

## Reflecting on the year

STAFF EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

This is *The Davidsonian's* final issue for the 2011-2012 academic year. As Co-Editors-in-Chief, we have enjoyed serving you and hope that the paper has been interesting and pertinent to our wide-range of weekly readers.


One of our most significant goals this year was to provide informative, prolific and "Davidson-centric" content each week. We tried to focus on including articles that offered depth by investigating the issues students care about most. Some of these investigative articles included Daniel Farlow's article exploring meal plan options at Davidson (9/7), Laura Chuckray's article examining student debt at Davidson (9/14), Sarah Welty's article on student activity budgets (9/21), Laura Chuckray and Sarah Welty's collaborative article on the relationship between the ATC and SGA (9/28), Logan Lewis's article on policy versus programming with regard to the SGA (10/19), Amelia Montgomery's article on Patterson Court party themes and gender relations (11/2), Lyla Halsted's article on professor evaluations (11/16), Eric Sawyer and Sarah Welty's article exploring the impact of Winterfest on bridging the cultural divide on campus (2/1), and Julie Coursen and Kelly Wilson's two-part series debunking honor council myths and investigating honor in social versus academic settings on campus (2/8, 2/15).

This year *The Davidsonian* had the largest editorial and business staff we've had in years, and we anticipate such enthusiasm on the staff will continue. Looking forward to next year, we want to welcome Sarah Welty '13 and Scott Matthews '13 as next year's Co-Editors-in-Chief. Given the launch of our website [www.davidsonian.com](http://www.davidsonian.com) last fall, Scott and Sarah hope to maximize the benefit our website provides to a small community like Davidson. One component of Scott and Sarah's ambitious plans for next year include creating blogs on the website for every student organization to keep the Davidson community up to date on what campus organizations are doing. The new web manager, Caroline Queen '14, is spearheading this project over the summer. We foresee [www.davidsonian.com](http://www.davidsonian.com) being a central window to showcase what is happening with student groups. With everyone's participation, we see this as a medium not only for students to learn what their peers are up to but also for connecting the off-campus Davidson network (including alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and students abroad) to the Davidson family on campus.

Thanks to all who support *The Davidsonian* and, as always, we welcome your feedback as we strive to be the most important source of news, investigative articles, and commentary on campus. The [davidsonian@davidson.edu](mailto:davidsonian@davidson.edu) email will be active over the summer, so feel free to send articles, perspectives, and photos.

Logan Lewis and Kelly Wilson  
Editors-in-Chief, 2011-2012

## The Davidsonian



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## Oh Davidson!

Aria Halliday

Although we as students always hear the Davidson College Statement of Purpose one-liner "The primary purpose of Davidson College is to assist students in developing humane instincts and disciplined and creative minds for lives of leadership and service," we rarely ever hear any other line of the 40-lined document. We don't hear anyone quote that Davidson "dedicates itself to the quest for truth and encourages teachers and students to explore the whole of reality," or that Davidson "emphasizes those studies, disciplines, and activities that are mentally, spiritually, and physically liberating." And I personally take offense.

Now that I've been at Davidson for a little over three years, I have seen the good, the bad, and the truly ugly of this place. I've seen the cattiness and selfishness of professors, the complete aloofness of students, and the complete disregard for staff, unless of course they are servicing the aloof students and selfish professors. Don't get me wrong, there are people here who constantly challenge the complacency (with all-encompassing whiteness), yet are hardly ever recognized for the great work they do. People like Dr. Fairley, Dr. Flanagan, Dr. Kelly, Ashley Sherrill, and Dr. Reimer who challenge students to really think critically about the ways that they understand the world and therefore, affirm Davidson's purpose. Individuals like these are consistently disregarded and ignored because some white man wrote an "interesting" article about Europe.

The curriculum of this place is as dead and old as some of the professors here. It isn't challenging, it doesn't ask students to think critically, and it definitely isn't reflective of "exploring the whole of reality" nor "those studies, disciplines, and activities that are liberating." With the exception of those individuals previously mentioned, there is hardly anyone here who questions their privilege or the racist (and yes I mean, RACIST) things that they say. Yes, we have discussions on gay marriage and "liberal" studies, but

we don't have discussions on how race or class impacts any of those things. Yes, we have "safe" discussions on race and gender, so as not to ruffle the feathers of the "guilt-stricken" white people, the "angry and over-emotional" people of color, or God-forbid the trustees and alumni. WHY does Davidson not have any arts classes that are reflective of non-European thoughts, ideas, or concerns (with the exception of studies on Asia-related topics on occasion)? HOW can this be a liberal arts education when so many things are left out? HOW can we be training leaders for the "whole of reality," when Davidson rarely acknowledges the reality of its racist, sexist, and generally oppressive practices? Yes, Davidson was founded for rich southern white men, but that demographic changed a long time ago. HOW LONG will it

**"...Davidson rarely acknowledges its racist, sexist, and generally oppressive practices."**

take to actually make change? HOW LONG will Project 87 lay forgotten and unheeded? HOW LONG will Davidson refuse to acknowledge and change its ways?

