

Convocations at Meredith: Do We Need This Many?

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Year after year, Meredith College invites many prestigious speakers to campus to speak about national and global issues. Most, if not all, of these events will count for convocation credit. For any new students who may not understand the convocation requirement at Meredith the process is quite simple. Each student must attend at least twelve convocations, write about each one (using the template on the general education website), and get her form signed by a professor (if it was done for a class) or by her advisor.

While many students do attend the convocations and enjoy them, students don't have enough time to write about them. It is important to stretch our intellectual muscles and push ourselves to dig deeper into issues that matter; however, after writing papers for class, students feel as if there is nothing left to dig into, not to mention time to write it down.

Some professors realize that they can help students by requiring students' attendance and requiring that students write about the convocations or by giving extra credit for attending them. It would be better if more professors on campus adopted this philosophy. The students may not enjoy convocations at first, but when they are seniors, they will be thankful that their convocations are already taken care of.

Why would a senior be relieved? Students without twelve convocations accounted for in the Office of the Registrar will not be able to graduate, even if they have all

of their credits and have maintained a relatively high G.P.A.

The foundation of this requirement is understandable: Meredith wants its graduates to have challenged themselves during their time at the college. Convocation requirements do seem like a potential solution because they bring to the campus a variety of people from different backgrounds, all talking about a wide range of topics. While students may go to convocations and wrestle with new ideas, others may not have been intellectually involved at all. The students will still leave and write about the event to get the credit, but doing so becomes just another thing on the "to-do" list.

That is the real problem: Challenging our minds should not be considered a chore. It should not be a requirement to listen to talks or watch documentaries that present a new lens through which to view life. It should be something that students want to do.

The challenge should begin in the classroom. Professors give the warm-ups for stretching students' thinking. Some professors have lost their creativity and passion for learning, and that makes students in their classes not want to learn or pay attention. The students need the professors to get them interested.

The last part comes down to the student. If the professors are introducing new philosophies in the classroom, the students must educate themselves outside of the classroom to go beyond their professors' outlook and find a new one.

Last fall, Meredith invited David Faber, a

Jewish man who survived the Holocaust, to speak, and it counted for convocation credit. While he did have a strong accent, making it somewhat difficult to understand him, his talk was amazing. He talked about being a young boy in the Holocaust and losing his whole family. The lecture was interesting and relevant to what we as students learn in the classroom. It was not a required convocation, but Jones Chapel was packed even up in the balcony.

During Cancer Awareness Week, my freshman year, the awareness team put together "Cancer Testimonies," where different people who had experiences with cancer came to share their stories. At the end, we all lit candles for people who have died from cancer. It was more than a convocation; it was the Meredith community coming together to say that there is hope in a sometimes unbearable fight.

Convocations, themselves, are not bad. The requirement of them, however, does not make students welcome new ideas and broaden their thinking. When it becomes something that we have to do, rather than something we want to do, it loses its significance in our lives.

And, just out of curiosity, where did the number requirement of twelve come from? Is there something magical about twelve? I mean, I know that Jesus had twelve disciples, but is that any reason to require students to do twelve convocations? Maybe it is referring to the num-

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Star Tech

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What's new for iPod? It might be easier to answer, "What's not?" Either way, one thing's for sure: Apple's design department has been mighty busy of late. All versions of the iPod—shuffle, nano, classic and touch—have been revamped, reworked and restyled to create "the best iPods ever," as Apple's official website claims.

Apple's tiniest iPod, the shuffle, is now available in four new colors: red, purple, blue and green; the familiar silver is also available. Also new is a handy built-in clip that allows shuffle owners to attach their iPods to belt clips, sleeves, or any place that's handy. At \$79, shuffle is iPod's most affordable variety. Shuffle holds 240 songs, weighs only 0.55 ounces and measures 1.07 inches by 1.62 inches, so this iPod may be the way to go for those who want to listen to music without messing with a bulky player.

Next up: iPod nano. Nano now includes video capability, so owners can watch their favorite television shows and movies, as well as enjoy their audio collections. Apple's Cover Flow application makes finding the right album easy (and fun). Nano's display is now 65% brighter than that of the previous version, so everything's clearer. With a new, rounder shape, 4GB and 8GB models (starting at \$149) and five colors to

choose from, nano offers plenty of options.

iPod classic: its thinner, all-metal design gives a fresh spin on an old favorite. Choose 80GB (\$249) or splurge for the 160GB model (\$349) to store up to 20,000 songs or 400 hours of video. Its new interface includes Cover Flow; three games are pre-programmed (buy more on iTunes). View audiobooks and photos, subscribe to daily podcasts; buy movies, music, or episodes of your favorite television shows on iTunes and enjoy them on the classic. Classic offers it all in a relatively small package; this iPod weighs less than five ounces.

iPod touch: the sleek touch screen technology of iPhone coupled with more room for the music. Choose 8GB (\$299) or 16GB (\$399), watch videos on the generous 3.5 inch widescreen, and browse the internet with Apple's first Wi-Fi iPod. Need to expand your music library? Try Apple's new iTunes Wi-Fi Music Store. Choose iPod touch and enjoy cutting-edge technology.

Visit <http://www.apple.com/> to get all the information about Apple's newest iPod family.

Note from the editor: This is the second of a weekly column dealing with the latest in technology and offered by our resident student expert: Chelsea McGlaughlin. If you have ideas for gadgets you can't live without, please send an email to the columnist, and she will consider your technological favorite for an upcoming column.