

The Rainbow Revue

To Whom Much is Given, Much is Expected

A BSC Joint

February 2011

Ground Rules

Dr. Kelly provides insight about a future function and purpose of the *Rainbow Revue*.

Page 2

Inspirational Thoughts

A compilation of relevant student, historical, and faculty musings.

Page 6

An Open Letter

Izzy Justice '90 shares his thoughts on Davidson traditions and policies.

Page 9

On Behalf of the Black Student Coalition...

Aaron Goodson '11

BSC President

On behalf of the Black Student Coalition, I would like to give an official (though late) welcome to the freshman class to Davidson College. Words cannot express the excitement that I have for the remainder of this year and the future. Davidson College is truly a wonderful place that has the potential to change each student's life. The possibilities here are endless and have shaped me into the person I am today. I have had the pleasure of working with different students, faculty, and staff across campus on a number of projects. This year, I had the pleasure of serving as the President of the wonderful organization responsible for this newsletter, the Black Student Coalition.



The Black Student Coalition (affectionately known as the BSC) has a reputation for being a very dynamic organization on campus. Our motto is, "Unity, Dedication, Love," and each student that has joined the organization can attest to our commitment to this motto.

Continued on page 3

dcblackstudentcoalition.weedbly.com



About *The Rainbow Revue*

The Rainbow Revue is a student-driven publication created by the Black Student Coalition. In the past it functioned as a newsletter, providing updates, inspiration, and the perspectives of Black faculty, staff, and, of course, students.

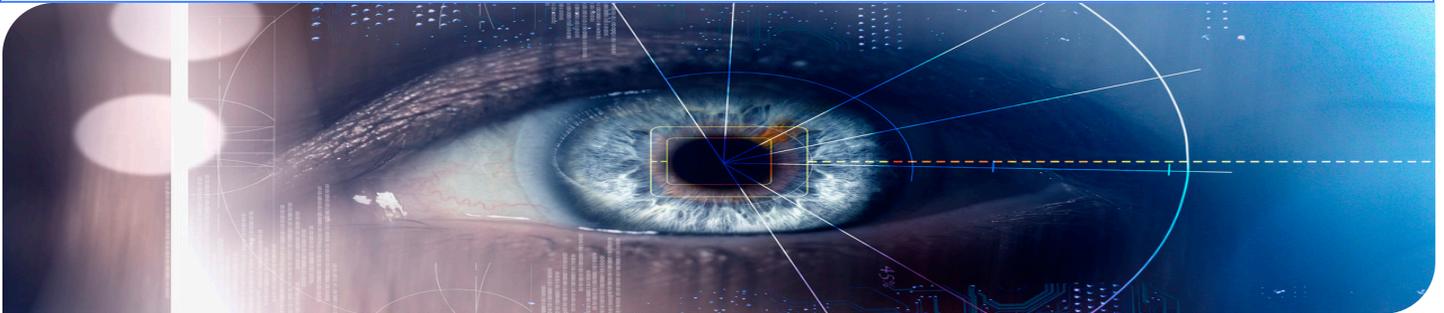
BSC members uncovered the last publication in May 1996 while exploring college archives. This rebirth of the *Rainbow Revue* is dedicated to all BSC members and affiliates from the past, present, and future, and their voices.

UNITY.DEDICATION.LOVE.

Perspectives and Opinions:

How we make sense of this world.

The views in this section are personal and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Black Student Coalition or ALL of its members.



Ground Rules: On the Revival of *The Rainbow Revue* at Davidson College

Dr. Hilton Kelly

Assistant Professor of Education

This summer, I sat down with Kaneisha Gaston and Vanessa Williams over coffee at Summit to discuss “bringing back” the *Rainbow Revue*. Apparently, back in the day, the *Rainbow Revue* was a literary magazine or newspaper or newsletter that Kaneisha discovered in the Davidson College archives. While Kaneisha was unsure about the purpose and function of the *Rainbow Revue*, she drew some conclusions that the publication was an outlet for black students at Davidson College to “tell it like it is” or to “speak truth to power” which seemed exciting to us at the time.

So, I agreed to support Kaneisha and Vanessa and I promised to submit something for the first edition of the second round of the *Rainbow Revue*.

But what should I write about? Should I write about the growing divisions between blacks and browns on our campus that has left some black students feeling as if they are fighting two racial fronts—one white and one brown? Should I write about the need for intra-racial unity (or at least harmony)—the kind that gets talked about in history textbooks but never gets lived “out loud” in reality? Should I use this opportunity as a

forum to talk about the black-white issues on campus as a historical sociologist of the African-American experience despite the fact that there has not been one tangible incident that I could actually discuss the who’s, what’s, when’s, where’s, and how’s?

