

Diversity dinner harmful, not helpful

Negative feelings result from good intentions

Diversity. What does that word mean, and how does it relate to Davidson? I got some idea at the SGA's Diversity Dinner on Wednesday night. To some people, as a guy at my table observed, to diversify means "to bring in more black people." I disagree. Diversity is more

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than skin pigmentation: diversity is personal. It relates to individuality, not placing people in groups of "black," "white," "Hispanic," "Asian," and "other." How can we group diverse people into clear categories when "Webster's" defines diverse as "different; dissimilar; varied; diversified"? Where do groups based solely upon skin color fit into this definition? By placing all people of one skin color into the same category and assuming that each category is different from every other category based upon skin color, we are, in fact, ignoring diversity. When have all people of one skin color ever been alike?

Don't get me wrong: I thought that the dinner was a good idea. Racism, racial issues, and tolerance are all important, and they need to be discussed. I am glad that the SGA held the dinner instead of letting the responsibility fall to the BSC or ISA, as it usually does, because it relates to everyone. I applaud the SGA's effort. But I think that it's wrong to group all white people together, all black people together, and so on. How are all issues divided into categories of black and white? Although I am white, I could have more in common with an Asian person than another white person because of our personalities, interests, and

ideas.

When I meet someone, I see a person, not a skin color. When I choose my friends, I pick people for the warmth of their personality, not their ethnic background. Everyone has something to offer that surpasses his or her skin pigmentation. I realize that one's skin color shapes his or her experiences, especially in a prejudiced environment like the United States, but skin color does not shape a person any more than any other characteristic. Skin color merely adds to the person just as other external qualities do.

Ethnicity, which can be different than skin pigmentation, gives a wonderful heritage to a person. For an example not related to skin color, one of my friends in middle school, Katherine, was

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homeless. Being homeless did not make Katherine the special person that I knew; however, it did help to shape her personality. We were not friends because she was homeless. We were friends because Katherine was a great person, and I was upset when her family drove their car to another town.

My opinion may come from my naive idealism which I readily admit to having. In Carrie's perfect world, things are much different than reality. People are treated as individuals and are appreciated for their idiosyncrasies. Different backgrounds — ethnic, racial, religious, national,

sexual — are accepted. Also in my utopia, there is no social inequality. Everyone has a home and food, and there are no Third World countries. I know that my perfect world does not exist, but I can still try to follow my ideals. Why shouldn't everyone be judged on the basis of his merit as a person? I don't even see why we have to place people into racial categories. Why do we describe a person as an Asian girl, a black guy, or a white woman? Is there really any need? We can accept different backgrounds without classifying them.

For these reasons, I was upset at the dinner. We discussed vital issues, but our "diverse" table was missing the point. I pitied the poor guy who was stuck being our token "black" person with all of the answers. How could we expect him to

explain what it is like to be "black" (because that is pretty much what we were asking)? No one ever asks me to tell him what it's like to be "white." If he did, I'd look at him as if he were crazy. How could I, one individual with unique experiences and opinions, summarize the experience of an entire racial group? I'd be afraid to accept the task because I could not understand the experiences and viewpoints of everyone who is "white." Instead, we should have discussed our individual experiences, not our collective experiences as separate races. I'm not a race, and I don't know anyone who is.

My point is that the SGA didn't get it. In its effort to be sensitive and politically correct, it did the opposite — something that often happens at Davidson. Instead of saying that we white people "just can't understand" people's points of view because they're black, we should have said that no one can understand every one of other people's opinions because they have not shared their experiences, or "walked in his shoes," as Harper Lee put it.

Some of my friends have complained that their group leaders asked the host to "bring a minority over" or said "we need more minorities." With that attitude, the leaders were not trying to understand the individuals. They were only seeing the individuals' skin and how it was different from theirs. How can Davidson overcome its problems if people are treated differently for their skin color? Yes, the SGA was trying to be politically correct, but in its effort to please everyone, it offended sensibility. Why were people placed at tables according to skin color? Why not place people at tables by different interests? By seating people to maintain a balance or a quota of minorities at each table, the dinner reinforced the barriers that separate people by saying, yes, this person is different because of his skin. It overlooked individuality. The leaders of the dinner should have kept the original system of random numbers.

In the future, the SGA and other organizations should realize what diversity really is. Diversity is not a euphemism for different skin colors but a word for individuality. With this attitude, it is no wonder that Davidson has only approximately 80 African American students. Once we begin to see people as individuals, part of Carrie's perfect world can exist in the real world.

"Hair" successful in more than one way

Musical breaks conservative past

I must have missed it. You know, the huge article detailing how radical, how important and how groovy "Hair" was. I mean, President Vagt was in the cast — how much bigger does it get? What? It didn't receive any press? Well, this article is my inadequate attempt to rectify the lack of deserved published commendation for "Hair."