My prayer for this institution is that by 2015, when all these dear first-year students are looking back over their 4 years here, another student like me will not be able to write a letter like this. James Scott (1990) says, "once the lack of faith in the enterprise left the hidden transcript and became a public fact, it posed a threat to its legitimacy that offstage heresy alone could never pose." Therefore, count this as my lack of faith in the enterprise of Davidson, posing a threat to its falsified legitimacy. We all have these conversations in private, but no more. This time let the conversation be heard by all and "constitute a throwing down of the gauntlet, a symbolic declaration of war" (Scott, 1990: 203).

Aria Halliday '12 is an Africana Studies major from Jessup, MD. Contact her at [arhalliday@davidson.edu](mailto:arhalliday@davidson.edu).

## Defending Davidson

Logan Lewis and Marcus Bailey

This article is in response to Aria Halliday's article titled "Oh Davidson!" and Cidney Holliday's article titled "What I want at Davidson." Our intention is to provide an alternative perspective, illustrating our belief that Davidson embraces diversity and takes pride in its liberal arts curriculum. Furthermore, we believe that the College promotes discussion on issues of diversity frequently and has taken steps to expand its curriculum in an adaptive way for the 21st century.

Beginning with Halliday's third paragraph, which suggests that Davidson is complacent "with all encompassing whiteness," Halliday asserts that the College's curriculum and faculty are outdated and disregard Davidson's purpose. We found this statement particularly offensive, since we chose to attend Davidson largely because of its outstanding professors and commitment to academic rigor. The suggestion that the curriculum is not challenging or thought-provoking is ludicrous. Please show me your 4.0.

As far as "studies, disciplines, and activities that are liberating," we've experienced many. Sometimes that has meant enjoying a simple meal with freshmen halls of students from a range of backgrounds or taking a class examining the works of a 17th-century British author with a world-renowned scholar for a semester. Believe it or not, the author of the literature we were discussing and the amazing professor leading our class were white!

We do not believe that there is a culture of racism on campus. Halliday's view that "there is hardly anyone here who questions their privilege or the racist...things that they say" is inaccurate in its conclusion because of its faulty premise—that many Davidson professors and students (who are white) cast a condescending eye on their minority colleagues. We have not seen evidence that this is the norm.

Halliday also objects to the limitations of the College's liberal arts curriculum. She asks, "HOW can this be a liberal arts education when so many things are left out?" Unfortunately, that's the result of attending a small liberal arts college with a small faculty that attempt to cover a breadth of subjects. This is not a problem of "diversity." There are limitations on what the College can offer, whether it lacks classes on non-European/Asian art or a seminar examining the growing importance of the U.S. Supreme Court between

1800 and 1845. A large research institution would be more likely to offer these and other specific topics.

Similarly, Cidney Holliday complains, "Without more professors who specialize in the experiences of Black People, Queer People, and the experiences of other marginalized groups, I lose the well-rounded education I expected to receive at this liberal arts institution." While faculty who specialize in these topics would certainly add to the educational breadth of the College, we believe that David-

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son intends for students to receive a "well-rounded" education in a slightly different way, encompassing a variety of subjects, including the social sciences, natural sciences, history, mathematics, religion, philosophy, literature, writing and foreign language. Additionally, Davidson ensures that students are exposed to foreign cultures by requiring that they take a course in cultural diversity. Beyond that, an overwhelming majority of each class studies abroad at some point during their Davidson careers.

Finally, Holliday concludes by praising the commitment of the faculty that make Davidson such a special institution before explaining, "But a college that recruits more diverse faculty and keeps them here is what I want." We can't say that along with Holliday; we want the best faculty regardless of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, whatever.

In sum, Davidson embraces diversity with open arms and promotes learning at its highest level in a well-rounded way. We're sad that members of our community feel that Davidson perpetuates a sense of racial inequality, and we share Halliday's desire that no student in the Class of 2015 will feel a need to write a letter like hers during senior year.

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