Rather than force an issue, I have decided that the best thing for me to do in this first “revival” edition (of something that I still am not sure what it used to be) is to outline ground rules for healthy and productive expression. Regardless of the sentiments expressed in this issue, and subsequent issues, the *Rainbow Revue* ought to nourish its readers, as well as its authors. To this end, I recommend the following ground rules as a step in what I hope is the right direction or as a guide for what such a revival can be and do:

1) Black is one of many colors. We should not ignore the fact that black Davidson College students a generation earlier talked about “rainbows,” which symbolized and celebrated diversity as a spectrum of colors. More importantly, we must remember and teach that black students are more than their color; they have ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, disability, etc. How can we write about ourselves

Ground Rules (continued...)

as complicated rainbows on an overwhelmingly white campus?

2) Remember to celebrate. Beyond reporting problems and frustrations, remember to celebrate successes and triumphs in your lives as smart and engaged students at Davidson College. It would be a grave mistake to spend all of the *Rainbow Revue's* ink on trials and tribulations and obstacles. While it might be informative to document racial discrimination or sexist incidents on campus, it could be just as productive to focus on individual and groups fights, struggles, and achievements against injustice on campus. What are you doing to bring about change on Davidson College's campus?

3) Black is/Black ain't. Whenever possible, as I alluded to earlier, show the complexity of black life at Davidson College and the larger world. Find ways to define who and what you are as a cultural group. Unfortunately, black people in the United States are still fighting for respectability or what a black person can be and do. How, then, do we want to be represented?

4) To nourish, not to strangle. The most productive thing that we can do is to begin a dialogue with each other and to support differing points of view. In the early 1990's, as an undergraduate on a predominantly white campus, I discovered that black students bonded over being racial tokens in academic departments and racial minorities on our campus. We spent an inordinate amount of time "licking our wounds" after racial incidents that we all experienced daily. We spent very little time debating each other's ideas and challenging each other's thinking about race and racism on campus, as well as the different ways in which some of us had been incorporated into campus life as "exceptions to the rule." In many ways, we only saw ourselves as "black students" and we settled for—and some of us prospered under—benign neglect and ghettoization on campus. Each of you must try to develop a community within a community that is not limiting or constraining. One way to do so, I think, is through the *Rainbow Revue* as long as it supports individuals as they try to become a part of the larger Davidson College community.

On Behalf of the Black Student Coalition...

(continued...)

It is clear that the BSC has the capacity and intent to affect the Davidson College community and beyond. We can look at our past actions as evidence. As stated in our 2010 charter, "We are a family that thrives on inclusivity—we would love for our family to grow, thus the reason why we put so much emphasis on publicity, because we want the entire Davidson community to feel welcome at our house no matter their background or interests." Please be on the lookout for the remainder of our events from the 2010-2011 academic year.

I hope that you enjoy reading this issue of *The Rainbow Revue* and will continue to read the publication as it is distributed.



POINTS TO PONDER:
"It would be a great mistake to spend all of the *Rainbow Revue's* ink on trials, tribulations, and obstacles."

5) Make this about you. Too often, subordinates (individuals and groups) spend a great amount of time thinking about and talking about the dominants in their lives. For instance, women might gather and talk only about men, blacks about whites, gays about straights, . . . What the *Revue* cannot be is yet another publication that gives more time and thought to those who dominate them. Rather, the important thing is to work on building a community that can sustain a movement for social justice and equality on our campus—in our time.

Best wishes to all *Rainbow Revue* editors, authors, and readers. Regardless of what the Rainbow Revue used to be and in spite of the opposition that you will no doubt face when hidden transcripts become public, I wish you well. And, I encourage you to re-read the demands that the BSC made for a better and future Davidson College. Not only will you be surprised by the demands and the hope that these students expressed; but also, you will be compelled to ask yourself: Are we there yet?

“Rather, the important thing is to work on building a community that can sustain a movement for social justice and equality on our campus— in our time.

-Dr. Hilton Kelly

Finding Myself in a White Sepulcher: A Reflection

Vanessa Williams ‘13
Anthropology Major

Somehow I make it back to campus after every Christmas Break. *Spring semester 2011*, I thought. After more than three weeks of sunshine, blue skies, and warm temperatures, I was welcomed by a wintery wonderland. Or, that’s what it seemed like. After the luster of such a scenic, awe-inspiring work of nature had worn off, I was hit by these words,

“In a very few hours, I arrived in a city that makes me think of a whited sepulcher. Prejudice, no doubt.”

Now, it could have just been the frigid temperatures, but recalling those particular words sent chills up my spine. It really got me thinking about a lot of things. Why, at that moment, did I find such terror in one of the most beautiful fields of my view my eyes have gazed upon?

Honestly, I think it may just be my subconscious fears and insecurities about my identity here. What trips me up the most, though, is the fact that I am used to the Davidson way of life. Not only have I

been a student here for over a year-and-a-half, but all prior schooling was saturated with an overwhelming volume of Anglo-Saxon-ide. Davidson prides itself on its uniqueness, bragging about the distinctive culture that gave the College its prestigious name. However, is this really such a great thing? I am not certain. Sometimes, I do not know with what I can assuage my need for certainty.

What do I know for certain is, though, are the benefits of having a small concentration of minority students. 1) We are easy to spot in the lunchroom if you do not see any of your other friends. 2) You know that at least one of us will be in some ethnic-sounding class if you are looking for a spot to fill in your schedule. 3) What we lose in quantity, we make-up for thousand fold in quality. I have forged so many unshakable friendships here. I came to appreciate my origins here. Most of all, however, I found myself here, and that makes all of the struggles worth it.

