

Real Talk confronts homophobia

BY CLINT SMITH
Staff Writer

"Faggot." There are a lot of ways to say this word, but that doesn't mean that any of them are right. It can be said within the context of two friends messing around with one another or used to offend someone of a different sexual orientation. The focus of the "Davidson's Homophobia," a symposium conducted by Real Talk of SGA, was to make an effort to educate the Davidson Community about a discouraging phenomenon occurring within both the confines of Davidson and around the world. The Monday-night symposium was moderated by Robert Galloway '09, Blake Poole '08 and Jessica Harding '08 in the Sprinkle Room.

The program opened with testimonies of different students discussing situations where they had been personally affected or discriminated against due to other students' homophobic sentiments. Much contention surrounded the word "fag," referred to throughout the program as "the f-word." One story relayed concerned a student who had straight yet effeminate friends who are often scared to go to the Outpost or even the Court generally because they were afraid, based on previous experiences, that they would be subject to hate, intolerance and ridicule from intoxicated students.

Dean of Students and Vice President of Student Life Tom Shandley entered the discussion by claiming that the administration has been made aware of these acts of bigotry and has made an effort to revamp the "Code of Responsibility" to accommodate acts of homosexual intolerance.

However, Shandley noted that in the last few years there has only been one case reported to the Honor Council. He said that if more cases and names of perpetrators were reported, then the administration would be able to address the issue more adequately and effectively.

Another great concern that was voiced by many of the students regarded the living arrangements of people who may be homosexual, bisexual or transgendered. A former Davidson student and GSA President acknowledged that while the co-ed housing policy is a step in the right direction, there are countless problems that can come about if a gay student comes into a homophobic environment. For instance, he stated that if a gay student were placed with a homophobic roommate, that arrangement would cause discomfort for both parties.

"The transition to Davidson is hard enough, and for someone not to feel comfortable and secure within their own living space is an unfortunate yet realistic problem that many students here face. Some sort of policy

should be instituted so that students don't have to go the entire year living like that," he said.

Admissions counselors in attendance explained that they do their best to troubleshoot before such issues arise, but maintained that that is oftentimes a very difficult and tricky task. They said that when reviewing and accepting applications they try to reach out to students who may indirectly imply that, even if they aren't gay, they have a special connection to the homosexual community, whether it be through a parent, friend or sibling.

If a potential Davidson student shows hesitancy about coming based on living arrangements than the appropriate administration officials would engage in dialogue and do their best to accommodate them. The counselor added that there are options on the roommate selection form that give students the opportunity to claim if they are gay or if they are uncomfortable around gays so as to create the best and most comfortable living arrangement for all involved.

On hand to discuss the issue from a faculty member's perspective was Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty Clark Ross. He stated that the faculty is aware of the increase in the homosexual population amongst the student body, yet some remain uncomfortable discussing the issue with their students.

Several students stated that many homosexual students feel uncomfortable discussing such an issue with a professor for fear that it will result in lower grades or partiality amongst administration officials.

One student inquired how Davidson's Presbyterian affiliation affects the Admissions decisions of whether to accept students who may be openly homosexual. The Admissions officers claimed that they look for diversity of all types when reviewing applications and homosexuality is included in that.

Over the course of the program, several students agreed that there should be an effort to make people more aware about chauvinistic acts of homophobia through email just as it is being done for the acts of racism occurring on campus. This way, students who may be unaware of those incidents will no longer be ignorant of them.

Towards the end of the program one student brought up the possibility of starting an organization similar to S.T.R.I.D.E. which would be geared toward getting together people of different sexual orientations together so that they can create a foundation and network of trusted people before the academic year begins.

Topics discussed included creating hall

See Real, page 4



Davidson students visit the Sacred Steps on the Camino Exhibition in the College Union. The exhibit runs through February 24th. It is free and open to the public.

'Steps' offer taste of an actual pilgrimage

BY NINA MACE
Staff Writer

Davidson is hosting the Sacred Steps on the Camino Exhibition in Rooms 302 and 313 in the Alvarez College Union through Feb. 24th. The exhibition features the photographs, paintings, and sketches of artists from the United States and Canada, inspired by the Camino de Santiago.

These modern-day pilgrims travel through Northern Spain to visit the shrine and relics of St. James the Apostle in Galicia. The journey is typically undertaken on foot, and is one of the most popular Christian pilgrimages, though it has been undertaken by pilgrims from a variety of faith traditions.

