

# Editorials

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## Second Semester Woes

Rachel Crawford, News Editor

Leaving Meredith... be honest, you'd never say it — or maybe you would — but you've thought about it. At one point or another, even the most enthusiastic Meredith College devotee will take a step back from it all and wonder, "Is this really the right place for me?"

Brandon Stokes, director of student retention and success here at Meredith, says that thoughts of transferring are "very common," particularly for second-semester freshmen.

"We all have thoughts of what we expect college to be like as we're leaving high school. When we get to college, we find that not all of those expectations are accurate," Stokes said.

He says that while the knee-jerk reaction might be to transfer to another college,

students who transfer are likely to experience the same issues. Therefore, the key is to fix those issues in the first place by developing the skills to utilize college resources and put yourself out there.

Stokes adds that whenever students question if Meredith is the right fit for them, he encourages them to remember why they chose Meredith to begin with.

"Usually, it's not because they were looking for their new best friend or that they thought Meredith would give them the best roommate," Stokes said. "On the other hand, it's usually our academic programs, proven development of strong women, the sisterhood and all of the traditions and network of alumnae that come with it, and so on."

My strongest recommendation? Get involved with a club, organization, or activity that interests you. Not only will you get the fulfillment of participating in something you're passionate about, but you'll also meet classmates with similar interests as you, all while making a valuable contribution to your school.

If I'm going to be honest, I had my own doubts during my freshman year about whether or not I was supposed to be here or even in college in general. I eventually realized I only felt that way because I had filled up my time with things I didn't care about. After that realization, I jumped into things that excited and challenged me — particularly undergraduate research and off-campus ministry. Ever since, my days

have been much brighter, and Meredith has felt more and more like home every day.

If you still find yourself feeling like Meredith isn't home, talk to someone you trust, whether it's a classmate, a professor, or a staff member in the Counseling Center. Whoever you are and whether Meredith feels like home to you or not, the people in your life here on campus want to make sure you feel included.

Stokes urges students, "If you'd like to meet with someone to discuss your options and how to go about gathering information, I'm always happy to help. I've helped many students discuss their options and make the best choice for them. At the end of the day, we simply want each student to be successful... ideally, at Meredith!"

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## Dump DeVos

Sarah Smerko, Features Editor

On Tuesday, Feb. 7, the United States Senate confirmed Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. In a historic tie-breaker vote of 51-50, Vice President Mike Pence gave DeVos the winning vote that would secure her the position. DeVos, who once described public schools as a "dead end," is a public educator's worst nightmare.

DeVos has no teaching experience, and has never attended public school herself or sent her children to public schools. In addition, DeVos is a huge school choice advocate, supporting charter schools and vouchers that use tax monies to

send kids to for-profit schools. As a pre-service teacher and future public educator, I am both dumbfounded and horrified as to how someone who is as unqualified and completely against the spirit of public education as DeVos could possibly be appointed to such an important position.

Based on her confirmation hearings, it was evident that she knows absolutely nothing about public education. During her Jan. 17 confirmation hearing, DeVos appeared not to know what the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was, and said that the matter was "best

left to the states" (Washington Post). So individual states should decide whether students with disabilities should get a free, appropriate public education, something they are already entitled to under federal law? I would like to see Ms. DeVos read an IEP or attempt to differentiate instruction for students with special needs.

While pretty much everything that has happened in the Trump presidency has been alarming to me, the confirmation of DeVos as Secretary of Education was a personal blow. It is my life's passion to be a public school teacher, and with each passing

day in this new administration, I am seeing new threats to my students. I will serve children with special needs, language minorities, refugees, immigrants, and students with low socioeconomic status who cannot afford private school. No, Ms. DeVos, public schools are not a dead end. They are a safe haven, a hot meal, a new book, a loving teacher; a friend to sit with on the bus. I wholeheartedly support public education, and it is my hope that our new Secretary of Education would at least try to see its merits.

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## Yours, Mine, and Ours: The State of Our Nation

Teresa Berton, Staff Writer

Since the national election on Nov. 8, 2016, one of the most divisive elections in our nation's history, we have seen the two major political ideologies polarize even further. Hashtags stating #notmypresident or #notmyamerica have gained popularity in the past few weeks, often sighted on social media. They declare the disapproval of the current events within the country and the actions of other citizens.

Parties on the left and the right have taken to disowning the nation as a whole based on the actions of those they disagree with because it is no longer what they know to be America. "It's not my America, it's their America," they seem to be saying. But it has never been their America, it has never been my America — it has always been our America. The United States has never been a nation that did not have

opposing ideologies battling for control. Despite this, it has always been a nation governed by its citizens — our nation. It is easy to forget this miracle of governing that is the American system, particularly when we feel it is not servicing our personal goals, or if we feel that the system has turned against us. But we must remember that no matter our personal belief, it is still our nation.

It has been our nation

for over two centuries, and over those centuries we have seen our nation transform into what it is today — our forefathers have shaped America, our families have borne witness to our history, and now we are making our history — the history of our America. Do we want that history to be one of a nation divided against itself, or of a nation that came together in love to trump hate, and make America great again?

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