

PERSPECTIVES

Presidential Campaigns

STAFF EDITORIAL

Next Monday, Davidson students will go to the polls—err, the internet—to elect new leaders to offices in the SGA, Union Board, ATC, UCA and SCC. Before then, a whirlwind of campaigning will take place. It is doubtful the Davidson students will familiarize themselves with the plans and personalities of each candidate before the election. Nevertheless, the campaign offers an opportunity for us to examine the state of SGA, Davidson's institutional identity and the progress of several on-going projects.

The Davidsonian will host a debate for the SGA presidential candidates, Meikaela Zwierynski '10 and Darrell Scott '10, this Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the 900 room. In advance of the debate, we would like to outline the issues we hope the candidates will address, both on Thursday and during the almost-week-long campaign.

This academic year began with an emphasis on sustainability. Throughout the year, departments and student groups have taken many steps to reduce the College's carbon footprint. The candidates ought to address the role of SGA in promoting student awareness of sustainability efforts and exploring potential solutions.

Just as Davidson has followed the sustainability trend, the economic conditions in the world beyond exit 30 have myriad effects on the College. As the school faces budget-cuts, a new student committee is searching for innovative ways to streamline expenditures and increase efficiency. We are very much interested in how the presidential candidates would involve SGA in facing the school's difficult adjustment to a shrinking economy.

One of the most provocative SGA initiatives of last year examined Davidson's median GPA in comparison with peer institutions. The findings confirmed the recurring complaints of many students—GPAs were significantly lower than those at competing schools. SGA can play an important role in surveying and conveying the academic concerns of students—how do these two candidates propose to assess the academic experience at Davidson and adjustments students would like to see?

Finally, we hope the candidates will propose ways to examine Davidson's institutional identity. As the College strives to create a more diverse community and attract an increasingly national pool of applicants, its identity is also changing. SGA should lead the charge in generating a discussion of Davidson's values and how they inform the school's direction.

A novel proposal for equality

HAYDEN HIGGINS
Guest Columnist

The American government, it is often said, is a nation founded on compromises. The art of compromise, a skill adroitly applied by statesmen from Washington onwards, seems, however, to have fallen out of vogue. According to the ostensibly contemporary Wikipedia, "In the U.K., Ireland and Commonwealth countries the word 'compromise' has a positive connotation (as a consent, an agreement, where both parties win something); in the USA it may rather have negative connotations (as both parties lose something.)"

Whatever notoriety 'compromise' earned as a politically weak maneuver is probably due in large part to the inflated ideologies of recent party politics. Despite the relative proximity of Democratic and Republican thought when compared on a global scale, and despite their shared inheritance of the classic liberal tradition, neither can ever seem to admit that they are more alike the other than they are different.

During the recent election, liberals seemed to be fond of swearing they would 'move to Canada' if McCain triumphed, and one conservative I talked to spoke of buying guns in case they needed to revolt against the coming oppressive liberal regime. I speak so much of compromise because there is an arena where its calming influence is sorely needed—a significant American populace has suffered too long for their rights. I speak of the roughly five percent of Americans who are gay.

During the recent election, perhaps the second most closely-watched result nationally was that of California's Proposition Eight—the Marriage Protection Amendment. Without bringing my personal beliefs about the question to the table, it is apparent that the fundamental crisis at stake was one of personal liberty versus popular belief. Gays would like to marry—but now they cannot (in California) due to the religious (not political) beliefs of the majority.

What is required is a moderate dose of two of the founding principles of the United States of America: the rule of the majority with the preservation of the rights of the minority, and the separation of church and state. I propose a basic enough solution, which I hope I am not the first to have thought of, because I find it very simple, very elegant and

very obvious.

Marriage, as a word, should be removed from the political jargon. If marriage is a religious sacrament—as most will well agree that it is—it should be governed by the individual religious entities, which may independently decide whether to approve of same-sex couples. Do a find-and-replace on government documents, replacing 'marriage' with 'civil union,' and thereby preserve the societal rights gained by married individuals at the state level. Civil unions will be gender-blind.

