

# Reforms

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faculty and staff. "We have such few role models here, said senior Mike Brooks. "Older blacks around here are janitors. We've seen the same thing all our life, and when we get to college and it's the same, it does something to us psychologically."

The administration should seriously consider adding a core requirement in racial relations, or at least hold a mandatory meeting for freshmen focusing on racial differences. Hines explained, "If students here come from an area where they rarely see black people, they

would experience here. But she feels she misled herself about her ability to deal with the challenge of attending a predominantly white school.

"I went to a predominantly white-high school and I thought I could deal with it at college," she said. "It's not that I'm not dealing with it; it's just that now I've come to the point that I've gotten older and I'm asking myself do I want to deal with it."

Sohn Sims, a sophomore from Brooklyn, adds a different perspective. "I would choose Davidson again if I had it to do over because for me, coming here was like a lot of dreams come true," he said.

"My high school didn't provide the best atmosphere, but here I've got a lot of opportunities. I can

it really counts because at the time, the two white students were drunk.

In the dormitories, friendships between whites and blacks may be hindered by as simple an object as the Confederate flag. Candelario asked, "Why would I want to go in a room where a Confederate flag bigger than I am is hanging on the wall, representing everything I hate?"

Sims said that he has noticed that people immediately think there's something wrong with a student who wears a Malcolm X t-shirt, but that most never think twice about the flags.

Hines added, "If there's something you learn as a minority, it's not to stereotype, even though it's hard not to. I don't know what those flags mean to those persons, but I know what they mean to me."

These students feel that communication between blacks and whites is essential in improving the situation.

They recognize that the administration has made important strides in meeting their needs through the addition of staff members such as Brenda Tapia and John Eaves, who provide black students with invaluable emotional support. "It's a start," Sweeting said, "but I hope it won't stop there."

The topic of race relations at Davidson always stirs heated discussions and disagreement over changes. With former debates in mind, Candelario, Sweeting, Brooks, Hines and others maintain their position that reform must come, not only for the good of the Davidson community, but also for our country.

"If you take a look at American society, it's easy to see that black people are in trouble," said Hines. "There are more black people in jail in the United States than there are black men in South Africa. Are we going to continue to ignore the situation?"

*Editor's note: For an in-depth look at the black experience at Davidson, see the Fall 1990 issue of the Davidson Journal.*

## "Why would I want to go in a room where a Confederate flag bigger than I am is hanging on the wall, representing everything I hate?" Rafael Candelario

won't know how we are. To a certain extent, blacks and whites do come from different cultures. Davidson has all sorts of requirements. I don't see why we can't have one to increase awareness of the black culture."

Several black students expressed disappointment in their experience at Davidson so far. Sophomore Machel Sweeting said her parents thought she just had a case of the "freshman blues" when she called home so much last year. But her feelings ran much deeper than that.

"I didn't expect to go through as much struggle as I have been through," she said. "I didn't know it would be like this. I found out that I would have to do a 180 degree turn-around in order to fit in, and fitting in would have required giving up a lot. Davidson is requiring no change in the structure of the school itself," she said.

Sweeting said that neither recruiters nor other Davidson students misled her about what she

do things I never really would have had the chance to do otherwise. At twelve o'clock at night it's peaceful, there's no shooting going on - I can go running then or do anything else I want," he said.

"When I came here, I knew it was going to be different and I just decided to experience different things. I even started listening to certain kinds of rock music that I had never listened to before.

"One thing bothers me, though," said Sims. "Nobody was willing to try things I wanted to do. No one wanted to go places with me or come sit with me; I was always going with them or sitting with them. It's always me. I'm always the one reaching out. And some days there's nothing left to reach out with."

Sims remembers only one time that some white students expressed an interest in him and his culture. They started talking about racism and a certain rap group. It meant a lot to him that they reached out to him, Sims said, but he doesn't think

# Trial

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itself, which had fallen from his hands in the shuffling. At this point, the student had only a few minutes and rushed to get the exam to the gallery.

After the professor who graded the exams found the class notes in the student's envelope with no examination questions, he went to the Dean of Students. The student claimed he had no idea of the actions for which he had been accused. When asked where the examination questions were, he answered that he did not know,

then went back home to see if the questions were among the notes he had thrown away. They were. He returned with the crumpled exam questions. The Dean of Students declined to handle it and submitted the violation to the honor council.

Technically, the guilt lay in the fact the exam questions had not been included, but the honor council agreed that it was a natural mistake with no malicious intent. They voted the student not guilty, unanimously, 6-0.

"I think that this case is a great example," said student solicitor Brian Jennings. "Students can look to it and know that the honor system works and the honor council is fair and not just a bunch of conservative headhunters."

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