

## Staff Editorial

### Let them watch cable

Cable television in Davidson dorm rooms. It's a topic of debate that dates back even further than the Outpost. We haven't heard much talk about it lately, but after questions were raised at a recent SGA meeting, as detailed on our News pages, the cable TV question may surface anew.

Arguments on both sides of the debate certainly have their merits, but we believe it is time for cable TV to be made available.

Opponents argue that if students had cable in their dorms, they'd have no reason to congregate in the hall lounges, the Union or any other social setting. They'd sit in their rooms, alone or with their roommates, missing out on chances to hold spontaneous conversations and interact with their peers. And to opponents, that's not what the Davidson experience is supposed to be.

Others say installing cable TV would be too expensive an undertaking, perhaps costing as much as \$200,000 per year. For them, the cost simply isn't worth the benefits gained.

Still others worry that freshmen, and upperclassmen too, might neglect their studies, fail to take up extracurricular activities, or lose sleep by devoting time to readily available, distracting entertainment.

But there is another constituency on campus, often silent, who heretofore have not advocated their beliefs. These proponents have been given a voice in incoming Sophomore Class President Jack Hubbard, who campaigned on the issue and has brought the matter before the SGA.

Supporters say that if they are willing to foot the bill, they ought to have the convenience of access to cable news and sports in their rooms so as to avoid fighting for control in the hall lounge. In the age of high-speed Internet and multimedial TV shows and programs are already available to those who seek them, sometimes in violation of ResNet policy.

And they dispute the fact that they would lose out on social interactions by viewing in their room and not the hall lounge or Union. Students already can join their friends in watching videos, DVDs, or playing video games with friends in dorm room TVs.

The hidden force driving the cable issue is that many dorms are already wired—the cable is simply not turned on. Lack of an installation cost incurred to the college and given the student demand, we feel Davidson students ought to be given the chance to prove they can handle cable TV.



### College should explain affirmative action stance

Davidson College recently joined 27 other higher learning institutions in submitting an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in support of the affirmative action program at Michigan University. The verdict of the case will have ramifications for the admissions process at Davidson and eventually the composition of our student body.

Affirmative action policies are complicated, potentially sensitive, and will affect us all in the years to come. Realizing this, why did the College elect not to involve the student body in a dialogue concerning the brief?

The amicus brief speaks for us all but is suspiciously lacking our voice. For the vast majority of us, the first time the issue was brought to the fore was through an article buried on page four of the Davidsonian two weeks ago.

It may be true that this type of decision can only be effectively made within the upper echelons of administration leadership, but that does not preclude the college community from participating in the dialogue. The gravity and impact of the issue deserves far more attention than we have given it. There does exist a healthy and vibrant dialogue about race relations on campus, but that dialogue is for the most part played out in closed, small group interactions.

The Michigan case has set the stage for the beginnings of a truly substantive and open dialogue about affirmative action, college admissions, and race relations on campus.

Davidson should seize this historic opportunity by processing the outcomes and ramifications of the verdict as a community.

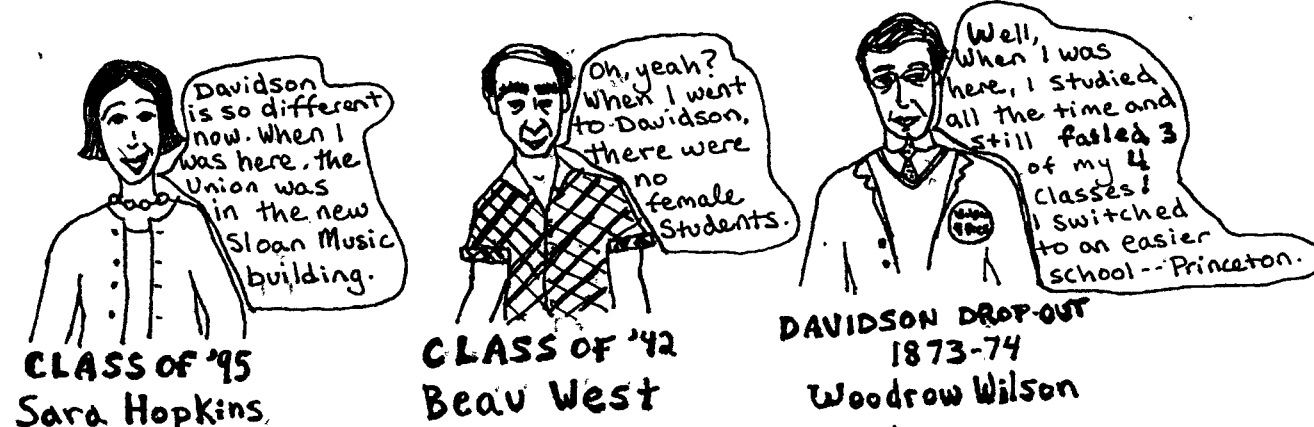
Both President Vagt and SGA President Charles Washington have graciously agreed to lead a panel discussion in the coming weeks on these vital issues, and it is my hope others in the administration, faculty and student body will join them in initiating this dialogue.

John Pitts '04



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