

Letter to the Editor

Thomas Pegelow Kaplan

I picked up the issue of the Davidsonian that appeared the visit by Dr. Angela Davis and, frankly, was surprised about the very poor and minimal coverage of the events involving her or Black History Month in general. Davidson College has, undoubtedly, an ugly history in terms of "race" relations. Throughout the twentieth century, (a significant number of) its students (and yes, some faculty) have embraced stunningly vibrant racist traditions. Just leaf through some yearbooks from the early 1920s. The recent racist incident involving Kappa Alpha only demonstrates that these traditions have hardly fully disappeared. The Common Hour panel on racism and civil rights, the Davis talks, the Larry presentation, the event with African-American veterans who fought racism in Nazi Germany and the U.S. South all provided ample opportunities for the paper to reflect on these highly pertinent questions. To not do so would have also meant to give those students a chance who helped organize and participate in Black History Month events and the many others who came to attend them. It is very regrettable that the paper missed yet another all too obvious opportunity.

In the six years I have been at the college, the Davidsonian has, unfortunately, never been a strong publication (all the way down to copy-editing problems). I remain hopeful, however, that it can catch up to the standards set by many successful student newspapers on other college and university campuses. Davidson students could certainly be able to do so.

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Thomas Pegelow Kaplan

Re: Letter - We're on the same team



Scott Matthews

Dr. Pegelow Kaplan is missing the point. We are all in this effort together, there is no us versus you in this debate; we are all on the same team when it comes to celebrating and commemorating black history and civil rights. Our community has spent the past four weeks dedicating countless hours to celebrating the efforts leaders and working to constantly improve.

Dr. Pegelow Kaplan asserts that The Davidsonian's coverage of the events involving Black History Month was "very poor and minimal." Respectfully, I disagree. The Davidsonian has done its part to cover the events organized by students and staff lending them a "microphone" to deliver their newsworthy points to the rest of the community. On

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January 23rd, we covered Dr. Bob Zellner's lecture. The February 6th article "Exhibit commemorates efforts of civil rights activists abroad" covered the month-long exhibit in the Union Atrium. On February 13th, we published a photo and a paragraph (standard coverage of lecture events) on Dr. Angela Davis' lecture. Most importantly we ran a half-page calendar advertising all of the upcoming Black History Month events on January 30th. The coverage is a clear demonstration that we are on the same side as the organizers

of the Black History Month events; I don't understand how Dr. Pegelow Kaplan can call this "minimal."

I can only infer that he assumes that our "minimal coverage" is due to racial bias within our staff. In reality, this year alone, The Davidsonian has done more to enrich campus discussion on diversity than at any point in its history. We have pushed our role beyond the printed page to facilitate discussion on Chick-Fil-A and sexual orientation, coeducation at Davidson, drinking culture, and another talkback scheduled on college affordability. Dr. Pegelow Kaplan references the role race has played in the College's

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history, but his example is nearly one hundred years old. I would hardly claim that race is no longer an issue on our campus, but to draw a parallel to the 1920's is hyperbolic.

Finally, Dr. Pegelow Kaplan's direct attack about the quality of The Davidsonian is both insulting and counterproductive. We are always open to constructive criticism, but telling our staff that we have never produced "a strong publication" does not empower us to improve in any way. If you have constructive advice, our door is always open.

On a personal note, as Co-Editor in Chiefs, the buck stops with Sarah Welty and me. In the meantime, I think you owe our staff an apology. Our staff is made up of your students—men and women who have dedicated countless hours to producing Davidson's weekly newspaper. They deserve better.

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Save Social Security

Ben Gitis

While the immediate economic consequences of Friday's potential sequestration makes it all the more difficult for Davidson's seniors to find work, it also threatens our entire generation by ignoring the key drivers of the growing national debt. In particular, exempt from the \$85 billion across-the-board spending cuts is Social Security, which in the current state promises to burden our generation both by adding to the gross federal debt and failing to pay what we promised when we retire.

Although Social Security has many functions, it mainly exists to transfer income from the young and working to the old and retired. So those who are young pay into Social Security via the payroll tax with the promise of receiving an equivalent amount back (with cost of living adjustments) when retiring. This type of program is known as a pay-as-you-go model, and it essentially forces people to save.

The problem? A pay-as-you-go model assumes a constant population growth rate, while in reality America's population is decreasing. This trend stresses our Social Security program and in order for them to remain sustainable either taxes must increase or pension benefits must erode.

According to CSIS's Richard Jackson, America's youth population is shrinking and elderly is increasing simultaneously. The total fertility rate decreased from 3.45 in 1955 to 2.07 in 2000. In addition, life expectancy increased from 69 in 1955 to 77 in 2010 and is expected to be 83 by 2050. The United States population expects that from 2010 to 2050, the average age in the United States will increase from 36.0 to 41.1, the elderly share of the population will increase from 13.3 percent to 20 percent, and the working-age share of the population

will decrease from 59.8 percent to 53.8 percent.

The United States also faces an unusually rapidly aging population due to the baby boomer generation. Over the next twenty years the Census Bureau expects the population of people age 40 to 64 to increase 6 percent while the population of people age 65 and older to increase a dramatic 79 percent.

These demographic trends will shock Social Security and simply screw over our generation. Despite the program showing an accounting surplus, the Congressional Budget Office, Congressional Research Service, and fact-checkers, everywhere confirm that Social Security today adds to the gross federal debt and will continue to do so at higher and higher levels over the next several decades.

Since 2010, Social Security began to receive less tax revenue than it paid in program benefits. The only reason that it can still provide its promised pensions is that for more than 20 years prior to 2010, the program had excess revenues that it invested in \$2.7 trillion worth of special Treasury securities. The interest Social Security receives on those assets actually gives it an accounting surplus. Over the years, however, the Treasury did not simply keep that money and spent it in other ways. Thus, the Treasury must borrow from the public when Social Security uses interest

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payments or Treasury assets to make up for the tax revenue shortfall, which directly increases federal debt levels.

In 2012, the tax revenue deficit for Social Security's Old-Age and Survivors and Disability Insurance (OASDI) programs was about \$165 billion. Despite the recent 2 percentage-point increase in the payroll tax, Social Security remains on an unsustainable path. The Congressional Budget Office projects that over the next 10 years, OASDI's tax revenue deficits will add \$1.3 trillion to gross federal debt and we students will be burdened by slower economic growth and potential austerity.

Worse, we will not be able to benefit from Social Security. By 2021, the Social Security Administration expects its tax revenue shortfall to exceed its annual interest income and the program will have to start drawing from its accumulated Treasury assets. With our rapidly aging population it will only take until 2033 for Social Security to exhaust its trust fund assets.

If policymakers let those assets completely deplete, in 2033 Social Security will no longer have legal authority to

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pay its promised benefits, and the program will only have enough tax revenue to cover 75 percent of the program's pensions. As a result, our generation will continue to pay into Social Security without the promise of receiving an equivalent pension when we retire. Now that pisses me off.

By distracting themselves with the sequester and continuing to avoid fundamental problems like Social Security's unsustainability, policymakers directly increase the burden and we will have to correct their mistakes. It's

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time to be angry and vocal, Davidson. We can't let our leaders continue to sacrifice our future in such reckless ways.

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