

Drew, FDU students feel pride, uncertainty

Obama's announcement praised

By **AARON MORRISON**
STAFF WRITER

MADISON — Morris County college students shared a sense of resolve tempered with skepticism about the impact of the killing of Osama bin Laden, which President Barack Obama announced Sunday night.

Most of them — ranging in age from late teens to early 20s — first learned the news on the social media websites Facebook and Twitter, and then by coverage on cable news networks into the early hours Monday morning.

"Before today, I'd heard that (bin Laden) was believed to be dead," said 16-year-old freshman Joel Chapman, of Drew University in Madison. "But now that they're saying his body was in U.S. hands, I'm actually thrilled."

"I need to see a picture," said 19-year-old Drew freshman Andrew McGibbon, who was skeptical of Obama's announcement. "What

better way to throw people off if you have just killed a stunt double?"

Students living in dormitories at Drew and at Farleigh Dickinson University in Florham Park said it was clear when their neighbors heard the news. Chants of "U-S-A!" and strains of "Proud to Be an American" could be heard through walls early Monday morning.

"It's about time," said FDU junior Auston Gabriel, 21, who admitted feeling indifferent about the news. "But just because he's gone doesn't mean it's over."

"He was the big head of the al-Qaida organization, so hopefully it will weaken the morale of the terrorists," said FDU freshman Chris Perez, 19. "He was wrong for the things he helped to plan, but not all the blame should

be put on him."

Students looked to find the symbolic meaning in the announcement of bin Laden's death, even as details continued to be unveiled Monday afternoon.

"As an American, I'm very proud of our country and our brave soldiers," said Selime Aksit, vice president of the Muslim Student Association at Drew. "I don't think murderers should be roaming around freely in any nation."

Having watched Obama's Sunday night remarks from her dorm room, Aksit added that she was pleased with the tone set by the president on bin Laden's killing.

"We must also reaffirm that the United States is not — and never will be — at war with Islam. . . . Bin Laden was not a Muslim leader; he was a mass murderer of Muslims," Obama said in his speech.

Mike Oliver, a graduate

student of theology and philosophy at Drew, spent seven years in the Marine Corps and did a yearlong tour of duty in Afghanistan before leaving the service in 2004. The 32-year-old was mostly satisfied with how government officials marked the historic event.

"There's part of me that wants to justify what we did because it was such an impact on my life," Oliver said. "It would be interesting to juxtapose Bush's rhetoric with Obama's. Bush's remarks seemed to be more explicitly religious, Christian religious, backing for the war."

"(Obama) seems to be more sensitive to what's happened since 9/11, and not making it about any one particular religion," Oliver said.

Most students on campuses were preparing for finals scheduled for later this week and were unaware of any planned events or gatherings to mark the news.

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Oliver