

News

Meredith's Black Student Union Brings Culture to Campus

Marlena Brown, Managing Editor



via Facebook

February might seem like an ordinary month with nothing too exciting going on, but February is nationally recognized as Black History Month, celebrating the achievements of Africans and African-Americans. Meredith's newly formed Black Student Union embraced the opportunity to celebrate African-American

heritage and bring some cultural spirit to campus.

Two events were hosted by BSU in honor of Black History Month in February. The first was a panel lecture on beauty and self-image amongst African-American women. The lecture, entitled "The Skin I'm In," highlighted stereotypical views of beauty standards for African-American women and what defines beauty in a judgmental society. From skin complexion to hair care standards, the discussion was open and honest in addressing beauty issues that many African-American women face on a daily basis.

The second event celebrated African-American culture through music, speech, and art. During the event, vibrant aspects of African-American culture were on display. BSU celebrated past, present and future accomplishments of African-Americans with

the Raleigh community at this event. There was also a special visit from the fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi. In addition, BSU (in conjunction with Ethiopian Community Organization in North Carolina) also hosted the Battle of Adwa presentation. This was in commemoration of the 119th anniversary of Ethiopia gaining its independence from Italy.

Although newly formed, Meredith's BSU seems to be making its presence known on campus. Humble beginnings for BSU have not stopped it from spreading cultural awareness to the Meredith community—after all, bringing people together through communal understanding is a significant feat.

For inquiries or information about BSU, please email tbwillia@email.meredith.edu. Also check Meredith's Enews page for announcements regarding meetings and events.

Sweet Briar in Distress

Kristen Lawhorne, Staff Writer

It is likely that many have already heard about Sweet Briar's impending shut-down. As a whole, Sweet Briar's campus takes up 3,250 acres of land—much larger than Meredith's 225 acres (according to our website). However, the school only has 700 students, compared to roughly 2,000 at Meredith College. Although Sweet Briar intends to close down the school, they cannot sell the land. Indiana William, the school's founding benefactor, has stated in her will that the land must be used for the creation of Sweet Briar, a women's college. The court has yet to decide what will happen to the land; however, there is a possibility that the land will be transferred over to another charitable organization.

The school itself has been open for 114 years. It currently has an endowment fund of \$94 million, which is the same amount currently funded to Meredith College. About \$60 million of that fund has been donated to put toward specific projects, restricting the available funding to about \$30 million. Sweet Briar has stated that they are closing their doors because of financial challenges; this is true, but there was more to the decision than that. President Jo Allen says, "Although Meredith and Sweet Briar share an historical commitment to educational excellence for women, we differ in a number of critical ways. First, Meredith has substantially more students than Sweet Briar, meaning that enrollment fluctuations do not impact our financial situation as dramatically as they may a smaller institution. Second, our location in Raleigh/RTP is a tremendous attraction for many students who want to be part of a vibrant community." This fact has become more apparent to Sweet Briar, located near Lynchburg, VA.

According to the board at Sweet Briar, the number of students attending small, rural schools has been decreasing. They have tried to implement a strategy to increase the number of students, but because their finance has been restrained, it is impossible to make a comeback. The fact that Sweet Briar is losing students and the fact they are not in an overpopulated region has really hit them hard financially. Although they are closing, the memories of that school will continue to live on in

the hearts of its students and alumnae. Meredith College is and will still be standing strong.

For more information:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/pascalemanuelgobry/2015/03/10/does-sweet-briar-college-want-to-survive/>

<http://www.businessinsider.com/sweet-briar-college-land-cannot-be-sold-according-to-founders-last-will-and-testament-2015-3>

<http://sbc.edu/news/academics/board-directors-votes-close-college-2014-2015-academic-year/>

http://www.slate.com/blogs/business_insider/2015/03/03/sweet_briar_college_closing_why_the_wealthy_virginia_school_is_closing_its.html



via Getty Images

Changes in Gas Prices Coming to North Carolina

Monique Kreisman, News Editor

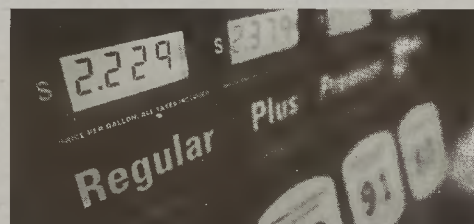
This month, the General Assembly is considering changes to the state gas tax that will impact prices in North Carolina. The goal is to slow decreases in revenue for the Department of Transportation. The Department is very dependent on the gas tax; according to its website, \$1.82 billion of its \$4 billion budget comes from the gas tax. Part of the tax is fixed, and part of it varies based on wholesale oil prices, so with falling gas prices, the DOT is receiving less revenue. Several plans have been proposed to solve this problem, and they will all directly affect North Carolina drivers.

The current North Carolina gas tax is 37.5 cents per gallon. According to a Mar. 11 article in the Charlotte Observer, the House has

passed a bill to reduce the tax to an unchanging 36 cents, and the Senate passed a bill to reduce it to 35. Although these proposals are for a tax less than the current amount, they would actually be successful in slowing the decrease in DOT revenue, for if the current variable tax were to remain, it would drop well below 35 cents this summer. The goal of the plan is to find a stable source of revenue for the Department of Transportation that does not change with gas prices.

Rep. Charles Jeter (R) proposes another plan. He suggests a \$201 annual fee for all registered North Carolina drivers in lieu of any state tax. While some drivers may prefer paying a flat fee once a year instead of paying higher

gas prices, opponents of the plan complain that it does not take into account road usage—people who drive infrequently would be taxed as much as people who drive every day—and it does not tax interstate drivers who use North Carolina highways. Whatever plan is agreed upon, North Carolina drivers will likely notice a difference in the cost of gas this summer.



via Getty Images