

# Op-Ed

## Editor's note:

I am foregoing my editorial this week. I think the Op-Ed section should speak for itself.

## Students Must Move On

**Joey Harris**  
Freshman Class President

The apprehensive period that followed Homecoming weekend spawned many opinions from across this campus and may bring about some crucial changes here at Davidson. Ever since the deplorable incident occurred where a racial slur was written across a Dyln Glenn poster, students, faculty, and staff have been voicing their outrage in the hallways, on sidewalks and via voice mail, class discussion, SGA meetings, and most recently a forum. As appalling and as uncalled-for as this occurrence was, I submit that in retrospect we will all agree that it was a good thing for Davidson College.

What remains to be seen is just how effective these talks have been. I have seen and been involved in a number of student forums and discussions in my eight years in student government and very rarely have I seen anything concrete come from any of them. It will be interesting to see just how many changes this pivotal week in our school's history will bring. I contend, however, that just by talking and discussing these issues like the civilized young adults that we are, we have all taken a very meaningful and essential first step. We all owe a great deal of

thanks to the administration here at Davidson who has done such a great job of handling this entire situation.

At my old high school, the administration would have tried to keep predicaments such as this under the table. Here, Bobby Vagt, Dean Shandley, Dean Jeffries and others have worked very hard to not only make sure that all the students knew the facts, but to also make it clear that these acts and acts like them are not tolerated here at Davidson. Only time will tell if a committee chooses to

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attach issues of overt racism to the Honor Code. But even if they do not, every student here at Davidson should act as though it is part of our Honor Code. Acts that hurt the feelings and tear at the very soul of the people that they are directed towards should

violate something far more potent or intimidating than our Honor Code.

Moreover, let's not leave it up to the SGA or the BSC to tackle these issues by themselves. No one can do it alone. If you attend this institution, it's also your responsibility to do all that you can to make it a better place. I have much hope and enthusiasm for the future and I see a lot of great things happening at Davidson. But while we put this hateful incident behind us, let us not put the ideas that it has generated behind us as well.

## Vagt speaks to Chambers issue

**Bobby Vagt**  
A Word from Our Leader

Last February, the Trustees adopted a budget for fiscal 1998-99, on recommendation of campus budget committees involved in the process. With tuition paying for less than half of the cost of providing an individual's education, it was difficult for the budget to both complete recent initiatives (such as the availability of computer technology in both the dorm room and the classroom) and also continue fundamental activities at the same level.

A part of that budget was a series of expenditure reductions, of which 80 percent was not personnel related. The largest single target of opportunity was also the largest single expenditure we make, for power; and we are not a particularly prudent consumer when it comes to utilization of this resource. Therefore, the major effort to curb consumption was deemed good public policy, as well as an effective cost-saving device.

One piece of this energy-saving strategy, discussed last spring at an SGA meeting, was a decision to close academic buildings from 1 to 6 a.m. When specific plans were formulated this fall, considerable concern was expressed by students. After two SGA meetings where this was a subject for question and debate, a "Lights Out" Committee was formed by the SGA, which then presented me with suggestions. The result of that interchange was a decision to keep the Union open 24 hours a day. With helpful recommendations from Lights Out and members of the Union Board, retrofitting of lighting (with floor lighting available until the change of fixtures is accomplished), sup-

plying of white boards, installation of e-mail retrieval sites, etc., were new efforts undertaken for the Union. In addition, one new 24-hour computer lab was scheduled for Belk Dormitory, with a second such lab to open in the north basement of Chambers at the beginning of the second semester.

As a result of this, beginning Monday night, Nov. 9 (Tuesday at 1 a.m., actually), the following will occur: 24-hour study space will be available in the Library, DCPC, a new computer lab in Belk, and the Union, including the Cafe and the 900 Room (when not set up for a major function). The Union will have certain rooms designated quiet, others as group study rooms. Academic buildings will be closed to students from 1 to 6 a.m. During the period preceding and including exams, all buildings will be open 24 hours.

I would ask you to consider two additional points: This decision is not about "profits," it is about choices; and the choices are like a row of dominoes, each affecting the next. One example is our current financial aid policy, whereby we do not meet all of the demonstrated need for the one-third of the students enrolled here who need it, resulting in hardship for many. It is a policy we are committed to change. Decisions such as this one about energy allow us to keep from falling further behind in this important area.

This decision is not to everyone's liking, and I regret very much that this is so. I apologize for any dislocation or discomfort it may cause. It is my hope that we will find ways to accommodate this change.

I am grateful for the dialogue with the SGA, and its myriad suggestions which resulted in important changes to the original decision.

## The Davidsonian

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## Challenge Awaits Campus

**Ernest Jeffries**  
Dean of Minority Affairs

This incident of racial hatred was one that really made many people including myself take inventory. I will agree that racial hatred and intolerance has been and still is everywhere including Davidson. But as my mother's generation "got used to it" just as a mean of survival, we can not afford to do the same. We are at the point as a nation that we can do anything that the mind can conceive. We can send people to space, we can create human life in a test tube. We can even create machines that afford us the luxury of not having to think. But we can not seem to get the racial thing right. When I read about the Civil Rights Movement, I almost feel cheated because I did not get the opportunity to partake in the movement. It is just awesome to think of the unity that was displayed by African-American and White Americans alike. People giving of themselves even when they knew that they may not see the results of their struggle and that it could ultimately cost them their lives. I am quite sure that it is their will as well as the will of God that we who are alive and remain, pick up the banner and continue the fight. I was very proud of how the students at Davidson reacted to this incident. I saw something special on last Wednesday night in the SGA sponsored forum. I saw a large group of mostly students with a common goal. That goal was to speak out and organize against racial injustice. We heard many heart warming speeches and very well thought out plans and ideas. But how do we go from idea to action? In my opinion, we must first understand that any larger problem of racial preju-

dice is first an individual problem and that racial understanding does not just appear, we must create it. We must also constantly assess ourselves and confront our own prejudices. It is very simple to let ourselves go unchallenged by getting an acute case of the "Not Me" syndrome. Even if we see problems an never address them we are part of the problem. Dr. Martin Luther King jr. Once said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy. The true neighbor will risk his position, his prestige, and even his life for the welfare of others." How many of us can measure up? How many of us are ready and willing to be challenged and changed? how many of us are ready to loose some of our friends because we will no longer stand for their racist attitudes? How many of us are ready to risk our position or status to do what is right? I would love to see these questions not answered with words but with deeds. It was wonderful to have 400 students at the forum last week. Can we duplicate this feat on a regular basis in when it comes to trying to discuss racial problems after the campus has cooled down? I challenge each member of this community to silence the doubter. Keep the discussion of race in the forefront. Keep asking questions like why Davidson College has such a poor representation of minorities specifically African-American Men on the Faculty. Keep asking why do we as an Institution not have a full day off on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday. Hold this institution and all members of the community accountable when it comes diversity.