Progress and Privilege

Issac Bailey

Class of 1995

There were black people on stage. And black people waiting to take the stage. And many more black people in the Duke Family Performance Hall in the student union with a good number of white people and Asian American and Hispanic American people.

It was more than a year ago I took in the scene at the annual step competition-fundraiser, which included a Davidson step team, as well as those from Duke University and traditionally-black South Carolina State University, among other.

I was surprised by the size and enthusiasm of the crowd. I was stunned when I spied President Tom Ross sitting among the judges and was almost floored when Dean Ernest Jeffries informed me that it was not the largest crowd the event had ever garnered, and that it had been successfully held for several years by this point.

Such a scene at Davidson was foreign to my 35-year-old eyes. I graduated from the college in 1995. During my student years, we held a few events at the Black Student Coalition which attracted a fair audience, including a step dancing performance which included students from Johnson C. Smith. But nothing as traditionally black as the step show I witnessed early last year, or maybe two years ago, occurred on campus during my four-year tenure, at least not on that scale and with that consistency.

That image continues to be the foundation of my emerging views of Davidson as I celebrated my 15th reunion in November. And it's one I hope black Davidson students— and minority students of colors, backgrounds, sexualities and physical makeup— don't underestimate.

I was on campus that day reporting for *The Davidson Journal*, examining the college's changing definitions of diversity. I spoke to dozens of students. And many of them sounded a similar refrain. That Davidson is not diverse enough. That not enough of the cultural offerings they cherished

weren't an integral part of campus life. That too many white Davidson students avoided frankly speaking about the issue of race and avoided the BSC altogether. That there needed to be more professors of color.

Those observations sounded eerily familiar, for we were making the same claims when I was a student in the early- and mid-1990s. Each of those complaints is worthy of attention. And the fight for equality— however one defines the word— should never end.

But here is something that shouldn't be forgotten: When my parents unloaded me onto campus and left in the fall of 1991, Davidson's student body was roughly 92 percent white. There was no annual step show. There were no non-white fraternities or sororities on campus. There was no pre-orientation program for minority students that provided comprehensive support throughout the year instead of just the first weeks of a Davidson freshman's career.

Those things and so many more programs are available today. That doesn't mean Davidson has suddenly become the Howard University of the South. That won't happen and shouldn't. Davidson's uniqueness and hard-won identity would suffer if it did. And it doesn't mean more diversity among tenured-track professors should not be pursued. It should. This is what it means: Minority Davidson students, while fighting in the tradition of those who came before them to continue shaping and molding the college to become an even more equal place should not forget or underestimate the privileges from which they already benefit daily.

My one regret about my time at Davidson is that I learned that lesson too late.

Bailey is an award-winning columnist for The Sun News in Myrtle Beach, S.C., and author of the book "Proud. Black. Southern (But I Still Don't Eat Watermelon In Front Of White People)." He graduated in 1995 with a bachelor's of arts in psychology and is married with two children.

Dear Davidson Leaders,...

Kaneisha Gaston '13

English Major

Davidson has an uncanny ability to make us forget about the injustices in this world and, especially, on this campus. We get angry. We might have a discussion. We might build a building. Then we run to Chambers, snag a classroom, and forget about the inconsistencies in the world and on this campus. Why? Because at Davidson, work is more important than having real conversations about the junk that backs-up our systems and makes us shit the most ignorant and unintelligent things on this campus. To some, this introduction may seem a little aloof or illogical. To others, this introduction is spot on. It speaks to the hundreds of days, countless nights, and unspeakable moments when the pressures of being a minority on Davidson's campus become overwhelming. I want to preface everything I say after this point with this statement: I am Kaneisha Gaston and I speak for myself. I am not the spokesperson for Black/African American/Negro race on this campus. All of these views are mine and mine alone. If you happen to agree, that's cool. If you don't agree, so be it.

There is a problem with Davidson and its proclaimed "commitment" to diversity.

I have cited Davidson's revised commitment to diversity because, frankly, Davidson just isn't getting it right. Oh let me count the ways! I could waste your time in explaining each fault but I've decided that I've done too much already by even bothering to write this article and educate a population of the campus that does not want to be educated. I will instead focus on the "WHY?"

Much of Davidson's inability to ethically attract, effectively support, and retain diverse populations of students stems from the inability of campus administration (who pride themselves in being champions of minority populations on campus) to recognize that they are wrong and ill-prepared to truly care for minority students on this campus. Let's be real, there is always one administrator among many that fits into this category. Several of

you are thinking of a name right now. Nine times out of ten, this administrative leader is unaware of his or her privilege on a campus like Davidson's (or in the world for that matter). I want to unpack this leader's "Invisible Knapsack," if I can borrow the term from Peggy McIntosh, a white feminist known in the gamut of anti-racist education, in some sort of hope that this leader will read these words and re-evaluate the "work" (because that's all it is in the Davidson bubble) that this leader prides itself in on this campus. For the sake of time, I will only outline two.

