



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

September 26, 2023

2023-2024 Board Members

President Edwin Peacock

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Past Pres William Bradley

Secretary John Cantrell

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Directors 2022-2024

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Linwood Bolles

Terri DeBoo

Andy Dinkin

Donna Dunlap

David Head

Joel Ford

Membership Terri DeBoo

Foundation Joe Morris

Programs Andy Dinkin



Douglas Hicks, Davidson College's 19th President

by **Susie Masotti**

Doug Hicks, President of Davidson College served as this week's speaker at the Charlotte Rotary Club meeting. A Davidson graduate himself (having returned as President in August of 2022), Doug first took the opportunity to acknowledge Charlotte Rotary Club Member Martin Waters, a Davidson Alum from the class of 1948.

Doug shared that the College is focused on a liberal arts education that starts with building a campus community and teaching for a lifetime that includes involvement in their community throughout their careers and lives. Charlotte has always been the largest draw for their student population, but they are proud to have students representing more than 3 dozen countries. Doug is particularly pleased that their alumni base stands at a +10% for students who end up staying, working, and living in this area.

Doug remarked that he had been on the job just 30 days when he participated in the most unique graduation ceremony he had ever attended – for just one graduate – Stefan Curry. With coverage from ESPN (and every other network around the world), Davidson's Graduation on that day had more than 5.4 million viewers. Doug shared that he was able to spend time with Stefan and that he found his character is truly reflective of the Davidson community as a whole and he looks forward to planned conversations about how Stefan can become more of a leader off the basketball court.

Davidson College's mentoring program is their bread and butter as it keeps their students engaged and focused. When Covid hit, the mentoring program took a hard hit and the school learned that in-person experience is their key but that a hybrid education (in-person and online) has shown how they can grow. Education is changing and Davidson is working hard to stay ahead of the game.

Davidson has worked hard to remove the need for student loans to attend and toward a work-study model. The net end based on income has helped them attract new students who may not have had the opportunity to attend Davidson.

Doug pointed to the history of Davidson dating back to 1837 and how he and staff and faculty are all keenly aware that enslaved individuals fired and placed the bricks that some of their current buildings were built from. Morally this was wrong, but as an institution, they try to use that history to be forward faced with full recognition of the past.

Davidson is proud to be the highest-rated liberal arts college with a Division I sports program. 26% of their student population are scholars/athletes. To marry their community mindset with the liberal arts education and sports programs, just this year 10 buses with 500 students attended a Charlotte FC game during orientation week. Doug hopes to continue such programs by taking advantage of the rich culture of museums, arts, and entertainment in the Charlotte area.

On campus, Doug is very proud of The Hub – which brings together 150 community members to develop ideas for non-profit and for-profit businesses. The Hub encourages the business community to use this resource not only to build businesses but to solve issues they may be facing.

In their path forward, Davidson College looks forward to learning for tomorrow – how AI works and how we need to limit it. They look forward to finding pathways for their students on both traditional and non-linear pathways. Davidson's goal is to help students not only find their first pathway but their second as well – they can always look to Davidson for help.

Doug was asked about Davidson's policies toward legacy students. He replied that Davidson had already recognized 4 – 5 years ago that there was a disproportionate number of legacy students. The admissions team refocused itself on working toward building a community that is reflective of the world we live in. For legacy students, the simple answer is they are already aware of the community mindset at Davidson so that may give them a head start but it is not a determining factor of admission. With that already in place, the decision by the Supreme Court this summer regarding affirmative action was announced, Davidson felt they had already set themselves on the right path.

Doug was asked about how Davidson works to teach work ethic and giving back and how they instill this in their students. Doug stated that once again this goes back to the admissions team and their task to build a community, not just recruit students. This spirit provides us with students who want to make a difference with a sense of purpose.

Davidson's endowment stands at \$1.3 billion and has increased greatly with investment and generous donors. With that comes a sense of responsibility to the campus, the community, and the students to serve through the endowment.

Doug's last question was whether he is the Ping Pong champion of Davidson College. He reported that he is no longer the champion after having been challenged to a tournament by the entire men's basketball team and he sadly lost in the semifinals to an assistant coach.

A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/868456792>
The speaker's introduction begins at approximately 24:45 minutes.