

QUAESTIONES DE QUOLIBET

Fall 2008

Diversity: Myth or Reality at UST?

By Paul Armstrong

A lot has been said in recent years about diversity at our campus; after all, it is one of the seven convictions of this institution, alongside such pillars of an academic institution as the pursuit of truth and academic excellence. Moreover, diversity is given an additional status boost above these categories, since there is a separate section under "About UST" on the UST homepage, dedicated solely to diversity. Yet what exactly is this diversity which is sought, and for what purpose?

Naturally, one may be inclined to think that our administration is simply trying to "fit in" with a general fad for diversity, in a politically correct world; yet even if this were the case, is there no objective merit to a diverse student body?

For me personally, this quest for diversity here was somewhat of a surprise, but for much different reasons than it may be for others. Coming from a bilingual household, and having lived in three different countries and four different states, I have been in many places where I was an outsider, and not part of the "majority" in some

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Voting Qualms?

Why I was tempted not to vote, but did.

By Marissa Evans

So this is the first time I get to vote for president. I am tempted not do it.

It's just too difficult! Too many issues, not enough information combined with the realization that the candidates aren't going to tell me what they really think. I hate the feeling that I have to just pick someone and pray that it was the right choice. I dislike the feeling that the only information I have is probably just a lie.

I am a Catholic. I vote for the person who upholds human dignity the most. I don't know who it is, honestly, because I don't trust the campaigns. I don't know who really cares for human dignity. I know McCain's party is against abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research, and homosexual marriage. But I don't know that McCain himself is against these things, and that is my difficulty. He has never mentioned these issues in any of his speeches. This could be because he doesn't write his speeches, or it could be because he does not care about any of these issues. These "social" issues make a difference to me. I call them "life issues" and I care about them above all else. Yet I have a hard time voting for McCain based on these, because I don't think he actually cares about them.

However, I also have a hard time deciding on Obama. I like his speeches--he has great skill in oration. He can rouse a crowd, and seems to care very much about the middle class. Yet on these life issues his views are very much opposite mine. He is all for all five of the aforementioned ideas, and would have no problem allowing them to happen. People say that doesn't mean he will actually do anything to make them happen. I have

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President's Corner

The Honors Scholars experience

When I came to St. Thomas as a freshman, I said to myself, "I wish I knew everything now that I will know as a senior." Well, this is my senior year, and I am hoping I know more now than before entering the University of St. Thomas. While many things here have helped me grow as a person (i.e. classes, the residence halls, on campus organizations), one thing that has particularly inspired my growth has been the Aquinas Honors Scholars Program. My fellow upperclassmen have their own stories and experiences, perhaps entirely different than mine, but I would like to share with you some of the things I have learned from my four honors classes and three seminars:

1. Will and Grace. No, not the television show, but human free will and God's grace. One J-term is not nearly enough to solve the millennial dilemma of combining these two aspects! (Thank you Will and Grace seminar).
2. Shaving a tiny bit off a die can greatly improve your odds in the gambling world. (Thank you honors Statistics).
3. In a class of Aquinas Scholars, be the first to give a presentation. (Thank you honors Philosophy of the Human Person).
4. Old Testament women deserve more credit. (Thank you honors Old Testament).
5. How dark were the "Dark Ages"? (Thank you Ideas Matter seminar).
6. Music will set you free! Literally, oppressed people have used music to win their freedom. (Thank you Music as Resistance seminar).
7. One hour naps can improve memory! Warning, do not rely on this method to pass your finals. (Thank you honors General Psychology).

I'm sure others of you have, or will have, learned much from your Honors sections and seminars as well. Good luck with the rest of the semester and enjoy the Aquinas Honors Scholars experience!

Billy J. Dodge
President
Aquinas Scholars

Interested in writing for the QDQ? Please contact either Paul Armstrong (ptarmstrong@stthomas.edu) or Marissa Evans (mcevens2@stthomas.edu)

Freshman Retreat

This year's freshman retreat once again took place at the beautiful Koinonia Retreat Center in South Haven, MN. The overnight took place on the 13th and 14th of September. A total of 41 participated in the event, including nine board members. Koinonia offers swimming, canoeing, paddleboats, volleyball, hiking trails, a labyrinth, and many more outdoor activities. Unfortunately, we arrived with a downpour of rain making outdoor activities less than desirable.

Despite the rainy weather, and the cancellation of the annual game of capture the flag, a good time was had by all. There was a break in the rain for a couple hours in the afternoon, and volleyball, swimming, and sauning was enjoyed by many. Thankfully, Koinonia also offered a large array of indoor activities including ping pong, foosball, billiards, board games, and many others.