1. She or he can if she or he wishes to be in the company of people of her or his race all of the time, regardless of her or his sexuality, socio-economic status, or religion.

Leaders who do not recognize their privilege in this manner are notorious for making blanket statements about the needs of ALL minority populations be they religious, ethnic, socio-economic, or lifestyle minorities because she or he may somehow belong to one of these groups outside of race. Some may ask, "Ms. Gaston, is it really all about race?" Don't ask me that.

Continued on page 8...

Inspirational Thoughts

"Education is that whole system of human training within and without the school house walls, which molds and develops men."

-W.E.B. DuBois
Continued on page 11...

The BSC is Yours

Ebony Harley
Class of 2009

You have chosen to attend college at an institution that will not only challenge you academically, but socially and culturally as well. I remember moving into my hall in the fall of 2005, and being in total and absolute culture shock when I realized that I would not only have to go to school with my hall mates, but I would have to LIVE with them as well. Like many of you, I participated in the S.T.R.I.D.E. pre-orientation program and heard the stories from the upper classmen about their various experiences, but I didn't realize that I too would have my own stories to tell. These experiences, both positive and negative, would shape my college career and I was determined to make the best out of it.

The BSC, for me, picked up where S.T.R.I.D.E. left off. It provided an arena for students to gather and express their feelings about issues affecting the minority community on and off Davidson's campus. It allowed me to build a safe space, so that when I put myself in situations that weren't necessarily inside my comfort zone, I had a community to fall back on. The BSC was an organization where I honed my leadership skills, and its members constantly challenged my views and opinions on subjects ranging from education and politics to the current state of hip hop. The BSC is where with many of my friends and classmates, I argued, conversed, laughed, cried, partied, strolled, yelled, studied and even prayed. It's where we worked together on behalf of others and even prepared meals for each other when we couldn't make it home for a holiday.

The BSC was and should remain a tight-knit community of people with similar interests involving people of color. I'm not naïve enough to think that all of you will feel this way about the BSC as an organization and many will view it and its members

as exclusive. For some it will just be a house on Patterson Court that plays "good music." For others it is "just" an organization for people of color. But for some, the BSC and their membership to it will play a significant role in their college career.

The fall of my junior year, I was nominated and elected to the position of president and the one thing that resonated most with the executive council was the need to foster the feeling of community. We realized that on a campus like Davidson's where many students are far from the comfort and familiarity of their homes, the fostering of a community was extremely important.

The two things that we worked on most were making the BSC feel homier and to increase awareness on Davidson's campus of the role of the BSC to its members and to the community in general. We painted, redecorated, and opened our doors to co-sponsor events with various campus organizations. We bought food for the kindred to eat and cook, and urged them to invite non-members for meetings. Little by little, I think we strengthened the community inside, and outside our walls. We showed the campus that the BSC is not exclusive and we welcome all students to join the community that we created.

As new organizations are welcomed to campus, and members pour their efforts elsewhere – the BSC should remain the strong, supportive, and stable community that it was created to be in 1967. I can only hope that those efforts had lasting effects and that all of you will continue to build that community. And at the very least that you all enjoy the flat screen television and cable, courtesy of the 08-09 executive council.

Continued from page 6...

When Davidson began boasting about the diversity of the 2014 class, one of the first (and at times only) things we hear is the increasing number of Black, Latino, and Asian students on campus. This leader knows not the pain (or beauty) of being Black or Latino in America or on Davidson's campus; she or he believes that the relatively small amount of discomfort experienced in her or his lifetime can compare to hundreds of years of racial subjugation. Long story, short, this leader does not fully understand the population she or he claims to serve. It ain't service if you don't understand the population you serve. Its called causing problems.

2. She or he is never called to speak for all people in her or his racial group.

The dominant culture loves picking out one person in the minority culture to advocate for the entire minority culture. I wonder if they even realize that they are undermining the minority culture's complexity in the process. It is interesting to note however that Davidson has a habit of making one leader the spokesperson for a complex population. The leader appointed to such a position eagerly takes on the esteemed role

of the spokesperson. Perhaps it is because in her or his dominant culture, the opportunity rarely exists. Dear leader, stop doing this. You have now become an agent of increased subjugation of minority rarely exists. Dear leader, stop doing this. You have now become an agent of increased subjugation of minority populations by diminishing their complexity and intricacy through giving voice to all of their concerns through your one voice. It is not possible to do so. Dear leader, stop that.

I understand that I may only be making sense to a few individuals. The leading statements come from Peggy McIntosh's article, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack. I encourage everyone to read it. I have used these statements to address the ways in which Davidson's administrative leadership impedes true progress towards creating an inclusive campus. Many of the statements found in McIntosh's article can be applied to the student population as well. While I will not demonstrate this now, understand that it is no less important to Davidson's commitment to diversity than the role of the administration.

Why Do We Celebrate Black History Month?