Due to the not uncommon inclement weather, the first two days of "Hair" were held in Loye

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Auditorium. On Sunday, though, "Hair" was performed on the lawn, the original and perfect atmosphere for possibly the most controversial rock musical ever. It's hard to describe the amount of love radiating from Chambers Lawn that afternoon. For two and a half hours, the love flowed between the cast members who spent so many rehearsal hours learning the long score.

Those of us in the audience felt strangely close to one another, not only because we were sharing each other's blankets, but also because we knew that we were witnessing a

landmark moment, a definitive milestone in Davidson history. It was definitely the be-in to be at, if you know what I mean. The ambiance of beads, flowers, freedom, and happiness was furthered by everyone's wholehearted enthusiasm and desire for the show to be a success. J. Crewism was thrown to the wind and Chambers Lawn was transported back 30 years, as most members of the audience dressed appropriately for the occasion.

The cast was comprised of 34 individual characters who all managed to contribute some-

thing important to the overall production. Representing the faculty were Sally McMillen of the history department; Nancy Fairley of the anthropology and sociology departments; and Ramon Figueroa of the Spanish department as General Grant, Aretha Franklin, and the 1000-year-old Monk, respectively. Of course, one of the highlights of the show was President Vagt's spirited appearance as Rhett Butler opposite Erin Smith as Scarlett O'Hara. Matthew Hobbie played Berger, the leader of the tribe, and his strong performance carried the show smoothly through key moments, such as the worshipping of the planets and the mooning. Elizabeth Tripodi was a bit of starshine herself as the show's choreographer and Sheila, Berger's devoted girlfriend.

This musical contains no specific scenes, and therefore Tripodi's inspired choreography was essential to the fluid pace of the show. The freshman class was well represented in the cast with noteworthy performances by Robert Lee, Amanda Britt, and Andra Whitt. But by far the standout performer was Austin Rios, whose strength as an actor and a singer came through in

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performance. Davidson has Zac Lacy to thank for the vision of bringing "Hair" to Chambers Lawn, and Tamra Carhart to thank for making the vision a reality and allowing his dream to be realized.

We have the good fortune to be able to bring many speakers, artists, and performances to Davidson and produce many works of merit on our own. "Hair" was arguably one of the best performances on campus this school year, and it will not soon be forgotten. Perhaps a new tradition of musicals has begun. I say, let the sunshine in...

a role seemingly created for him, and we believed in Claude. The director was C h a s e Bringardner, who we can only assume motivated the talented cast to their elevated

Standing by a teammate

There is no such thing as a "dumb jock"

It is unfortunate that Kristen Taylor decided to make The Davidsonian a battleground for her vendetta against Dave Rosenberg, but it is too late to change that. However, in attacking Dave, she also attacked the football team, of which I am a member. Thus, I felt compelled to write to offer a dissenting opinion to those expressed by Ms. Taylor. Ms. Taylor's article displayed a baffling lack of education, as well as

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an unfortunate degree of prejudice and myopia.

Ms. Taylor obviously missed the main point of Dave's article—humor. His article was written tongue-in-cheek, for the most part. For instance, I doubt that Dave would really be disappointed that "2 Pimps & Their Ho's" was not accepted as the official team name. Nor do I suspect that he actually "cried — alone and helpless" after his buddy grounded out during the softball game. He made reference to the differing competitive natures of men and women, and perhaps Ms. Taylor was correct in taking issue with it. However, he did say, "I recognize any Davidson athlete's prowess in their sporting field and understand that many girls at this school may have a higher internal competitive drive than guys." In my opinion, that constitutes respect for women's athletics. Others may find it insulting, and such insult could very well warrant a letter to The Davidsonian. But why degrade over 75 fellow students in the process?

Ms. Taylor's assertion that "this may be difficult for a football player like you to comprehend..." instantaneously insults 75 or so students

at this school. She implies that men who play football are not as smart as the general population (to whom else is she comparing us?) of the school, thereby depending on an overused and invalid stereotype to fling insults at an offender. Call me a stupid football player, but I thought that increased education brought increased enlightenment as to the insubstantiality of stereotypes! It is truly unfortunate that a Davidson education has not benefitted Ms. Taylor enough to where she can be liberated from judgements influenced by prejudices.

Perhaps Ms. Taylor would benefit from knowing that football players are not all "dumb jocks" at this school. For instance, I doubt she knows that in the last five years, three football players have been recipients of the prestigious Stuart Scholarship here at Davidson. Bo Bartholomew, John Cowan, and Eric Sapp were all winners, and all played football. Maybe Ms. Taylor missed the article recently appearing in The Davidsonian that described the multiple accomplishments of John Cowan, including his

design of an award-winning physics computer program, a post-graduate scholarship, and superior performance at one of the most demanding medical schools in the country (Johns Hopkins).

In fact, our football team has many players who will be attending medical school in the next few years. Would anyone suggest that medical school is easy? Many other players are going to graduate schools; some will be working after graduation. And I personally take offense to anyone who might suggest that any of our freshmen players (or players from any other class, for that matter) are not as academically gifted as the rest of the Davidson population. No athlete got here by being a dumb jock, not even the football players, and it is truly sad that some still think that way.

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