

## Staff Editorial

### Lectures, events deserve more than student apathy

What was your excuse?  
 "I had a huge paper due the next day ... and I hadn't started it."  
 "I was still recovering from the weekend."  
 "I forgot."  
 Turnout at Monday's "A Night for New Orleans" benefit concert was disappointing. Only 642 tickets were sold, and that includes general public.  
 The reasons for missing events on campus are always the same. Yet that's no excuse for such a low student turnout when tickets were free (with a suggested donation) and the cause was so noble.

A lot is made of the notion that college is about more than what we learn in the classroom. Usually, that's applied to emphasize the value of social experiences and peer learning. Sometimes, it's used to justify taking the night off just to go to a game.

It's also relevant when we're talking about visitors to and special events in this community. These one-time events give a new voice and raise issues students would otherwise be without.

A healthy intellectual diet cannot be fed by E. H. Little, Chambers, and the Belk computer lab alone.

There are talks coming up by Davidson alumni. There are lectures about diversity on campus and in society. Your professors will opine on matters of faith in the Profs on God series. Where will you be when they roll around?

Davidson students complain about the "college bubble" environment where it can be easy to feel disconnected from the outside world.

Yet, when the college goes to great lengths to bring pieces of the real world here, too many shun them.

Organizers of this weekend's alumnus speech have expressed concern about low student turnout at past events. As we report, David Rozelle '95 will speak about his powerful experiences as an Iraqi war veteran. He is a man who has not only answered the call to serve, but one who overcame adversity and did so with the character and determination.

Leave your books in the library, drink an extra glass of water before bed following Friday's semi-formals, or do whatever it takes to get up and over to Duke Family Performance Hall on Saturday morning.

You owe it to your \$34,000-plus education and you owe it to yourself.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Sororities build walls

I was extraordinarily disturbed to read of a movement to start a historically African-American sorority at Davidson ("Eating Houses: A Retrospective," Sept. 14).

If it comes to fruition, this organization will deal yet another blow to Davidson's already fragile race relations. Let me preface my argument with a bit of background. I come from a community with much more racial diversity than Davidson, but that is not what truly differentiates it.

Until I came to Davidson, I had always lived in places where race was one label by which people identified themselves but absolutely nothing more. Colorblind community was a wonderful way to live.

When I arrived at Davidson, I was not surprised by the lack of diversity here. Instead, I was dismayed by the self-imposed segregation on this campus.

At the same time, Patterson Court social organizations have the potential to break down these and other social boundaries.

Through my fraternity, I have become friends with men I probably would never have had any social contact with but for our bond as members of Phi Gamma Delta. This story is replayed in most if not all fraternities and eating houses on this campus.

By permitting social organizations which reinforce the walls Davidson puts up within itself rather than tearing them down, the College defeats the very purpose of Patterson Court.

If the Davidson community cares even a little about our rhetoric of diversity, condemnation for the movement to further racial labels should be immediate and widespread.

Ryan Clark '07

### Faculty letter off target

I have been very interested to hear and read all of the discussion and, in particular, the criticism directed at The Yowl from Sept. 7.

While I am pleased to know that people are paying atten-

tion to issues of objectification and especially sexual assault on Davidson's campus, I think that feminists have misdirected their concern.

When it comes to feminism, I am on board. I am afraid, however, that the signers of the faculty petition reasserting feminism and authors of various perspectives and letters to the editor (Sept. 14 and 21) who call The Yowl articles offensive to women are accusing their allies.

The characters in the Yowl who demean and prey on women are despicable—no one argues that. If the petition endorsed by many faculty members were aimed against these sexual predators and superficial morons, I think we would find that everyone would sign it, Yowl editors and uncomplaining readers included.

The editors of The Yowl did not create nor promote objectification and sexual assault at Davidson. They announced and criticized existing issues and made it possible for us all to identify someone who has acted a little like "Sketchy Steve" and mock him.

I am a feminist, but I do not want these articles censored or apologized for. Maybe all they do is call out and ridicule these characters.

I hope, however, that they encourage the campus to more actively combat the behavior of a few pathetic and awful people who offend men and women alike.

Becky Nolin '06  
 President, Rape Awareness  
 Committee

The Davidsonian welcomes letters to the editor. Please e-mail submissions of no more than 250 words to davidsonian@davidson.edu by 6 p.m. on Sunday. We reserve the right to edit for content, brevity and grammar.

### Davidson women of color deserve sorority

BY WHITNEY WHITE AND CHERITA JEFFREYS  
 Guest Columnists

Approximately 70 percent of Davidson women are members of eating houses; however, less than three percent of these women are women of color (Woc) and less than one percent of these women are African American. It is estimated that only 11 percent of Woc join eating houses and even less black women (seven percent) join.

Despite these statistics, we believe that eating houses are inclusive of Woc; however, many Woc opt out of eating houses largely because of cultural differences. The prevalence of alcohol at social functions also deters some women, but not all.

This semester several Woc have joined to bring a historically black (National Pan-Hellenic Council) sorority to Davidson. Two benefits of this include making Patterson Court more attractive to Woc and bridging the gap, obvious to many students, that exists in the social fiber of this campus. In previous years, Davidson women were given the option to abolish the eating house system to allow sororities. The majority voted to maintain the current system. Our proposal respects this desire and requests the addition of a NPHC sorority to Patterson Court.

Although NPHC sororities were founded to address the needs of black women, these organizations have accepted women of all ethnicities, including Eleanor Roosevelt. These organizations commit themselves to scholarship, service and sisterhood, and those ideals disregard race.

We simply ask Davidson students to think outside of comfortable stereotypes and connotations associated with the word sorority. We ask that you assess our efforts through a fresh perspective with open hearts willing to listen and process new information.

NPHC sororities have a national process for membership. Qualified applicants must maintain minimum GPAs of 2.5 while remaining active in community service and leadership positions. They must attend regional and national conferences for the sorority, and their chapter decisions are guided by a graduate adult member of the sorority. Membership is for life.

Thus, the legacy and networking a NPHC sorority provides its members is invaluable. We have all heard, "It's not always what you know, but who you know" or "membership has its privileges." As we work towards successful futures, we want access to these opportunities now.

Eating houses contribute so much to Davidson's campus. We just want the opportunity to contribute even more. We want the Davidson College community to understand and appreciate the heritage of all groups, including Woc. Some suggest that a NPHC sorority will segregate the campus although an examination of the statistics supports an existing divide.

We believe that allowing a NPHC sorority to join Patterson Court would allow us access and a voice in working to overcome some of these separations. Additionally, any woman who joins a NPHC sorority could have dual membership in an eating house (and vice versa).

It is our hope that this column will prompt the Davidson College community to research and formulate ideas as individuals in the earnest attempt to understand and respect our request. You may still disagree with us or not understand our needs, but we simply ask that you support Woc in our quest for a space that we can call our own.

Whitney White and Cherita Jeffreys are sophomores. Contact them at whwhite@davidson.edu and chjeffreys@davidson.edu.

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## The Davidsonian

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