Although blacks have lived in America since colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that society began to record their accomplishments and contributions to society in our nation's history books. Dr. Carter G. Woodson, a professionally degreed Harvard graduate, found that history texts blatantly dismissed the black-American population and its influence on society. If any influence or contribution was recorded, it usually shed a negative light on the black-American population and reflected their inferior social position.

Born out of this realization was a desire to write black-American history into the nation's history. In 1915, Woodson created the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (currently known as the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History). In the following year, he founded the respected Journal of Negro History.

Continued on page 9...

An Open Letter to Davidson College

Izzy Justice

Class of 1990

My name is Izzy Justice (Class of 1990) and I am a member of the Davidson Alumni Board. I came to Davidson in 1986 on a scholarship as an international student from Southern Africa – the first from my country. While at Davidson I was very active in several organizations and won several leadership awards ... and have continued my engagement and support of Davidson both financially and with pro bono efforts since I live just a few miles away in Cornelius.

At the Alumni Board meeting Homecoming weekend, our Trustee Chair Mackey McDonald, came and spoke to us. He gave us a wonderful update on how Davidson has embraced Diversity and Globalization amongst other updates. He also gave us an update on the presidential search and someone asked him what the by-law criteria was for selecting the next president. And apparently there is only one – that the president be a Christian and upon being president, engage with Presbyterian activities on and off campus.

I found this terribly contradictory to what

Mackey had just spent the previous 20 minutes updating us on – the fact that Davidson takes its Diversity very seriously and is embracing globalization actively to prepare our students for the 21st century. I shared with him that as a non-Christian, I would probably NOT be sending my kids to Davidson since I would have a hard time telling them that if they go to Davidson, they could get a world class education and could be anything they wanted to be, including President of the United States, except being President of Davidson College...and the reason...their religious beliefs. If this is not hypocrisy at its finest, then I honestly do not know what is. For this to be THE ONLY by-law requisite for a president and it apply to ONLY ONE position at the college (the President) is baffling, discriminatory, prejudiced, and contrary to what a liberal arts education should be modeling.

As an alum that literally owes his life here in the US to Davidson (I feel I OWE Davidson and I LOVE Davidson) and has

Continued on page 10...

Why Do We Celebrate Black History Month?

Continued...

Woodson placed the first Negro History Week on the second week of February because it holds the birthdays of two men who have significantly influenced the black-American population: Frederick Douglass, a former slave who became one of the most prominent abolitionist and civil rights leader in the nation, and President Abraham Lincoln (February 12), who signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which abolished slavery in the nation's confederate states. In 1976, Negro History Week expanded into Black History Month, sometimes referred to as African American Heritage Month.

Continued on page 11...

POINTS TO PONDER:

"I would probably NOT be sending my kids to Davidson since I would have a hard time telling them that...they could get a world class education and could be anything they wanted to be...except being President of Davidson College..."

An Open Letter (continued...)

been incredibly active and supportive in a myriad of ways for the past 24 years, this by-law was incredibly hurtful to me. I am writing this letter to Davidson students because you (1) need to be aware of this and (2) should be equally troubled by this whether you are a Christian or non Christian. If you are part of the latter, know you are attending a school where you will never have the opportunity to be president as your religious beliefs will immediately disqualify you.

This by-law is religious discrimination instituted by bigots at a time when even rationalizing slavery in the name of religion was acceptable. It should be noted that the Southern Presbyterian Church was founded by the state's and nation's most vocal defender of Slavery. I was reminded in a recent conversation with an Alum from the Class of 1973 that about 30 years ago, Davidson made national news when it rescinded a job offer to a faculty member who refused to sign a declaration of Christian Faith as part of the process to be hired by Davidson. There is also a matter of whether this by-law is even legal under Title VII.

Through our history, when people of character and goodwill are confronted with prejudice or injustice or a moment of change...they hear their conscience and respond to it with action...mostly

because it is the right thing to do. Is this not what our Honor Code teaches us? There were times when we did not let people of color into Davidson, when we did not let women in, when we discriminated against people who were different from the norm. You, the students and the rest of the Davidson family, are now at such a time and I am asking you to respond with action to what might be one of the last discriminatory policies that Davidson still has. I am asking you to speak up, tell your parents, and other members of the Davidson family and force the College we love to be better than it is. Other people and students have paved the way for you to be there, if you are not a white male Presbyterian Christian. You now need to stand up for those coming behind you ... and be the students that make this change of eliminating this discriminatory by-law at Davidson ... for Davidson.

EDITORS NOTE: This article was printed with the permission of Mr. Izzy Justice. Upon speaking with Mr. Justice, I was informed that Mr. Justice originally wished to publish his remarks in *The Davidsonian*, the primary, student-run news publication at Davidson College. Due to the nature of his article, his remarks were not published under the following conditions:

- 1) The college will commit to informing the incoming president about the conditions under which a president of Davidson College is selected and will address the issue within the first year of the incoming president's presidency.
- 2) The college will openly talk about policies that may prohibit some of its donor, alumni, and students from participating in all aspect of the institution.

I have published it here as an act of accountability. If you have questions, comments, or concerns please contact Mr. Justice at ijjustice@eqmentor.com, or the BSC at BSCExecCouncil@gmail.com.

