

SGA works to revamp course evaluations

Committee proposes online solution

CONNOR HAYCOX
Staff Writer

December in Davidson is notable for two main reasons: finals and course evaluations. While finals are most likely here to stay for quite some time, students and faculty can rest assured that change is coming to course evaluations. A subcommittee of the Student Government Association (SGA) is currently working to develop a new electronic course evaluation format that seeks to challenge the formulaic and inefficient system that is now in use.

Sophomore Class President Nate Harding described the proposed changes as an effort meant to “help students make more informed decisions about their education” in response to recent concerns expressed by students and professors.

Co-chaired by Harding, '17, and Madi Driscoll, '17, the SGA subcommittee, in tandem with the Educational Policy Committee led by Dean of Faculty Dr. Wendy Raymond, has been pursuing an alternative assessment system in order to, in Driscoll's words, “make course evaluations more about the course.” In this way, the appraisals can omit individual qualms and focus on constructive criticism.

Earlier this year, Harding began researching a new method of appraising courses after he received, in his words, “negative feedback” from peers concerning the inability of the current form to fully and accurately relay student opinions. Over the summer, Harding met with several Education Scholars in Charlotte in an effort to learn about educational improvement methods. Revamping of evaluations began once he and Driscoll received the support of SGA, the project started in earnest and has continued ever since.

Harding explained that the Educational Policy Committee was unsuccessful in revising the course evaluation framework between 2007 and 2009 “for a number of reasons.” Driscoll indicated that the SGA's first priority was to “look at how to gain information from the student.” As a result, she and Harding have been using a variety of methods, including Davidson's Qualtrix survey

system and personal interviews, to gauge student and faculty perspectives. Driscoll remarked that the Qualtrix questionnaires have been “very helpful” in determining “how the evaluations are being used” now and that their “yes/no” questions clearly indicate public opinion. Driscoll also noted that she and other subcommittee members are “not focusing on what students want” exclusively. She emphasized that the professors also have a say, and that she doesn't “want [their authority] undermined.” The subcommittee focused, in Driscoll's words, on “general research” as opposed to individual suggestions in an effort to gain “more substance” on what to base the project.

Currently, Harding said that the subcommittee is working to “synthesize” all of its data succinctly and is collaborating with faculty and consultants, particularly Dr. Raymond, to find a “happy medium” between students' requests and professors' needs.

Driscoll noted that, although “students are the ones actually taking [the evaluation]...professors have just as much stake in [the evaluations],” since the assessments help professors and department chairs determine the efficacy of their teaching efforts.

As such, a compromise is necessary to ensure that professors receive quality feedback in a time-efficient manner. Harding said that the subcommittee is “looking at finalizing the [proposal] over winter break and presenting to Dean Raymond and other faculty in February.”

However, Harding stressed that the subcommittee is only “representing one side of a very complex issue,” making input from the Educational Policy Committee essential to the cohesion of the revisions. If all goes as planned, there may be a new course evaluation system in place by next semester, alleviating at least some of the tension that surrounds finals.

Harding emphasized that all interested students are “more than welcome to reach out” to SGA for any concerns or opinions and to join the “ongoing conversation” surrounding changes to course evaluations.

[We want] to make course evaluations more about the course.

- Madi Driscoll '17

crime log

Time	Description / Location
12/01/14 at 1521 hrs	Weapon on School Property (Knife) in New Dorm. Prosecution Declined/Dean Referral.
12/01/14 at 1617 hrs	Larceny of Property (Bicycle) in Davis. Further Investigation.
12/03/14 at 2203 hrs	Injury to Real Property in Warner. Further Investigation.
12/03/14 at 2330 hrs	Underage Consumption in Tomlinson. Dean Referral.
12/04/14 at 1756 hrs	Miscellaneous - Vice Complaint in Irwin. Inactive.
12/05/14 at 2306 hrs	Alcohol Aid & Abet. Underage to/by Minor/Poss. Of Malt Beverage Underage in Tomlinson. Dean Referral.
12/06/14 at 0026 hrs	Suspicious Odor in Belk. Unfounded.
12/06/14 at 0045 hrs	Injury to Real Property/Underage Consumption in Belk. Dean Referral.
12/06/14 at 2205 hrs	Injury to Real Property on Ridge Rd. Inactive.
12/06/14 at 2247 hrs	Underage Consumption/Public Urination in Armfield. Dean Referral.
12/07/14 at 0020 hrs	Streaking at the Baseball Field. Dean Referral.
12/07/14 at 0020 hrs	Streaking at the Baseball Field. Dean Referral.
12/07/14 at 0020 hrs	Streaking at the Baseball Field. Dean Referral.
12/07/14 at 0020 hrs	Streaking at the Baseball Field. Dean Referral.
12/07/14 at 0020 hrs	Streaking at the Baseball Field. Dean Referral.
12/07/14 at 0210 hrs	Disorderly Conduct in SAE. Dean Referral.

'Die-in' disrupts town holiday festival to protest police killings

Continued from page 1

also affects us too, and we are willing to stand up for what we believe in,” Jeffries said. “That was a proud moment. Our students really stood up, and that's something I've been waiting to see for a long time. When I saw that happen, I wanted to be a part of it.”

Karen Soos, associate chaplain and Catholic campus minister thought for a long time about whether to participate. “I wasn't sure I could be here [in town], which is why I wasn't part of the hoodie and t-shirt group. I joined in after it had started,” Soos said. “That's what I think is awesome, seeing young adults passionate about something and really putting themselves out on the line to express that passion publically.”

Faculty and staff members from the Dean of Students Office, the Chaplain's Office, and the Departments of English and Anthropology attended the 'die-in.' Moore and Vaughn said they received numerous emails of support from other faculty members who could not attend.

Organizers worked with Town Police

While many large-scale protests across the country have turned violent, with protestors and police clashing in the streets, the Davidson student organizers contacted the Town of Davidson Police to notify the department of their actions and ensure safety of both protestors and townspeople.

Moore and Vaughn praised the support town police gave student organizers. “We reassured [Town of Davidson Police Chief Jeanne Miller] that this is just to send a message. We're not trying to incite any riots, any violent protests,” Moore said. “She said ‘whatever you need, I'm supportive. I know my officers will be able to support you.’”

On the scene, a group of officers arrived on bicycles when the protest started and several stayed to look-on around the perimeter. Aside from some negative comments from the crowd, the protest remained peaceful. On Monday morning, Miller said she had no reports of any confrontations that required police intervention.

Comments on news articles online have sug-

gested that the protest drove away visitors to the annual festival and customers from vendors and businesses participating in Christmas in Davidson. On Monday morning, Kim Fleming, one of the organizers of Christmas in Davidson and the town's downtown manager, reported that business were made aware of the possibility of a protest occurring after organizers were notified by the police.

Fleming also said she had not heard from vendors about the demonstration affecting business profits positively or negatively. David Boraks reported on Davidsonnews.net on Monday that no businesses on Main Street attributed any loss in business to the protest.

Martel Campbell '15 participates in the 'die-in' staged during Christmas in Davidson on Saturday night.
Photo by Michelle Wan.

