

Staff Editorial

Trustees should re-think requirement

Davidson has a long record of adapting to changes in the social climate. What was once a regionally respected, conservative, all-male, all-white college has emerged as a nationally recognized, majority liberal, co-ed institution dedicated to promoting diversity.

Well, almost.

Two of this week's front-page articles offer evidence of the distinct divide between students' desires to go a highly diverse school and trustees' resistance to diversifying their membership.

According to a survey conducted by Dr. Sellers' Public Opinion class, a whopping 91 percent of students ranked religious diversity as either

"very important" or "somewhat important."

While this figure is remarkable, it is not surprising. Davidson students have spoken out on many occasions about the need for all kinds of diversity on campus. The survey results are only the latest manifestation of this discussion.

The College has made great strides in recruiting students from different backgrounds.

The antiquated requirements for trustee membership show no such effort.

As the Davidsonian reports this week in "Trustees voice support for Board's Christian membership requirement," members of the College Board of Trustees continue to support a discriminatory section of its bylaws, requiring all trustees to be members of the Christian faith.

Moreover, the trustees have no plans to discuss amending the section.

Nature teaches us the lessons of evolution. Over time, whether gradually or not, all things change. They adapt to the conditions of society.

Unfortunately for non-Christian and Christian students alike, our trustees are attempting to fight change.

Trustees have the power to do as they please. They are not held to the opinions of students.

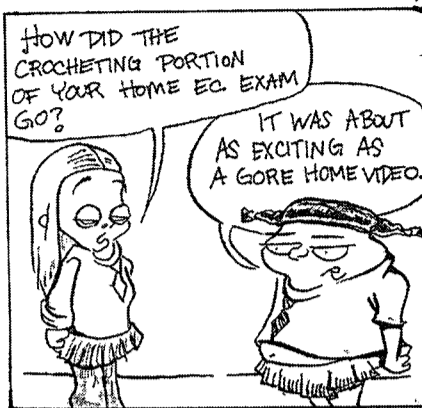
But 91 of every 100 Davidson students should be heard.

Darwin put forth the radical idea of natural selection: adapt or suffer the consequences.

The Board of Trustees should take heed of the opinions of Davidson students not because they have to, but because they can. This is a "teachable moment" for the institution, a time when it can practice what it preaches in a dramatic way.

After all, intolerance is not a pretty thing, even when it's covered by the pretentious mask of tradition.

Patent Sweater



Ali Fitzgerald

Bond deserves a chance to be heard

"The First Amendment must protect unpopular speakers. You have to remember that my views and the civil rights movement were unpopular views. We must protect the unpopular views or we cannot protect the popular ones." -Julian Bond

Thank you, Davidsonian, for publishing an informative piece, previewing our next Reynolds lecture. While it mainly informed us of the opinion of your special contributor, it did promote some discussion on campus.

Before I begin, let me mention that the purpose of this response is not to provide another side onto which we can align ourselves; rather it's purpose is to "promote a dialogue on campus."

While reading the preview for Julian Bond's speech I couldn't help but feel a lack of objectivity on the part of the author.

I don't doubt his sincerity, but pointing out four conservative black leaders (by the way, Norm Mineta is not black), and then stating that the NAACP "should be supportive of any minority individual who has achieved so much," is offensive. There are so many things wrong with that statement; but, implying that 94 years of service in the black community doesn't count as supporting these individuals, undermines the achievements of the NAACP and Bond himself.

Secondly, the condescending tone used in that statement and the one where the author hopes Bond will "practice the self control necessary to put aside mindless partisanship and deliver a substantive, uplifting Reynolds lecture," are indicative of the author's need to heed his own advice.

If the author and "concerned students" take the opportunity to attend the lecture with an open mind, they will learn something. Bond deserves the same respect the author solicits for conservative minority leaders. If Davidson students go beyond the information provided in that article, they would see that he too, has "achieved so much."

Why did you laugh?

She's an Ugly Girl. She doesn't pose a threat. She's an Ugly Girl. Does that make you feel safe?

Friday night the dance ensemble blew away the audience with their talent, hard work and passion.