Have perspectives, updates, or original works to share? The Rainbow Revue is always looking for YOU to contribute to the conversations here and to start new ones. Email BSCExecCouncil@gmail.com to submit articles for our semesterly publication.

-The *Rainbow Revue* Staff

Arts and Entertainment

Student, faculty, and staff works of creative writing and non-fiction with a touch of historical inspiration

daythoughts

Kaneisha Gaston '13

English Major

the greatest offense is when those that offend use the fact that they don't understand the nature of the offense as defense for not addressing the offense. so the offended are defending against being offended (or their right to be offended) and those that offend are defending their inability to understand the offense, but no one addresses the great offense. how are we expected to build a community of mutual respect, across differences, if offenses are not addressed and the defenders of an offense are not challenged to relinquish the power they have, if only for a moment, to defend an offensive [insert item here], to address the concerns of the offended? trying to make sense of it all even when this conversation doesn't make sense.

sn:
and if i'm proud of who i am and the culture i represent, who are you to say that i am being petty for defending the purity of my culture, and myself?
and who am i not to stand by my brother or sister who wishes to protect to purity of their own culture, and themselves? by standing by them i am saying that 'i acknowledge your usefulness and your importance in this society and in my understanding of the world.'
i am saying 'I recognize your humanity by recognizing your hurt.'
i am saying 'i love you.'

#loveistherevolution

written in response to campus events from 2/3/11 – 2/22/11.



Black History

Continued from page 9...

Now that American is recognizing the contribution and accomplishments of its black-American population, the question is where do we go from here? Should February be the only time we whip out the black posters in the hallway, play black movies on the local channels, and share a list of cliché black accomplishments on the morning announcements? No. America is still struggling to move into the full incorporation of black- American History into its own history, the original vision of Dr. Woodson.

“We should emphasize not Negro History, but the Negro in the History. What we need is not a history of selected races or nations, but the history of the world void of national bias, race hate, and religious prejudice.”

-Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) on founding Negro History Week, 1926

2010-2011

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Keynote Speaker of the Davidson College MLK Convocation and
Inaugural Common Hour 2011

childhood remembrances are always a drag
if you're Black
you always remember things like living in Woodlawn
with no inside toilet
and if you become famous or something
they never talk about how happy you were to have
your mother
all to yourself and
how good the water felt when you got your bath
from one of those
big tubs that folk in Chicago barbecue in
and somehow when you talk about home
it never gets across how much you
understood their feelings
as the whole family attended meetings about Hollydale
and even though you remember
your biographers never understand
your father's pain as he sells his stock
and another dream goes
And though you're poor it isn't poverty that
concerns you
and though they fought a lot
it isn't your father's drinking that makes any difference
but only that everybody is together and you
and your sister have happy birthdays and very good
Christmases
and I really hope no white person ever has cause
to write about me
because they never understand
Black love is Black wealth and they'll
probably talk about my hard childhood
and never understand that
all the while I was quite happy

Her Heart

Rodney Saunders '13
Theatre Major

She used to want implants.

Jealous of the attention all the top heavy girls got from the jocks, she was unaware that an artificial pair of breasts would only make it more difficult... to get to her heart... Only noticing the guys' jaw-dropping at the sight of D's, she had no clue that it was only because they envisioned those same girls' jaws dropping that very night... With the dream of enticing a stranger, she wanted something artificial due to only being able to see what's superficial, but she's genuinely beautiful just the way that she is.

She didn't believe it though.

Her own words falling on deaf ears, she would be the one who told her friends "You know he's only talking to you because you have big boobs, right?" But would instead believe *them* when they told her: "You're just jealous."

So jealous she grew, and as her jealousy grew, she realized it was directly proportional to that which she wished her breasts did... Thinking that she lacked the one thing that every man wanted, she chose not to let love in... so I knew the reason she would ignore me saying hi, or look past the fact that I could look her in the eye anytime that we spoke... She simply thought that I was being nice.

But after countless attempts to get her attention, she finally realized that feelings didn't come from feeling... they came from the one place which she wanted to distance everyone from – her heart.

Seeing her own inner beauty, she learned to let love in. But before she realized her natural value, I used to watch from a distance just thinking... If she was my girl, she would probably apologize for not having any cushions for me to rest on... and if I was her boy I'd respond, "Baby, if I wanted a cushion to rest on, we've got pillows right there. But right now, RIGHT NOW, I just want to hear your heart beat... *love*, *love*, *love*..."

If she was my girl... and I was her boy... she would laugh at herself for ever wanting to change who she is in the first place.

But she's not my girl... she's a woman now... a woman who let my love in because she first learned to love herself, and that's what I love most about her.



Stepping for Opportunity

February 5th Davidson College hosted the 5th **Annual Greek Apocalypse Step Show** with, get this, the entire Divine Nine. Davidson College's own Tau Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Sigma Psi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and Pi Mu Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. participated in the event. Alpha Phi Alpha won first place in the fraternity division.

