



**Statement of Dr. Carol E. Quillen
President, Davidson College**

**On behalf of the
National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities**

**Innovations in College Affordability
United States Senate
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
10:20 a.m. Thursday, February 2, 2012**

Good morning, Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Enzi and Senators. I am Carol E. Quillen, President of Davidson College, and I am appearing today on behalf of Davidson and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU), of which Davidson is a member, although the specific views expressed today are mine alone.

NAICU serves as the unified national voice of independent higher education. With more than 1,000 members nationwide, NAICU reflects the diversity of private, nonprofit higher education in the United States, including traditional liberal arts colleges, major research universities, church- and faith-related institutions, historically black colleges and universities, women's colleges, performing and visual arts institutions, two-year colleges, and schools of law, medicine, engineering, business, and other professions.

It is my privilege to speak with you today about Davidson College and how we are ensuring the affordability of our quality education through our innovative program, The Davidson Trust.

In 2007 Davidson College became the first liberal arts college in the country to eliminate loans from its financial aid packages. For all accepted students, Davidson pledged to meet 100% of demonstrated need—defined as costs beyond what a family can pay—through a combination of grants and campus employment. Davidson, like several other highly ranked colleges and universities, has long practiced need-blind admission. Through our initiative, known as *The Davidson Trust*, we further ensure that a student’s financial aid award meets 100% of demonstrated need without loans. Some need-eligible students still choose to borrow, and for some, such borrowing makes financial sense. However, we do not expect this. Davidson always meets demonstrated need without loans, through grants and employment, usually campus employment of between 8-10 hours per week. Furthermore, all available data and a repayment rate in excess of 97% indicate that students who do choose to borrow money pay it back at a rate above national averages.

The Davidson Trust builds on Davidson’s longstanding leadership in access and affordability. The minutes of an 1841 Board of Trustees meeting state our founders’ determination to keep the cost of education “within the reach of many in our land who could not otherwise obtain it.” Expanding this vision, each year we now offer an unparalleled education to hundreds of students for whom, before The Trust, even applying to Davidson seemed unimaginable.

The Davidson Trust represents a huge financial commitment into the future. Davidson’s endowment of \$500 million, though significant, is approximately half that of

the average endowment of our peer institutions and is one-third that of some. A significant part (approximately 58%) of our operating budget comes from tuition, and our “sticker price” is lower than comparable institutions. Yet we are committed to providing a second-to-none education that prepares talented students from all backgrounds for meaningful lives of leadership and service. We have learned to allocate our resources efficiently while also offering the liberal arts education that best serves students for the 21st century.

We are always striving to do more with limited resources, and Davidson did not and cannot rely only on existing sources of revenue to fund The Davidson Trust. Rather, our commitment was initially made possible through the pro-education policies of North Carolina legislators and through significant support from private foundations and in particular through the generosity of The Duke Endowment and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The Davidson Trust is sustained, year to year, through ongoing, visionary financial support from Davidson alumni, faculty, staff, friends, parents and students, all of whom have embraced our no-loans commitment and made it their own. More than one-third of annual support to the college is donor-directed to The Davidson Trust. To date we have raised more than \$63 million in commitments to The Davidson Trust as we continue to seek long-term funding.

And yet, The Davidson Trust is not primarily about financial aid. It is an invitation and a promise that we extend to all talented and eager students. To these students, The Davidson Trust says: We want you here; you can afford it; and if you enroll at Davidson, we—the faculty, staff, alumni, and leadership—will do everything we can to ensure that you thrive, while you are here and after you graduate.

We make this promise as a direct extension of our foundational commitment to service and to excellence. Davidson exists to assist students in developing humane instincts and disciplined and creative minds for lives of leadership and service. We create a culture of inquiry and intellectual risk taking, where faculty and students who love to learn create new knowledge in every classroom, every day, and where students discover talents within themselves that they did not know they possessed. As a result of the education and experiences we offer, our graduates leave Davidson eager and able to fulfill their aspirations in light of what the world most needs from them, and their impact for good far exceeds their numbers. This impact is what justifies a labor intensive, very expensive form of education. All talented students deserve—and are entitled to—the opportunities we make possible. And we as a nation need these students acting and leading in the world. Our dual commitment to access and to educational excellence in the interest of leadership and service enables Davidson, though we are small, and schools like us, to meaningfully address some of the urgent global challenges.

