

Casey Scheiner
February 28, 2025

Humanities 104
Dr. Bowles

To: Jessica Cottle, Justice, Equality and Community Archivist, Davidson College Archives

Dear Ms. Cottle,

I am writing to request access to the Davidson's archives for a research project examining college integration efforts. More specifically, I am posing the question "How did coverage of the integration of Black students on US college campuses compare with documentation of similar efforts towards coeducation?"

In addition to Davidson, I am visiting other colleges and universities to make my research illustrative of varied responses to campus integration. These include University of Mississippi, the site of riots when James Meredith, a Black man, enrolled; Columbia, which excluded women until 1983; and Oberlin, which has accepted students of any gender or race since 1835.

Since Davidson began accepting Black and female students in sizable numbers during the 1960s and 70s, a period of nationwide integration, its archives provide a case study for reactions across the US. Unique aspects of Davidson—its strong ties to slavery, its location in North Carolina under Jim Crow Laws, its proximity to and its prior policy allowing women to attend classes (albeit not for a degree)—imbued its culture with nuances informing students' reactions to integration.

I chose this topic because seeing past reactions to progress for marginalized groups is the key to understanding how we can effectively advocate for their rights today. This project is also useful as a reminder that legal integration does not always ensure widespread social acceptance. In warped memories of this time, people met these measures of equality with near-universal celebration. The reality is more nuanced, featuring numerous critics, as well as supporters who spoke like a 1960s moderate, not a 2020s progressive, in order to persuade a wide audience.

To advance that research, I would appreciate the chance to visit your archive this spring. Thank you for your consideration,

Casey Scheiner