But the event meant more to several members of the audience that night. All proceeds went to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Charlotte and the Ada Jenkins Community Center, both of which with beneficiaries in the audience. It is our hope that this event will continue to bring the both sides of the Davidson community together.

Features

For your own edification

The views in this section do not necessarily reflect the views of the Black Student Coalition or ALL of its members.

EDITORS NOTE: The following article, submitted to *The Davidsonian* in 1983, provides several proposals from the Black Student Coalition. Dr. Hilton Kelly references this article in his article Ground Rules on page 4. Are there yet? What needs work? What is our duty to make sure that this happens?

Courtesy of Davidson College archives

BSC Proposes Project '87

The Black Student Coalition

In the wake of Dr. Charles King's and Dr. James Forbes' messages to black students on campus, we have decided to cease our disgruntled murmurings and act. Davidson has professed a commitment to its black students, and many white students have said that they want to help us; well, this is your chance to prove it. We have had enough foot-dragging and intellectualism.

It is not up to us to figure out for you how to do what we ask; we can only say that we are tired of waiting. Davidson, you know what needs to be done because we are telling you now. And it's so very simple: if you are committed, these things will get done. We have drawn up the following proposal. Now, Davidson it's up to you. And we will not wait any longer for the things we should have had long ago.

PROJECT '87

Problem: Black students at Davidson have become increasingly discontent with the college and its policies. Our continuing disorientation and feelings of alienation have given us reason to question seriously the extent of Davidson's commitment to making this a healthy environment for all students. We feel that all students, both black and white, are being cheated.

Therefore, we have drawn up the following proposal in order that Davidson might know what things are immediately necessary if its black students are ever to view the Davidson experience as a positive one. We believe that the following goals should be met by 1987:

1. At least one hundred black students enrolled. This

will require a doubling of the present enrollment of black students, as well as a reduction in the attrition rate. Also, we believe that an effort should be made to bring the black male-female ratio down to that of the college: at least to a ratio of 2 to 1.

2. At least ten American black professors. Although we want these professors at Davidson regardless of their academic fields, we believe that a special effort should be made to hire blacks in the following disciplines: Sociology, English, Political Science, Mathematics, History and Economics.

3. A black Dean of Students. The amount of work and travel required of an Assistant Dean of Admissions/Students leaves an administrator in that position insufficient time to address our many needs as black students.

4. At least five black studies courses, with special emphasis on the following disciplines: History, English, Sociology, and Political Science. We feel that at least one of these courses should be made mandatory for all students, and that black professors should teach these courses. Furthermore, we believe that the black experience should be incorporated into existing courses whenever possible.

5. By 1990, we believe that Davidson's number of black students and professors should reflect the percentage of blacks in America, approximately 11-12%.

The Black Student Coalition is willing to assist in any way possible in the implementation of this proposal. We feel that the urgency of our needs warrants diligence in seeking that they be met.

This article, drafted at a BSC meeting, was edited by senior Stone Bynum and junior Janet Stovall.

Response to *Black Sexual Politics*: Recovering Black Voices for Black Bodies

Eric King Watts, Ph.D.

Wake Forest University, Delivered at the National Communication Association Conference (Chicago, 2004)

During his recent comedy stand-up tour, Chris Rock parodies part girls shaking their booties to a hit by the Ying Yang Twins. Although the bit is funny, Rock seemed sincerely confused about how Lil Jon's infectious beat could make lewd requests for sexual favors and graphic references to sweat dripping off my balls seem irrelevant. "Don't you hear that?" he seemed to ask. Initially, I thought the answer to this question was "well, yes, but we don't care, the beat is the bomb." But, after reading Patricia Hill Collins's book, *Black Sexual Politics*, I think the answer to the question, do you hear that is "no, not really." What I want to sketch out this morning, in broad strokes, is a relation between the display and consumption of black bodies and the strategic degradation of black voices. Collins's work proposes a provocative challenge to African American rhetorical studies by suggesting that there is a corrosive tension between seeing and hearing: constitutive of spectacular consumption, the hyper-sexuality of black bodies contributes to the erosion of black voices. I will discuss the character of this challenge to African American rhetorical studies by first examining what Collins means by hyper-sexuality; second, going along with Collins, I will argue that such a massive display of black sexuality is a part of a process that not only suppresses public moral argument regarding how our youth are impacted by this kind of sexual socialization, but that it tears away at the communal character of black voice. Lastly, I'll suggest ways in which black rhetorical studies might meet this challenge.

Throughout *Black Sexual Politics*, Collins tells us that in terms of the representation of black bodies, we cannot trust what we see. The hyper-visibility of black bodies in various media produces the appearance, the semblance of "freedom." The spectacular circulation of imagery of black sexuality, ironically, reifies exclusive and hierarchical social arrangements. In a sense then, black bodies are phantasms— they seemingly "pass" through all sorts of borders and boundaries. But Collins argues that this passing is not actual

(at least not as actual as it should be), it is commercial, manufactured for consumption. As such, the market value of this "passing" is directly related to the sexualized fear and desire of the Otherness that is projected onto black bodies. In order to fabricate higher market value for Serena Williams' breasts or butt, for instance, her image has to be everywhere and be perceived as "rare"; in Williams' case, her sexuality is shaped nearly in terms of the paranormal and the supernatural, as big, bold, beautiful, and bad. Collins rightly asserts that there sorts of black bodily displays hinder public deliberation on the health care risks of black youth because they offer up in American imagination myths about black sex, linking risky behavior to personal failure or cultural dysfunction.

