

SGA articulates debate about Presbyterian requirement for college president in letter to trustees

By Sarah Teachworth

The Davidson campus has recently been abuzz with the controversy over whether the college's By-Laws should continue to require the president of the college to be an active Presbyterian. An important step in the resolution of the dispute was taken at the November 15 SGA meeting when the senators voted to submit a letter to the trustees presenting both sides of the issue.

The origin of the argument

The matter was first brought up by SGA President Eric Rosenbach six weeks ago. His

main concern with the current by-law was that the requirement critically limited the pool of presidential applicants. Freshman Senator Lucian Dervan says, "There are very few African-Americans who are Presbyterian, and the current rule almost assures that there will never be a president of Davidson College from a minority group."

The current debate

The interim SGA meetings have found division among the senators and a large amount of indecisiveness. Opponents of the change point out that if a resolu-

tion was passed, some alumni may become angry with the school.

According to the SGA Minutes from November 1, Senator Rick Onkey found that "eight out of the top 10 donors to Davidson were Presbyterian" and that "approximately \$20,000 per year is received directly from the Church." Because of this financial tie, some senators feel that the school owes it to the Presbyterian Church to remain affiliated in more than just a traditional sense.

The SGA acts, sending letter to trustees

However, the importance of the Presbyterian tradition at Davidson brought the greatest amount of division among the SGA. Because of their lack of cohesion, the SGA decided at their November 8 meeting that in the place and stead of a resolution, a letter explaining the controversy to the trustees would be drawn up and voted on at the following meeting.

Rosenbach says, "A letter effectively articulates the concerns of the students. The Senate should not feel it has to pass a resolution to

make a statement. The letter will be a more valuable tool for trustees when they discuss the issue in the spring."

Dervan comments, "The letter which passed the SGA and will be sent to the trustees is the most viable solution, giving both sides of the issue the chance to lobby the final decision makers."

Last Tuesday, the first draft of the letter was circulated among those present at the SGA meeting. The letter's main argument in

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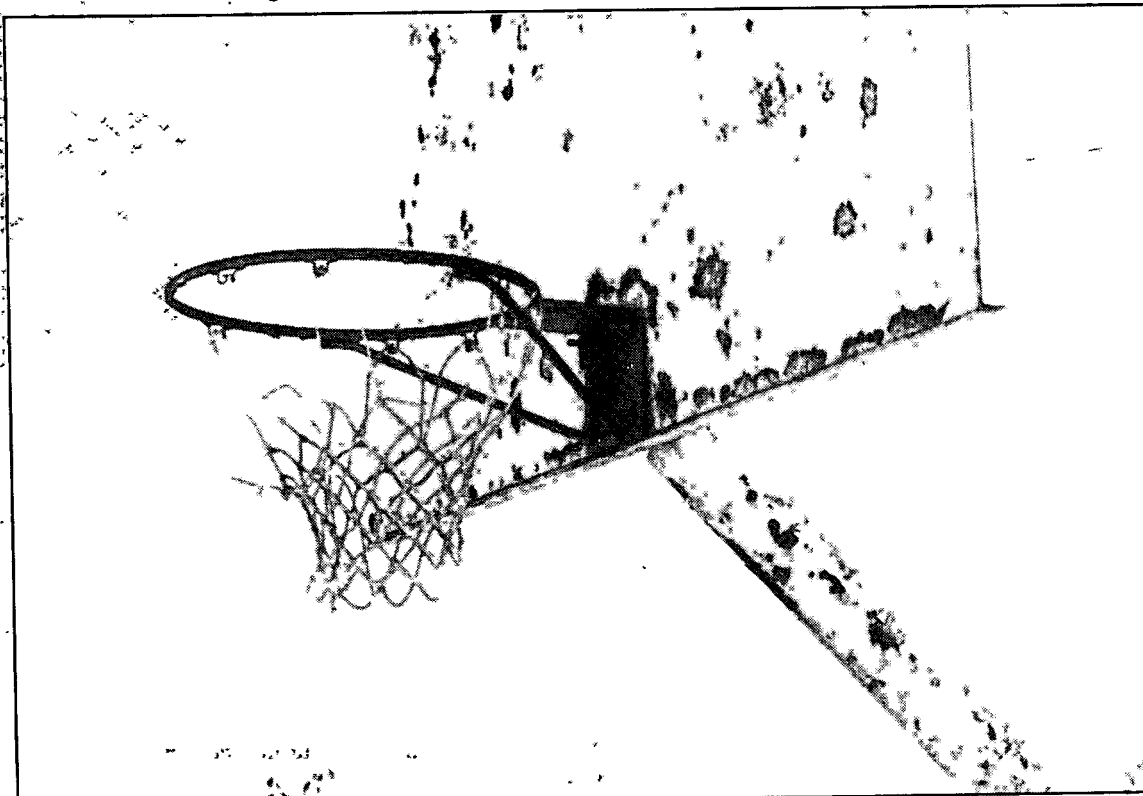


