

Meeting at the crossroad

Every so often the life of a college student meets at a crossroad whereupon we must face our self and ask the ever looming yet vital question: "What is it that is important to me?" As a senior college student, let me tell you that you will spend more time sitting at crossroads than any human should have to bear. What should be important today? A short list, in no specific order, might include family, friends, money, grades, athletics, and service. But which should come first and when? Establishing priorities is something we must do everyday, but when inquiring about priorities that include life decisions, the answers do not come as easily as waking up every morning. Or at least they shouldn't.

Davidson demands a lot of its student body. But unfortunately, as many have written in The Davidsonian before me, students tend to place far too much stress on academic achievement. While we may place blame for this on the students themselves, or an administration that only perpetuates the problem, ultimately it is a societal problem which keeps us up in Chambers all night (errrr, I mean the Union) studying just to make sure we get that "A" (or in my case, a "B").

As the successful little "capitalists" mom, dad, and the world we live in have taught us to be, we rest our self-worth on our success. On the surface success appears only to be our achievements whether it be in sports, service, or the classroom. But ultimately, success (we may admit

to it or not) translates into money. If we do well in school and build a nice resume, we can finally land that dream job and make "x" amount of dollars. We are all guilty of this thinking to a certain extent, "poor professors" and "rich lawyers" alike, for it is the very nature of a capitalist society. After all, we must all make a living when we finally leave Davidson and that is going to require money.

I do not mean to suggest that every last Davidson student is simply motivated by the potential to make a few bucks. That is certainly not true. For instance, I know many students would participate in service activities regardless of whether they get to add such participation to their resume, but the very fact that we do write such things down on resumes, makes such a variable impossible not to give consideration. Thus, my suggestion is that the very society we live in corrupts our thinking process when we finally sit down to figure out our priorities.

So damn, this column is getting really boring. For that I apologize. But if you made it this far, it's all down hill from here. Please continue.

Anyway, my ultimate purpose is to give a little "thank you" to the infamous Homecoming

poster person. You see, in the very least this person (I use the term loosely) has cleared away some of my corrupted prioritizing. It is too easy at Davidson to get away with the notion that "I am the only one that matters. "I" need to be successful. "I" need to be the powerful societal white male I was brought up to be. "I" need to be a "have," not a "have not." While this course of thinking may be more extreme in the head of the infamous Homecoming poster person, I see the same destructive reasoning running through students' heads all over campus, including mine.

I will be truthful, a lot of what I held valuable in Davidson's student body was destroyed by this random act of hatred. I suppose it was just something I thought did not really exist in Davidson or the community. I have heard people throw words such as "nigger" around before, and with not such infrequency, but I suppose I ignorantly hoped those people really were just "kidding around." I can no longer be as accepting or hopeful.

Some of my hopes and feelings were restored two weeks ago Wednesday night. I didn't

speaking but simply watched and listened as those who genuinely cared spoke about the race issue on our campus. As I listened for almost two hours I began to think about what was important. And what I concluded was not that "I" was important, or the work "I" had to get done that night, but the people sitting around me. After all, I am defined by the people with whom I associate. I am a Davidson college student. I am a senior. I am a swimmer. I am just one among many in each of those groups. Who would I be without these associations? I can tell you one thing, I definitely would not be the "Crabbie" I am today.

The past two weeks I have thought a lot. I would hope the events of Homecoming weekend would be enough to make everybody think. There are certain times and events in our lives that give us the opportunity for group and self-improvement. However, I'm not sure there is always a line between the group and the self. For when the group prospers, you prosper, not the other way around. Ultimately it comes down to our original question, "What is important in this world?" Will true happiness be in nice vacations to the Caribbean? Perhaps. Or perhaps separation from our fellow humans, separation from what defines us, leads directly away from happiness. We all must answer the question of what is important for ourselves. I just hope we all take the needed time out to ponder this question.