The spectacular consumption of black bodies, therefore, is not benign, it is malignant. This is so because it is also noisy; hyper-visibility has a sound track. You don't just *see* bling, you *hear* it's distinctive ring. Thus, hype is loud. The spectacular consumption of black bodies eats away at black voices precisely because it offers amped-up diversions from the material conditions of black life. Elsewhere I have argued that black voice is a phenomenon of public hearing; it involves the

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Response to *Black Sexual Politics* (continued...)

acknowledgement of the ethical and emotional character of black speech. As such, black voice is dialogic. And so, when Collins asserts that an “anti-racist African American politics” depends on our capacity to “keep race, class, gender, sexuality, and age in dialogue with one another,” I hear a challenge to black rhetorical studies to engender black voice over the ring of the bling. Collins writes; “[I]n the context of a new racism, men and women who rescue and redefine sexuality as a source of power rooted in spirituality, expressiveness, and love can craft new understandings of Black masculinity and Black femininity needed for a progressive Black sexual politics” (51). Collins refers to the erotic as a key source of power rooted in spirituality. I have treated the erotic as a vital and ancient form of communication because it helps us to locate the words we need to touch the hearts of our fellow human beings. And so, the erotic is connected to the voice because, among other things, it is a mode of rhetorical invention, it can do what Collins urges, “to craft new understandings.”

Black rhetorical studies might contribute, therefore, to a Black sexual politics by taking

Professor Collins’ advice and building from “scratch.” Professor Collins argues that a new understanding of gender ideologies must “reflect the needs of actual lived Black experience” (306). Black rhetorical studies must mine the resources of these experiences and explore how the discursive shapes and is shaped by the material. When I search for an exemplar of such a practice, I am reminded of Thurman Garner’s work on how “playing the dozens” builds community. Black rhetorical studies can help revitalize black voices by attending to their rich textures, their emotional and moral senses. Chris Rocks’s party girls could not hear the ethical challenge to their well-being because their own bodies were driven by a fat beat. Rhetorical studies in general dedicates itself to the practice of speaking. Perhaps Black rhetoric, however, should spend a bit more time and energy on providing quiet spaces for hearing, for reflecting on each other. Can you *hear* that?

This paper was submitted by Ashley Sherrill, a staff member of the Center for Civic Engagement. Mrs. Sherrill is the Director of the Freedom Schools Program at Davidson College.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN AND AROUND DAVIDSON

January 28-June 19 *Black Music After 1968: The Photography of Jim Alexander* at the Harvey B. Gantt Center in Charlotte. He has photographed African American music makers, both sacred and secular, playing and singing jazz, blues, gospel, rhythm and blues, and popular music with regularity since 1968. This exhibition presents some of the highlights from this project. **March 2-5** *KMBA, presented by On Q productions* at the Bluementhal in Charlotte. "Want to know why "those people" are still so wound up about race? KMBA packs the best of chocolate entertainment television into a delightful evening program created by the black and angsty minds of some of Charlotte’s finest performing, visual, and literary artists. Tickets required. **March 17** *Love of Learning Panel* brought to you by Dr. Kelly’s EDU300 course, Education in African American Society. Email hikelly@davidson.edu for more information. **March 31- April 3** *Garth Fagan Dance* will be at the Bluementhal in Charlotte. The dance troupe is a staple in the world of dance, winning numerous awards and producing famed dancers such as Natalie Rogers and Norwood Pennewell. Tickets required. **April 2** *African Dance for Everyone with Oneaka Dance Company* at the Harvey B. Gantt Center. Museum admission required.

The Black Student Coalition at Davidson College

The Black Student Coalition was founded in 1967 "to establish and maintain a spirit of solidarity among the Black students of Davidson College." The BSC received their Patterson Court House in 1981.

Our mission is to thrive as the Mecca of campus life and to bridge the gap between the Davidson College community and those who surround it. Our motto is "Unity, Dedication, and Love."

This group is open to each and every person on Davidson's campus. We appreciate and accept every one, no matter what his/her racial/ethnic affiliation may be.

Stay connected to the BSC by finding us on Facebook under *The Black Student Coalition* and following us on Twitter at *BSC_ExecCouncil*.



Contact the Black Student Coalition or send a submission to BSCExecCouncil@gmail.com

The views and opinions expressed in the Rainbow Revue are not necessarily the views and opinions of the Black Student Coalition or ALL of its members.

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:

Kaneisha Gaston '13,

STAFF: Calley Anderson '14, Vanessa Williams '13, Daavonia Womack-Lee '14. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact

us at

BSCExecCouncil@gmail.com or kagaston@davidson.edu.

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The Black Student Coalition

Davidson College

209 Ridge Road
Davidson, NC, 28035