We believe in the promise that The Davidson Trust extends to talented students nationwide. So, Davidson staff have traveled the country offering a workshop, Financial Aid 101, to students, families and high school counselors, and building partnerships with school districts, community-based organizations and charter management organizations like KIPP and YES Prep. We created a Center for Teaching and Learning that provides integrated support for all students in writing, speaking, math, science and economics. Our faculty received grants from the Howard Hughes Medical Research Institute to create a program, Strategies for Success, that encourages students from underrepresented groups who express interest in math and science to pursue research in those fields. Our residence life advisors developed an early

orientation and year-long peer mentoring program for students of color to build community and ease the transition from home to college. Davidson requires all first-year students to take a writing-intensive course with each class's enrollment limited to 14 students, where experienced faculty provide individualized instruction and all students reach a high level of proficiency. Our commitment to our students extends beyond graduation. Each year, Davidson alumni expand internship and career opportunities to ensure that students smoothly move from our liberal arts environment to impact for good in the world. Last year, six months after graduation, approximately 93% of Davidson graduating seniors were employed, on a fellowship or in graduate school. This year, we anticipate an even higher percentage.

Measured in terms of admission and matriculation statistics—the usual metrics—the Davidson Trust is working. Applications from underrepresented groups are up: in 2007 Davidson received 743 applications from domestic students of color and 334 applications from first-generation college students; last year we received 1,074 applications from domestic students of color and 514 applications from first-generation college students.

Enrollment of students from underrepresented groups is up: in the Fall of 2011, 100 domestic students of color and 39 first-generation college students entered in the Class of 2015, compared to the 79 domestic students of color and 28 first-generation college students who entered in the Class of 2011.

We are attracting and enrolling a greater number of students with financial need: nearly 44% of the Class of 2015 qualified for and received need-based aid, compared to approximately 33% of the Class of 2011. Over the same period of time, the number of Federal Pell Grant recipients has increased from 115 to 222 (a 93% increase).

We are attracting students from a greater number and wider range of high schools, receiving applications from students at 2,152 high schools last year, a number that has increased 6% over the past five years.

These numbers matter, but they are not the only measures of success. In the world of higher education at large, the graduation rate hovers around 50%. Davidson's four-year graduation rate is 88%; and our six-year graduation rate is 92%. These numbers have remained remarkably consistent even after the implementation of The Davidson Trust and the accompanying changes in the demographics of our student profile. Similarly, we have maintained our rigorous admission standards. The profile of our enrolling students has remained unchanged as defined by traditional measures of academic preparedness.

The most telling indicator of our success is not retention and graduation rates, or academic profile, or our increasingly diverse applicant pool and student body, or our growing reputation as a good place for first-generation students. The most telling measure is the impact of our alumni—teachers, artists, bankers, consultants, ministers, parents and entrepreneurs—who are leaders in their chosen fields and in their communities and who give back to Davidson in record numbers, year after year, so that all talented students, regardless of means, can have the Davidson experience. While it is far too early to speak precisely about the long-term impact of The Davidson Trust, we already know that it enables us to attract truly remarkable students whose talents enrich our campus and our community. We look forward to and are grateful for the incredible things they will do.

Davidson is a small, residential college committed to cultivating the whole human being within a community that values unfettered inquiry, academic rigor,

personal integrity, intellectual humility, and service to something beyond oneself. What we do is labor intensive, expensive, and not scalable in conventional terms. Yet consider what our students do. They work one-on-one with faculty on a year-long research project that will help cure Alzheimer's; they develop a leadership program for middle-school girls at an area school; they use seed funds to start a composting program or design a solar-powered cart; or they start a non-profit organization that supports schools in Nigeria or sports programs for at-risk youth or a national registry for bone marrow donors. What we do is worth it, to those who attend Davidson and to the countless others who benefit from their work.

Davidson is a distinctive example among a small group of highly selective, need-blind colleges and universities, schools that each in its own way have long demonstrated a dual commitment to academic rigor and access. Collectively, these schools both transform individual lives and exert disproportionate societal impact. Through programs like The Davidson Trust, we are changing the face of society's leadership.

Our experiences at Davidson show that thoughtfulness, dedication and a focused effort with contributions from all – alumni, foundations, and federal, state, and local governments – can make an unsurpassed education available and affordable to all talented students. Davidson understands this as an ethical imperative as well as an urgent national need. We welcome you as allies in this quest.