I was lucky enough to participate in this performance by singing Jewel's controversial song, "Pieces of You." Some of our students were not quite armed for this particular piece.

As I sang the words some students laughed; they didn't quite feel safe.

The snickers of discomfort rippled across patches of the audience. Was it shock? Was it ridicule? Was it too close to home?

Davidson is a comfortable place for the white upper class co-ed. But why don't we promote acceptance for everyone else?

The snickers were noises of fear.



Our community is diverse and we must begin addressing our problem with discrimination based on the three issues raised in the song: physical appearance, religion and sexual orientation. It doesn't stop there.

We must all be active leaders in this important community. "Pieces of You" is a statement. This song singles out judgments people make.

We say we don't tolerate racism, but people could not sit through this song without discomfort. So let's reexamine what we stand for and be the accepting community that we claim to be.

Emily Mendenhall '04 Pitts is way off the mark (once again)

I was appalled after reading John Pitts' preview of Julian Bond's visit to campus this week. Had Mr. Pitts done any research into the accomplishments of Mr. Bond rather than checking Bill O'Reilly's Talking Points he would have found a remarkable career worth celebrating. In his portrait of Julian Bond as a "race-baiter" Mr. Pitts has shown a remarkable disregard for history. Like many modern Civil Rights leaders, it could be argued that Bond has occasionally been more about sound bites than action, but to ignore entirely the record that established him as a major political player is a clear injustice.

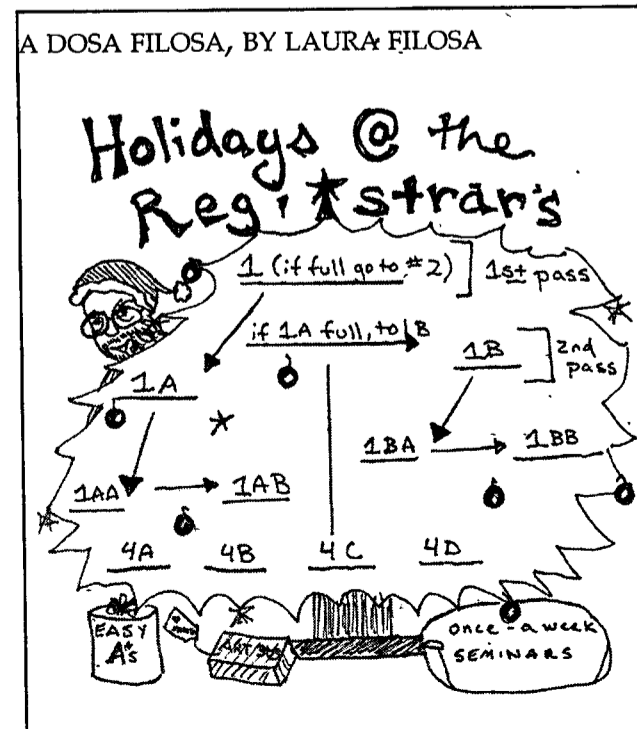
Bond's political career started in 1960 while as a student at Morehouse University he was one of the leaders of a carefully orchestrated student sit-in plan that, according to historians Darlene and William Hine, helped lead to the end of segregation in Atlanta. Bond would wind up in a leadership position in the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, and in 1965 was elected to the Georgia House of Representatives. It is important to remember that at this point Bond was considered a "sell-out" by many in SNCC because he was willing to work within the system. Bond nearly wound up being refused his seat because of his early criticism of the Vietnam War. In 1968 he was nominated for Vice President of the United States at the Democratic Convention but was forced to turn the position down because he was too young. From there Bond would wind up serving in the state Senate and serving as the President of the Southern Poverty Law Center all before even joining the NAACP's leadership.

Because of his impressive record, to insinuate that Bond is nothing more than a rabble-raising race baiter, as Mr. Pitts did, is a discredit not only to Mr. Bond but to the intelligence of the Davidson community.

Tom Anstrom '04

Phia Salter '05

The Davidsonian welcomes letters to the editor.
Please e-mail submissions of less than 250 words to davidsonian@davidson.edu. We reserve the right to edit for content, brevity and grammar.



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