Photo by Rob Kosicki

The current outdoor basketball courts by Johnston Gym may be replaced by sports courts behind Martin Court F after negotiations end.

Where are sports courts?

RLO, physical plant, A.D. and others negotiating

By Mary Laura Moretz

Senior Class President B. J. Rudell says, "It looks like we have most of what we need" to finance the building of new basketball and volleyball courts behind Martin Court Building F.

Director of Residence Life Richard Terry says RLO is prepared to commit about \$4,000 of the estimated \$6,000 cost of building the courts.

Terry adds, "Of course, should we discover it creates noise problems for the nearby residents, we would propose to do some landscaping or a wall of some kind." Additions would raise the price of the new courts significantly.

Executive Assistant to the President and Director of Institutional Research Dr. John Kelton says, "I think we can definitely say 'when' and not 'if' they will be

built now. We're looking for the funds and making some progress."

Rudell is still pushing to get the project moving before the winter break. "The charity drive is just such a good incentive to get it done before exams."

Progress, however, must wait on further consultation among Kelton, Residence Life Office, physical plant, and the athletic department.

African-Americans dissatisfied?

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SERCH

According to SERCH (Students for the Establishment of Racial and Cultural Harmony) President Jo Burrows, her organization attempts to educate people to differences in culture. "We want to help students understand that African-Americans are not and should not be like everyone else. They don't have to 'act white' to be accepted," said Burrows.

COMA

The Council for Minority Affairs (COMA) "encourages students to take initiative in policy," says student Co-Chair Tasha Jenkins. She advocates changes in the faculty, either for more Afri-

can-American professors or for professors "sensitive to diversity."

A Call for Change

Despite a growing awareness of minority issues, most African-Americans at Davidson feel that the changes are only on the surface. The social scene often leads some students to transfer. Senior Nikki Liverman argues, "Davidson social life is hard, but for African-Americans, it is even harder." Still, she believes that she has found her niche and feels satisfied with Davidson.

Students feel that change lies in the power of the trustees and the faculty. One senior says, "Until the faculty includes more African-American professors, and people see blacks in the classroom more

than in the Commons, African-Americans will feel isolated here."

Another senior agrees that "nothing has changed. Two years ago, people organized a black fraternity, and Anthony Fox (1991-92 SGA President) called for changes, but everything stays the same."

When asked about the changes in students, that senior says, "On paper, they have changed. Otherwise, everything is the same."

The current curriculum needs revision, say some. Junior Debbie Liverman says, "They don't have any courses on African-Americans other than history or English. We need all professors to include minority concerns in the scopes of their courses."

Ecumenical Council starts petition to reaffirm presidential ties to Presbyterian Church

By Mary Clare Jalonick

People all over campus are currently debating whether the president of the college should be required to be Presbyterian, and the Ecumenical Council wants the trustees to know how they feel.

Students signed a petition written by the Council last Wednesday and Thursday in Chambers. The petition stated the position of the Council concerning the question of the President's religion.

Lilian Montgomery, President of the Ecumenical Council, says "It is important for the president as a figurehead of the college to reaffirm Davidson's ties to the Presbyterian Church."

The petition states, "Recognizing the important role of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the life of Davidson College, we the undersigned affirm the school's relationship with the Presbyterian

Church and support these significant ties in the future, including that the requirement that the president be an active member of the Presbyterian Church."

"There seems to be a general trend that SGA is trying to cut ties, and this is a reaction to that," says Samantha Hackett, a member of the Council.

Matt Rich, a sophomore member of the Council, says that the Council feels that "the church has shaped the identity of Davidson. The leaders of the college, specifically the president, should remain Presbyterian to hold that identity."

The Council will present the petition to President Kuykendall and they hope that he will show it to the Board of Trustees on the next retreat. The SGA plans to present a separate letter to the trustees which presents both sides of the issue.

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