Fair for all: The Davidson way

As a trustee of Davidson College, I concern myself heavily with campus affairs. It has come to my attention, in light of recent comments, that one issue in particular has become quite a problem on campus. Students have repeatedly questioned Davidson's commitment to promoting a diverse campus. Most recently, in the Sept. 1 issue of The Davidsonian, four students presented a Student Government Association Resolution concerning this issue. The resolution called for the leaders of our college to "create the conditions necessary for a diverse environment."

Other students continued the heated discussion in editorials, arguing back and forth over the status of diversity (though I use the term "diversity" here, I actually mean racial interaction, since I know diversity only means having minorities on campus and nothing more). Moved by student concern, I could not refrain from responding to the problem with an editorial of my own.

Taking precious time away from my multi-million dollar business corporation, I raced back to Davidson to investigate the situation myself. I walked around campus, trying to figure out where to begin my search. I concluded that I first needed to speak to the students. I recognized that, as a trustee, I must always base my decisions upon actual consultation with students to determine their position, rather than assume knowledge and arbitrarily act in their (and the College's) best interests. Pulling aside the first student I encountered while wandering over the school grounds, I questioned him about the diversity issue. I asked him what lay at the heart of the problem. He quickly responded that the biggest threat to diversity could be found in Vail Commons. Confused, I asked him to explain further.

The student (his name escapes my memory at this time) began to explain how he encountered this threat every time he ate at the Commons. Sitting at his own familiar table with friends, teammates, and fellow fraternity brothers, he constantly noticed how all the African American students repeatedly sat at the same table for every breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He explained that students now labeled this area "the black table," since no other race ever sat at this particular table, or none that he had ever seen. He then mentioned how the black students wouldn't join his fraternity or come to activities and parties often enough and how they had even created the Black Student Coalition (the BSC) as a way to keep themselves separate from the other races. He concluded his remarks by condemning the separatist attitudes promoted by these black students, who sought only

the company of those of their own race, shunning all others. "I came to this school," he said, "to experience a diverse college community which promoted the intermingling of races and these black students are hindering that for me. It's all their fault."

Disturbed by the tale I heard, I asked the young man if he had ever bothered to sit at the table or attend the BSC. He replied, "Why should I? I don't feel welcome at either place and I don't want to be the person to make the first move. I shouldn't have to leave my table or fraternity where I'm comfortable and surrounded

by all my friends. Besides, those places are just for the black students." I sympathized with his stance, and agreed that another solution to the problem must be found. Encouraging students to just sit at this "black table" or join the BSC would only bring them great discomfort, which I vowed to avoid at all costs. It was also too complicated and silly to work.

I grew enraged at these black students for closing themselves off from all other races on campus, ruining the purpose of having black students on the campus in the first place. I specifically allowed African Americans to come to this school, creating scholarships for that purpose, to enrich the educational experience of Davidson students, and these black students were ruining my plan. Parting ways with the student, I contemplated the whole diversity issue in light of the "table" aspect, finally coming upon a solution fair to all, which would solve the diversity problem.

I plan to impose a numerical system on the black students, labeling each with a specific number, which will replace their name for identification purposes. Once all the black students receive a number, they will be assigned a table to eat at for the rest of their college career (one black person per table). The rest of the Davidson students will then sit at tables of their choice, rotating among the different tables until they have sat with every number. The administration will add a new requirement for graduation, compelling students to sit with every black person by the end of their senior year. This plan also has the advantage of dispelling the need for classes and professors promoting African American culture and history, since each black student is an authority on these subjects and will enlighten the other students during meal-times.

Davidson College represents the brightest hopes for the future, so this unrest over diversity must be smoothed over quickly to return our community to its normal state. We must band together to rid our campus of this slight imperfection before

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Crabbie Says

MARJORIE FRERET

A Modest Proposal

The Davidsonian

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The Davidsonian is published Tuesdays during the academic year by the students of Davidson College. One copy per student. Please address all correspondences to: The Davidsonian, P.O. Box 219, Davidson, NC 28036. Phone (704) 892-2148 or -2149. E-mail Davidsonian@davidson.edu. Our offices are located on the third floor of the Union. Opinions expressed in letters to the editors or commentaries do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Board of The Davidsonian. Subscriptions cost \$40.00 per year. Advertising rates are available upon request.

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