After a wonderful dinner we all sat in shock and awe of one another as we conducted a talent show. Talents included singing, piano playing, skits, slight of hand, limericks, and many others. From there we all headed down to the lakeside for a bonfire and smores. Thankfully the rain had completely stopped. On Sunday the traditional scavenger hunt took place. As always, this year's hunt pushed the imagination of the freshman scholars to the limit and brought exciting results. As your social chairs, James Munger and I would like to thank all who came. We truly enjoyed the experience.

Aaron Josephson

Upcoming Scholars Events

- November 11th, 12:45 (JRC LL62)- Pizza with a Prof: Dr. Buri speaking on "Love, Sex and Marriage"
- November 13th, 6:00-8:00pm (MHC 304)- Welcome Banquet for incoming scholars
- November 15th (8:00am)- Scholars trip to Goodwill
- November 19th - Scholars Up 'Til Dawn Team
- TBA- excursion to see *Quantum of Solace*, the new James Bond movie

Schola Holla

We asked Scholars about pressing issues, and here's what they think:

1) Election Postmortem: McCain v Obama. See what the scholars thought about the candidates and issues:

"I feel more inclined to vote for Obama. This is mostly because I feel that McCain is fake and unreal. Obama is more open-minded. Sarah Palin is a joke. She is smart. I will give her that. But the only reason that she was nominated for the vice presidency is because McCain was hoping to get the women's vote. And from what I have heard my fellow females say, they think that also. Many other women have expressed disgust at this ploy, thinking that it is wrong of McCain to think women would vote for Sarah Palin simply because she is of the same gender."
-Jaclyn Kartak

-“ McCain: because we are one vote away from overturning *Roe vs. Wade*. No other reason should be necessary to any reasonable pro-lifer--or, for that matter, any Catholic.” -James Heaney

-“ I'm voting for Obama, because Alicia Keys feels that I should. That, and I agree with him about the war, and the economy, and the environment, and he's a strong and principled leader. Obama '08!” -Ellie McDonnell

2) Energy Crisis. Gas prices have fallen, but this solution is only temporary. Or is it? Has the energy crisis passed? Do we need an extensive long term plan? Nuclear power? Hydrogen cars? Wind power?

-“The temporary decline in gas prices, while an economic bonus for the average American, should not necessary be seen as a demonstration of a resolved energy crisis. We do need to explore other forms of energy, while this may require a considerable initial investment, I believe renewable energy sources will result in greater longterm benefits than costs.” -Rachel Eaton

-“ I think that the best energy to look into is wind energy. I think that along with more cars that are hybrids or fully electric will help us to be able to get out our energy crisis and reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.” - Leigh Ann Thul

-“ Energy prices fell sharply when the stock market crashed a few weeks ago. So I have a new energy plan: we cause vast stock market turmoil and further financial collapse by arbitrarily shutting down companies that make annoying products. We'll start with whoever's behind HeadOn ("Apply directly to the forehead!") and decide the rest by vote (I nominate singing fish manufacturers as next target). The Heaney Plan thus decreases the cost of living while increasing the quality of life.” -James Heaney

3) Amethyst Initiative. University presidents across the country have started a movement to reopen discussion about the drinking age. Is this a good idea? Will anything of consequence follow from this initiative? Should it be supported by UST? (See Aquin from 09/12/08 for more information. Also, check out <http://www.amethystinitiative.org/>)

-“Considering how many fatalities and injuries that have come from binge drinking in recent years, I am in favor of the Amethyst Initiative. While it is not making the concrete decision of whether to lower the drinking age or not, this council of colleges across the nation has taken the first step in opening this dialogue. Clearly the drinking culture in America needs to change; it does not need to be a contest among friends to see who can become the most drunk. There needs to be a cultural shift in realizing that alcohol can be used and enjoyed among friends and family responsibly. Lowering the drinking age may not necessarily bring this about immediately, but this shift in attitudes must begin somewhere and soon before there are more unnecessary fatalities.” -Molly Gill

-“ I think you'll be hard-pressed to find any college student arguing *against* allowing college students to drink. This may be because we have a conflict of interest or because we see firsthand the irrationality of the current law, but probably both.” - James Heaney

Upcoming Honors Sections and Seminars

Seminars

J-Term 2009

Law and Society

J-term 2009 - TR 9:00-Noon

Professors: Dr. Steven Hatting and Dr. Peter Parilla

Remembering Jesus

J-term 2009 – MW 1:00-4:00pm

Professors: Dr. Gregory Robinson-Riegler and Dr. David Landry

IDSC 480-03 Community Action/Social Change*- 2 credits

J-term 2009 – TR 4:00-7:00pm

IDSC 480-04 Fieldwork Community Action* - 2 credits

J-term 2009 - Day & time to be determined

Professors: Dr. Kimberly Vrudny (UST, Theology) and Kevin Winge (Executive Director of Open Arms of Minnesota)

*Need to be enrolled in both courses at the same time.

