

News Shorts

Love of Learning receives \$15,000 from Merck

Davidson's Love of Learning has received a \$15,000 grant from the Merck Company Foundation.

Merck gave ten awards to private colleges and universities nationwide for innovative programs in undergraduate science and education.

Love of Learning accepts 30 eighth-grade minority students each year. The five-year program aims at preparing them for admission to selective colleges, with the option of careers in research and teaching.

Local Merck & Co. officials will present the award to Davidson and Charlotte-Mecklenburg officials on Friday, November 17, in a 12:30 p.m. ceremony at the Afro-American Cultural Center in Charlotte.

Computer Fest to feature vendors, equipment and education

Today's Computer Fest in the Art Gallery from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. will include representatives and equipment from IBM, MacIntosh, Digital Equipment Corporation and Zenith.

The vendors will be available to answer questions, demonstrate equipment and distribute information.

Open forum addresses resurgence of racism

By GEORGE LAFAYE

The Black Student Coalition presented an Open Forum discussion titled "Racism in America: Answers to the Problem" in the 900 Room last week to address what is seen as a resurgence in racially motivated incidents and racist attitudes in this country.

Five Davidson students, freshmen Rafael Candelario, a graduate of Davidson's Love of Learning program, and Anthony Foxx; sophomore Lindsay Mills; and seniors Michael Brooks and Michelle Serrano; along with Jamaal Harut, a freshman from Barber-Scotia, made up the panel which addressed questions posed by Assistant Dean of Students William Bynum.

Bynum opened the discussion in front of about 150 audience members with an introduction drawing parallels between the status of blacks in modern America with the situation near the end of the Reconstruction period following the Civil War.

"Not since the enactment of the Jim Crow laws and the murderous acts of the Ku Klux Klan have we seen the number and viciousness of racially motivated incidents as we have witnessed in the last five years," he said.

Bynum pointed out that there had been "racially motivated incidents on the campuses of the nation's supposedly premier colleges," as well as incidents like the riot this past summer in Virginia Beach involving black students and the National Guard.

BSC President Brooks placed some of the blame for the problem on the Reagan administration. Brooks said the administration "shot down a lot of programs which were aimed at increasing funds for black education," and welfare. He sees the result of these actions as sending a message to white Americans that "we don't have to worry about racism anymore," and to blacks, the idea that "the President of our country is saying that it's OK for people to oppress us."

While most members of the panel agreed that more racially motivated incidents have been reported in recent years, some took exception

with the assumption that the problem had ever truly waned.

"These specific events are the ones that have been in national attention," said Mills, who serves as vice-president of the BSC. "Racism has been around," he said, "ever since 400 years ago when black slaves were brought over to build this country."

Foxx echoed this opinion. "When you say something has resurged," he said, "it assumes that thing has been gone."

Candelario feels that racist attitudes have been in the minds of people, but the current political and social atmospheres have allowed those feelings to come into the open. "Racism has always been around and the Reagan administration let it come back out," he said.

Serrano discussed the Virginia Beach incident; she was at the beach when the riot occurred. Placing blame on local shop owners and residents for creating a tense atmosphere, she said, "the local shop owners wanted the event moved because they felt threatened." This tense atmosphere led the city to prepare for problems. "Any little incident was going to be reacted upon," she said.

Before the forum was opened to audience participation, Harut presented what would prove to be the most controversial ideas of the night. First he redefined the terms of the discussion. "The word racism is a myth to me. Racism to me means white supremacy, which runs this country," he said. The reason for this problem, he said, is caused by "a deep, inrooted fear. If you look at history you can see where that fear is coming from."

Harut said, "African people have the problem, and if we want to do anything about so-called racism we have to start getting together."

This position proved controversial once the floor was yielded to the audience. When one listener asked, "By everyone getting together, you do mean black and white?" Harut said, "No. I don't say that to offend, but you as a European can use your racism to hold blacks back." Harut sees the solution coming from blacks.

"You've got to start with yourself, and we have to start with ourselves," he said.

The focus of the discussion then moved to the racial climate at Davidson itself. Most of the panel felt that it is hard for a black person to feel comfortable here. Candelario pointed out that after just seven weeks of class, "I'm in the process of filling out transfer applications, and I will send the first one out tomorrow."

Brooks believes that because the school has a Board of Trustees with only two black members, a small number of black faculty members and students, plus the lack of a historically black fraternity, it is hard for black students to develop a sense of community at Davidson.

He placed some of the blame on an unresponsive

administration, commenting that racial problems are frequently pointed out to the administration. "Every year," he said, "a group of students will present a list of problems and solutions to the President or the Board of Trustees, and every year promises are made, and every year the problems remain unsolved."

The panel took care to point out that, in their minds, racism is a white on black problem. Brooks said, "racism to me is the oppression of a minority by a majority." Candelario said, "I think that racism is not taught in many black homes." Also, a distinction was made by Mills between racism, which he sees as the restraint of an individual or group because of race, and prejudice, which means having ideas about a group. "Prejudice doesn't

have to have a negative connotation," he said.

The panel concluded the evening by proposing solutions to the problem of racism in the nation and at Davidson. Brooks said that "grass roots have been in vain, and change has to come from the top," while Harut said; "Self-determination and knowledge are what Africans need."

Bynum summarized the solutions needed at Davidson. "We need a black fraternity, an African Studies major or concentration, more money for minority recruitment, more black Trustees, more black faculty, even if that means getting into a bidding war with other schools to show that we are committed. We need more programs like Love of Learning to attract a more diverse student body."

What the U.S. News & World Report ranking means to us

By KATHERINE COOKE

U.S. News and World Report published its 1990 College Guide on October 16. The guide is a rank order listing of the top colleges and universities in the nation. Davidson was ranked 15th in the category of national liberal arts colleges, up from 20th last year.

This move up was not a big surprise to Robert Gardner, Dean of Admissions. Gardner said, "I expected us to move up because I knew we had a strong admissions year."

When determining the rank, five categories are taken into consideration: quality of student body, strength of the faculty, financial resources,

retention rate and percent of students graduated and academic reputation. The final standing is then determined by the school's total percentage when the individual scores are compiled.

Out of the 141 national liberal-arts colleges rated, Davidson was judged sixth for retention and ninth for selectivity. It was also judged 22nd for financial resources, 23rd for academic reputation and 31st for quality of faculty.

All of these scores combine to give Davidson an overall score of 80.5. This made us the 15th national liberal-arts college, and the top one in the south.

Gardner says the main

problem with the system is that it is difficult to quantify and rank something like faculty strength and academic excellence. Retention and selectivity can be measured statistically, but it isn't as simple to judge the strength of one school's faculty against another's.

But what does all of this mean for Davidson? According to Gardner, the rank is a useful tool for students and parents when choosing a college.

"It is difficult to judge colleges on your own," he said, "and even though this guide can't tell each prospective student which college is the right one for him or her, it's better than nothing at all."

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We jumped the gun a bit last week. As of today, you have 16 days to find a date to Homecoming. (There's still time to take out an ad in *The Davidsonian*.)