyone is involved in service, from igniting the spark of learning in a second-grader's eyes to working with patients in a free medical clinic," *Davidson Is* notably not, or is not described as, a Christian school for Christians by Christians and about Christians.

Top Notch, Igniting the Spark of Learning? Yes. The Way, the Truth, and the Light? No.

And might I add, *thank God*. All that Sermon on the Mount crap, loving your neighbor—ick—the Honor Code is bad enough! Finder's Keepers. Get off my yard!

So what's going on here? It's a clever compromise between practice and symbolism. It's compromise for the sake of wealthy old codgers. Leave it alone.

Do you know how many clicks of a mouse it takes to find the Statement of Purpose quoted above?

There's a reason Davidson's "close and strong" ties with the Presbyterian Church are so well hidden behind our "century-old trees" and "top-notch facilities."

It doesn't take a cynical columnist to figure out that money runs the show around here. Who gives the money? Alumni. Who are the Alumni? Graduated Davidson students. Who selects Davidson students? Admissions!

Oh the mighty, scrawling signature of Nancy J. Cable, shaper of our Destiny. She and her cohorts know what they're doing.

By presenting the school as a secular, liberal institution, they attract secular, liberalish (couldn't do it) students. Students who will become alumni and not care, not care to defend, Davidson's "close and strong" ties to the Presbyterian Church.

In the meantime, our academic freedom continues to go unchallenged and one shallow, largely symbolic requirement remains; our trustees must be "Christian." Also wealthy. Also generous.

Leave 'em be and let's fight less symbolic intolerances on campus, like dinnertime segregation of the sexes on Patterson Court.

Amen:

The natural selection of eating houses on the Court has begun



ALI FITZGERALD

"Welcome to Turner House!"

This will be the resounding cry heard by retainer wearers from Belk to Budapest (there will be a live feed because apparently the Hungarian translation of "Patterson Court Process" is "The O.C.").

So they changed "Self-Selection" to "Court Selection."

Wow, what a massive and monumental syntactic shift.

Bravo, you creative powerhouses. Governmental think-tanks have nothing on you guys.

But just for arguments sake, what about the "Marxist No Choice-A-Thon?" Or, perhaps, "Turn-acious D(for Davidson)"

A house president told me an estimate of the number of girls each eating house will receive, but unfortunately it was during the Union takeover and so Iran out screaming because the phrase

While I understand the administration's need to even out the eating houses, I think forcing students to join certain houses will result in a lessened enthusiasm for the Court system.

"What is Art" made me want to Vincent Van Gogh kill someone.

I do remember that Rusk is only going to get 5.9 percent of incoming girls. Please, I weigh more than 5.9 percent of the Freshman class.

The question is, "Is it fair to limit the Eating House choices of Freshman girls?"

Wasn't it Darwin who said, "Only the strong shall imbibe?"

If Darwin was here, he'd loosen the ruffled shirt and say, "Hey guys, chill out and let's call it natural selection, man." (This would occur right after Bill and Ted jumped out of their totally rad time machine.)

Darwin would also identify 18 new species of drunken girls at "Bungle in the Jungle." "Barfus Inbushus" and the elusive "Chugbeefor Thecopseesus" among others.

While I understand the administration's need to even out the eating houses, I think forcing students to join certain houses (then limiting the number able to switch) will result only in a lessened enthusiasm for the Court system in general.

To quote my good friend Darwin again, it is truly "Survival of the Fattest."

I think what Darwin is trying to say here is that eating house size should be determined not by some arbitrary lottery, but rather by the size of their belts.

Pie-eating contest at 3 tomorrow. Winners get all the freshies.