Under this proposal, conservative religious groups need not feel threatened—homosexuality will not be forced upon them. They may still preach against the sins of the flesh and so on as much as they like, until the metaphorical trumpet sounds and they are proven either right or wrong in their judgment of others.

Complete separation of church and state will be achieved, insofar that a religious institution—marriage—will be removed from the political sphere, while retaining the recognition that the union of two individuals provides important, even integral social benefits (thus the granting of civil unions). The bywords of our time—freedom and change—will be achieved.

I think that both political parties can agree on the maximization of self-determination, and that is exactly what is achieved by this proposal, whilst recognizing the capacity for each congregation to decide what is acceptable in its particular arrangement with regards to homosexuality. Furthermore, this arrangement allows for the application of one of the central tenets of conservatism: minimal governmental intrusion into the lives of its citizenry, an idea that the last administration seemingly failed to recognize at all.

This is a change that will need to be achieved at the level of each individual state, per the Tenth Amendment. It is, however, a commonsense proposal, and one that cannot be accused of being persecutory or too difficult to administrate. I hope that others will join in conversation about this particular issue, and that reconciliation and compromise allow the American people to quell this unseemly quandary once and for all in a desirable and progressive manner.

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Bush's legacy wrongly disparaged



BOBBY DESPAIN

For the past eight years, a large number of individuals on the left have confused constitutionally supported dissent with disrespect and hatred. Free, unhindered dissent is vital in democracies. It keeps those in power aware that other sides to an issue may exist, and it forces our government to defend its decisions.

Such dissent may evaporate during the next four years, however, as the media has fallen head over heels for the current administration. Their objectivity should forever be

questioned after their performances this election cycle. What has transpired over the last eight years has not been dissent for the sake of improving the country, but malice for the sake of humiliating a man.

George W. Bush did not live up to my hopes as President of the United States. He abandoned the free-market, let the government grow like Jack's beanstalk, refused to defend our sovereignty by allowing our borders to remain insecure and let his Public Relations departments run our wars.

Regardless, the man deserves credit for preventing another terrorist attack on U.S. soil because, undoubtedly, the Islamofascists tried. He also deserves credit for backing Gen. Petraeus all the way to victory in Iraq.

The Iraqi people should forever be indebted to the United States and George W. Bush for removing the psychopathic and torturous regime of Saddam Hussein and then rebuilding and protecting their country.

In spite of his failings, President Bush should not have been treated to the scorn and venom of the left. He was subject to thousands of harsh caricatures insulting his speech, mannerisms and intellect (never mind the fact Bush has degrees from Yale and Harvard).

He was also the subject of a hypothetical assassination movie, "The Death of a President." As a sidebar, just imagine if a movie was made about the assassination of Barack Obama. The left might actually be in favor of keeping Gauntanamo

Bay open in order to house the producers.

After 9/11, individuals like Howard Dean questioned whether Bush planned or at least allowed the terrorists to succeed. The left vilified Bush for the Iraq War, ignoring the fact that both the Senate and House (including their liberal components) voted to authorize the war.

The left demanded war crimes trials for the use of waterboarding, even though Democratic Rep. Nancy Pelosi questioned earlier whether harsher interrogation treatments should be used.

The left was also fond of calling for impeachment hearings against Bush, although his only crime was the fact that he was President.

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Unfortunately the left had to get in one more crude gesture before George W. Bush left the Office of the Presidency. He entered the inaugural stage at the Capitol for the swearing in of Barack Obama, part of the crowd began chanting, "Na, Na, Na, Hey Hey, Goodbye."

Their disrespect for the man and the presidency is abhorrent, though not surprising. These are the same people who liken our soldiers to murderers, picket Marine Recruitment Stations and cheer for the successes of the enemy. To naively think being contrary is courageous.

Their actions are not dissent, but disgusting. And who was Barack Obama? Where was the man of "hope and change" and "post-partisanship?"

Where was the man who a few moments later would state that the "time has come to set aside childish things?" Now silent, which is sad because the left's disrespect is not just for Bush, but for the very office Obama now occupies.

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The Davidsonian

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