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Letter from the Editor: Informing and Provoking

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Informing and Provoking

This issue of *Colleagues* reflects a recent history of providing focused content around a topic. The goal is to provide the expertise and insights of our alumni, faculty, staff and students on trending topics in the education field. This edition, with a focus on LGBT issues, has been in development for some time and I think that effort is reflected in these pages.

The issue of gay rights has been called the civil rights movement of the 21st century. Civil rights leaders such as the Reverend Al Sharpton have compared these two areas of struggles and spoken out for equal protection before the law. Recently Rev. Sharpton shared his thoughts on the proposed Arizona law allowing religious exemptions to serving customers. While Arizona Governor Jan Brewer did not sign nor pass the legislation, it is being copied and passed in other states currently.

...Following all that sacrifice—many who even gave their lives for justice—how can we allow businesses to once again discriminate against a group of people? And if you think that this doesn't impact you because you aren't a member of the LGBT community, I have news for you, you're wrong. What's to stop a business owner from citing religious beliefs in refusing to serve anyone based on religion, race, ethnicity, etc.? (Sharpton, 2014)

Why should we even bring this up? Why cover Race and Poverty or LGBT issues when other educational issues are in the headlines? Why provoke? As educators facing

numerous challenges, we must separate personal feeling and prejudices from the execution of our duties. It is our duty to ensure marginalized portions of the larger society find equal, fair, and nurturing environments in school. While storms of social change, personal life, and family life may buffet students, our classrooms or offices must be a safe harbor.

That metaphor only goes so far. Do we only guarantee safety in the classroom? Do we also provide a place for growth and development? Do we lead by example and accept our charges, whomever they are?

I hope with each edition of *Colleagues* that at least one article has cause to make you reflect on your practices and perhaps change your work and profession for the better. Most importantly, I hope you are informed and maybe provoked.

The next issue of *Colleagues* will celebrate the 50 year anniversary of the College of Education. If you have a story or reflection you would like to submit, please email me at pelonc@gvsu.edu.

Clayton Pelon
Editor-in-Chief

Sharpton, A. (2014, 02 24). *From Arizona to Uganda, we must protect the rights of the LGBT community*. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rev-al-sharpton/from-arizona-to-uganda-we_b_4848141.html