The collection is comprised of a selection of images from a digital database of 6,000 images inspired by the Camino. The works are meant to take the visitor on the pilgrimage, intentionally separated into separate rooms in the Union to mirror the progression of the pilgrimage from the French border to Santiago in the west.

Experiencing the exhibit at Davidson takes considerably less time than the actual pilgrimage, which spans 500 miles and takes about a month when traveled by foot. 100,000 people check in officially as pilgrims to travel at least some part of the Camino, and a quarter million people per year visit the city of Galicia. About 60% of the pilgrims are from Spain and 40% from other countries (11% are American).

Dr. George Greenia, Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at William and Mary, is the curator of the exhibit and a pilgrim himself. Greenia and Dr. Xose Suarez, an archeologist and representative of the Xacobeo Foundation, were visiting Davidson for the reception the evening of Tuesday, Feb. 12th. The Xacobeo Foundation works to make sure the route is well-maintained and is one of the sponsors of the exhibit.

The pieces included in this exhibit were selected by Greenia's undergraduate students, and he believes the exhibit has particular relevance for college students.

"[The pilgrimage] is a chance to take ownership of your life and body," Greenia said. "It's a way for students to take responsibility for their lives and confront the world."

Greenia has taken groups of William and Mary students to Spain for the Camino. "Every student obsessed less about the majors, carried less in their backpack, did go shopping for recreation, and spent more time with their families," Greenia said.

Greenia came to speak at Davidson this year, stimulating a lot of student interest in the Camino and in traveling to Spain. Samuel Sánchez-Sánchez, Assistant Professor of Spanish, was contacted about bringing the exhibit to Davidson and agreed enthusiastically.

"We can all relate to pilgrimage," Sánchez Sánchez said.

The artwork represents diverse artistic styles and subjects.

"[The artwork] provides ways for pilgrims to preserve and share intimate memories [from the Camino]. It's a way of inviting others to share that space imaginatively."

One of the most meaningful locations on the Camino is an iron cross located at the highest point of the route. A mound of stones left there by pilgrims surrounds the cross. Pilgrims carry stones as tokens of remembrance for a variety of reasons, such as the sins, sorrows, and people they care about.

Pilgrims then leave their stones at the cross, as a symbol of entrusting their sins and sorrows to God.

"There are few places on earth that accept the stones we carry," Greenia said.

While the Camino is personally important for those who undertake the pilgrimage, Suarez emphasizes the historical importance of the Camino in unifying Europe. Suarez said archeological and historical evidence of the pilgrimage can be found in a variety of locations across Europe.

For a little while, we find a taste of the Camino at Davidson. The exhibition is free and open to the public. It is sponsored by the embassy of Spain in Washington D.C. and the Xacobeo Galicia (Spanish governmental agency), Spanish Department, OLAS, and DIA.

Honor Code Statistics

Honor Council Violations: Fall 2007

Admitted Guilt

- 1 Cheating (Not Plagiarism)
- 1 Stealing
- 1 Stealing and lying about official college business

Sanction

- F&3 authorized withdrawals
- 40 hours of community service
- Full restitution of funds; suspension Spring 2008
- Full restitution of funds**

Contested

- 1 Stealing
- 1 Cheating (Plagiarism)

- Verdict
- Not-guilty
- Guilty

Sanction

- None
- F&3 Authorized withdrawals; suspension Spring 2008

Total number of cases: 5

Guilty: 4

Not guilty: 1

*Original sanction handed down by the Honor Council

**Revised sanction handed down by the Review Board

WANT TO READ
THE UNCENSORED
POLICE BLOTTER?

Write for News!

Contact alcurran or cimoore

Fiv

ANNIE

BY Ed

The Board of T...
te professors
ek after a dec...
dy last fall s...
iving promoti...
mbers Dr. Shi...
gram and Dr. M...
mann of the...
Donna Mol...
partment.

According to t...
all professorship...
professors ser...
faculty and is...
y who have ma...
the College sir...
who show pr...
ction." All five...
ve demonstrated...
They certainly

j

on the
world

If you're curiou...
then pack your...
goodbye to the

Study abroad to...
experience a dif...
a foreign langua...
you are and mu...

USAC, your gat...

1.866.40...

UNIVER