Spring 2009

Brain Machine Interface

Spring 2009 - M 2:55-4:35pm

Professors: Dr. AnnMarie Thomas and Dr. Jennifer Prichard

Photographs as Documents in U.S. History

Spring 2009—Late Thursday afternoon—3:25-5pm

Professors: Dr. Scott Wright and Mark Jensen

Athletics: Building Character

Spring 2009 – R 9:55-11:35am

Professors: Dr. Steve Laumakis and Dr. Daniel Carey

Race and Representation

Spring 2009 – R 1:30-3:10pm

Professors: Dr. Heather Shirey, Dr. Dina Gavrilos

Sectarianism, Peace & N. Ireland

Spring 2009 – T 1:30 - 3:10pm

Professors: Dr. Bernard Brady and Dr. Thomas Redshaw

IDSC 480-06 (CRN 40616) The Foreign Experience

Spring 2009 – R 5:15-6:45pm

Professors: Dr. Joan Piorkowski and Dr. Lon Otto

IDSC 480-07 (CRN40617) The Research Experience

Spring 2009 - Day & Time to be determined

Professor: Dr. Stephen J. Laumakis

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.stthomas.edu/aquinasscholars/seminars/default.html>

Classes

J-Term 2009

No Honors Sections are offered during J-Term 2009.

Spring 2009

IDSC 490 Lincoln, Civil War & Constitution**

MWF 12:15-1:20

Instructor: Dr. Michael Paulsen

** This course counts towards a history or political science major or minor, as well as towards a legal studies minor.

THEO 101: The Christian theological Tradition

MWF 10:55-12:00

Instructor: Dr. Shirley Jordon

THEO 200: Christian Belief

MWF 1:35-2:40

Instructor: Dr. Barbara Sain

THEO 215: Christian Morality

MWF 9:35-10:40

Instructor: Dr. Bernard Brady

THEO 397: Theology and Mass Media

TR 9:55-11:35

Instructor: Dr. David Landry

PHIL 115: Philosophy of the Human Person

MWF 10:55-12:00

Instructor: Dr. Michael Rota

PHIL 214: Ethics

TR 8:00-9:40

Instructor: Dr. Michael Winter

PHIL 214: Ethics

TR 1:30-3:10

Instructor: Dr. John Kronen

Math 114: Calculus II

TR 1:30-3:10

Instructor: Dr. Arkady Shemyakin

HIST 114: Modern U.S. in Global Perspective

TR 9:55-11:35

Instructor: Dr. Anne Klejment

ENGL 190: Critical Reading and Writing

TR 1:30-3:10

Instructor: Dr. Susan Callaway

ECON 252: Principles of Microeconomics

TR 8:00-9:40

Instructor: Dr. Luz Saavedra

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.stthomas.edu/aquinasscholars/seminars/default.html>

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		3		5	4		7	
2		9	3			5		4
		5	1		2	4		
3	4							7
		1	4	3		9		5
		2					5	6
	3		6		5	8		2
5	9			2	3			

From: <http://math.about.com/od/recreationalmath/ss/Sudoku.htm>

Voting, continued from Pg. 1

a problem with his comfort though. He would be comfortable with legalized abortion. I'm not comfortable with voting in someone who is so comfortable with that, because that says something about his view on human dignity. If he has no problem with abortion, stem cell research, mercy killing, etc, that view indicates a lack of respect for human life that I cannot condone.

Yet I don't know that he is comfortable with those things, because he rarely talks about them. McCain doesn't talk about them either. The issues I care most about are the issues that both the candidates seem to care least about. Neither of them seem to care about my issues, which makes me think I don't care which takes office.

Therefore I am tempted not to exercise my power to vote. You could tell me that I have no right to complain, and I would say, I know. I won't complain, because I know there's no perfect candidate. Humans aren't perfect. I will keep thinking about it and talking to people. I may vote for McCain because he will protect human life the most, should the issue come up. I know the risk that comes with staying with this party. But I guess, going with what I know, "his" views will be most aligned with mine on the issues I see as non-negotiable.

Diversity, continued from Pg. 1

way, shape or form. Prior to coming to UST, I had attended either international schools, or extremely diverse public schools. Hence, upon coming to a university where about eighty percent of the students come from a single state, and approximately ninety percent are Caucasian, I must admit that I underwent a bit of a shock. In comparison to the other stages of my schooling, St. Thomas is undoubtedly the most homogeneous school that I have ever attended, particularly in the outlook, interests and worldview of students here.

