

# Racism: Give Davidson a chance

## Ismat Husain

I am writing this article in response to the recent bad publicity that Davidson has gotten in both *The Davidsonian* and *The Charlotte Observer*.

Firstly, I am neither black nor white. I have lived in both the continent of Africa (15 years) where whites are minority and blacks a majority and in England and North America (four years) where whites are a majority and blacks are a minority. I have had neighbors and good friends of both races. The point is that I am writing this article unbiased and from a neutral zone.

I would first like to address the statement of purpose from the Black Student Coalition delivered to the school through the Student Government Association. It demanded more black and Hispanic students and professors and a curriculum in ethnic studies. It also stated that in the last 17 years little development has been made by the school for blacks in sharp contrast to developments made by the school for international studies and women.

To begin with, the statement sounded more like a threatening ultimatum than a statement of purpose.

Secondly, the demand for more black professors and black students is racist itself. The only reason they are being asked for (as opposed to others) is their race. I think what is needed more than black professors and black students is open-minded professors and open-minded students (which includes blacks).

By demanding specifically black professors and black students, the BSC has made the enormous assumption that just because they are black, they are going to be open-minded. Both professors and students should be accepted regardless of their race. To my knowledge, Davidson has not violated this rule, and the BSC has not shown evidence of violations.

Prejudices exist everywhere in every society. Even in Zambia, Africa, many times non-whites would have their cars smashed, cameras stolen and houses robbed by blacks for the only reason that they were not black (true Zambians).

I am not condoning racism, only recognizing it as a consequence of being human.

I speak to all minority students (black, brown, fat, handicapped) when I say we can't and should not wait for the school to meet our needs, because we will be waiting forever. As long as there is room for us to change and be better people (and there always is since

no one is perfect), that is what we should strive for. And by doing just this, we will simultaneously be changing the people around us.

In the same manner, Davidson can change too. Although the rate and areas in which it is changing leaves much to be desired, I believe it is changing for the better. Davidson College was the first in America to have the unique Love of Learning program, where black high-school students are paid \$200 for the month of July every summer from ninth grade to twelfth grade so that they can be better prepared for not only Davidson but any college. Four black students from that program are today freshmen at Davidson.

Although I have had my share of setbacks, Davidson College has been a great institution for me. I have learned not only about the world and other people but have also gotten to know myself. I have had a good education, have been allowed to be the first international student hall counselor and have made life-long friends at Davidson. For this and more, I am thankful to Davidson.

*Ismat Husain is a senior physics major from Zambia.*

# Return to English ale: Goodbye Davidson

## Adam Smith

Eighteen weeks is hardly long enough to live amongst those eager 1,400 students who attend Davidson College. Moreover, those who gave Mina Fazel, Kate Raworth and I the incredible opportunity of this "holiday of a lifetime" should not only be hugged, kissed and blessed, but also shot. Being torn away from a community that has become my home is more than just difficult; flying back to England and leaving the new routine and familiarity of rural America is going to be as big a nightmare as this beer-drinking British thug has ever experienced. Something, though, tells me not to be sad, for all but one or two of the memories from Davidson will be fond ones, and this final article is dedicated to all of you who have helped me through the greatest time of my life.

Of course, I have been in a distinctly different situation than most of you: I'm English, you're American; I came to party, you came to graduate; I'm leaving, you're not. But that has made it special for me and with a little pressure (that only being to avoid complete embarrassment with my grades) on me, I have had the chance which I have always wanted—to live life and mesh into the fun of culture strange to my own. No one would ever welcome me in such a friendly manner in London, no one would allow me such freedom in work, no one would know where to introduce me to Ugandians or Nepalese, and no one would let me roam and party to the extent that I have been lucky enough to do here.

The upperclass Internationals were the first to warn me not to integrate myself purely with non-Americans, but instead to find the correct mixture necessary to make the most of staying in such a unique society. That is, I hope, what I have done, for my time has been in America and nowhere else. However, meeting the Germans, Indians, and such has broadened my mind,

and from hanging around Jose my sense of humor has certainly been altered. Many have much in common with me, many are slowly becoming Americanized (Debolina changes to Debbie; Jean Phillippe to JP), and all are experiencing an immensely enjoyable life in this warm environment.

And yes, the warmth of the Davidson atmosphere is provided by y'all. The hospitable South has been very inviting, and I hope that those that I have had the pleasure of being with befriend the three invading Brits who are coming in January. Those that are coming to London next term might experience slightly more of a "culture shock" than I have, for the English are a reserved race, and the Americans, thankfully, are not.

You have made me feel part of the college from day one (and my first introductions to Matt Gantt and Warner Wells), and I've felt that whether intermingling with freshmen or teachers, it has been unusually easy. The simplicity, too, of getting involved in the college television, radio and newspaper, not to mention the indoor FOOTBALL is to be commended. In fact, it seems to me that those here know when to work, and when to play—the opportunity for both is certainly available.

Webb Garrison, Joe Mavis and Ken Lane have proved invaluable mates, and I fully support their adventurous and exciting move to resurrect the Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity. Let's hope that when I drop by Davidson, this little group of people will be thriving on Patterson Court, along with the other fraternities and eating houses that have been the major part of my dwelling on campus—thanks especially to the Kappa Sigs for their comedy hour, the Phi Deltis for getting my mate from England totally wasted at Halloween, and the Pikas for the everflowing beer. First East Belk housed me for much of the term and no T-C, our football will always be better than your rubbish! Fourth Cannon deserves a special mention. But my

heart really goes out to the greatest hall—at the top of Richardson. Sarah, Bethan, Nethea, Kym, Jenny, Suzie, and the rest of my pals—I love you all, and will miss you terribly. Where will I sleep now? Where will I get my blankets? But to those who doubt that I ever had an assigned room—I might inform you I most certainly do, and if my roommate was not so cool I might well be tempted not to venture down that terrifyingly long hill to Akers at 3:30 every morning. Arindam, you're the greatest and take care of Maja, but please stop snoring.

I commend all of you who are actually trying to get A's even if I don't seem to, when going into the library, merely to find someone to chat with, or to discover any information as to the whereabouts of the nearest party. Yet I also love all of you who do party hard—and I apologize to all of them if they can never find me sober, but let's face it—I had to enjoy myself. By the time you read this article, I will probably have made a complete fool of myself as one of the Rolling Stones at the Air Band, but I don't mind, because I won't be able to remember anything anyway! I just hope you'll remember me—in whatever way you want to; I have tried to return some of the entertainment you've given me with my voice, my ansaphone messages and the case of English ale which was mainly devoured while partying on Richardson Field with some prospective called Walter.

However much you want to, you won't be able to get rid of me and my antics for long though—I hope to be back in a few months. Prepare the parties, order the kegs, bring back the band "Noun Rationale," and Joe—please prepare the motor to road-trip to Georgia. You don't realize how much I appreciate everything you've done for me—please keep in touch, and take care. Remember, work hard and party hard; it's a great combination.

*Adam Smith is a Rusk Scholar from London, England.*

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- All submissions should deal with subjects of interest to the campus community.
- Submissions must be neatly typed or legibly handwritten. The editors will also accept work submitted on 5.25" or 3.5" IBM-formatted diskettes (and, truth be told,

we're partial to them).

- All submissions must be signed. Writers must present the editors with compelling reasons if they do not wish their names printed with their work.
- The staff will not edit commentaries for content or for style, but for the rules of English grammar only.
- Letters should be under 300 words in length. The editors reserve the right to edit and/or condense any letter.
- The editors reserve the right not to print submissions

which contain factual errors, advertisements, or objectionable material, or which represent a viewpoint very similar to other letters printed dealing with the same topic.

- All submissions should include the author's address and phone number. Submissions to the "Commentaries" section should include the following information: the author's home city and state, graduating class, and major field of study (or profession).

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