Having earlier attended institutions of much greater diversity than this one, I must admit that this comparative homogeneity can indeed be detrimental, namely, since it decreases opportunities for more comprehensive learning and understanding, in particular outside of the classroom. Moreover, where a diverse student population is present, two things occur. One is able to gain a deeper understanding of oneself, and better form one's views, based on a multitude of ideas circulating due to the differences between students; additionally, one earns a greater respect and tolerance for cultures, ideas, backgrounds and opinions that are different from one's own, if one is in touch with them on a daily basis.

Therefore, I present our institution of higher learning with a challenge: to create an atmosphere in which real diversity is present. Moreover, I believe that UST's Catholic character underlines the need for such a characteristic to be present on this campus; originating from the Latin *catholicus*, meaning universal, it would be beneficial for UST to embody this principle. Additionally, this diversity should manifest itself in many ways in order for it to be genuine; not only should the focus be on cultural and ethnic differences, but on that of opinion, and even home state, bringing more students from outside of Minnesota and even the Midwest

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ALABAMA TEXAS
 ALASKA UTAH
 ARIZONA VERMONT
 ARKANSAS VIRGINIA
 CALIFORNIA WASHINGTON
 COLORADO WEST VIRGINIA
 CONNECTICUT WISCONSIN
 DELAWARE WYOMING
 FLORIDA
 GEORGIA
 HAWAII
 IDAHO
 ILLINOIS
 INDIANA
 IOWA
 KANSAS
 KENTUCKY
 LOUISIANA
 MAINE
 MARYLAND
 MASSACHUSETTS
 MICHIGAN
 MINNESOTA
 MISSISSIPPI
 MISSOURI
 MONTANA
 NEBRASKA
 NEVADA
 NEW HAMPSHIRE
 NEW JERSEY
 NEW MEXICO
 NEW YORK
 NORTH CAROLINA
 NORTH DAKOTA
 OHIO
 OKLAHOMA
 OREGON
 PENNSYLVANIA
 RHODE ISLAND
 SOUTH CAROLINA
 SOUTH DAKOTA
 TENNESSEE

A C A Y L H N O G E R O I C R E
 N I L E O A D E W A M R Y L P V
 A B A S U F N O K M U L D O R E
 I A Y R I Z A D C O A L S H T U
 D L G E S A N A S I L S I U V A
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 I I B W A L I R A I G R O E G K
 K A L E N M O D N A L Y R A M A
 L K E N A F W I S C O N S I N N
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 S H A N E W H A M P S H I R E S
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 N N I Y O T C L I P P Z L H A N
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 D E L A W A R E O T A E L A H T
 E I L H O I L I L U N W I H C N
 E R L S E E H A S O D Y O K A E
 S A N L L O L E X S L O N L S K
 S K E L I L N E B R A S K A S B
 E S V G I N U T H L R K O Y A R
 N A A I L T O K R O Y W E N M L
 N L D N A D L I D A L O H A D I
 E A A H L A M P S G N I M O Y W
 T L A I N A V L Y S N N E P L H

Kids-Teens.org

In my dreams for this university, which I have grown very fond of, I hope that it will become the *alma mater* of students from all different walks of life. The Catholic foundation of our school will not be lost through the inception of genuine diversity; I can say this with no doubt, based my own experiences, as well as those of others which I have seen growing up. Through a diversification of the student body, I believe that this school can become an academically stronger, and more prestigious, institution than it already is, if indeed a diversity of many qualities is established.

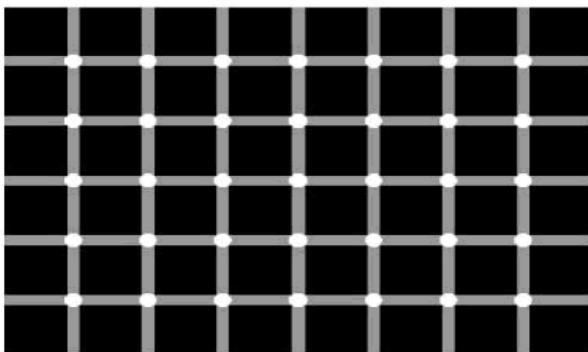
Want to have your opinions heard? Agree or disagree with something you read in this issue?

WRITE TO THE QDQ

Email either Paul Armstrong (ptarmstrong@stthomas.edu) or Marissa Evans (mcevans2@stthomas.edu)

From: http://www.kids-teens.org/independence_day/50_state.htm

How many black dots do you see? There are none...



CollegeBoredom.com

Mailbox #: