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Dean's Corner

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Cover photo by Bernadine Carey-Tucker, News & Information Services, GVSU

On the Cover: Antonio Herrera in the GVSU Pew Campus courtyard.

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DEAN'S CORNER



The Fall 2005 issue of *Colleagues* marks a change in format for this publication. As we concluded last year's Spring issue, the editorial board engaged in a deep debate about the publication's future direction. Given the recent focus on accountability and tremendous interest in issues of K-12 education by the public, we have decided to take advantage of the moment to expand *Colleagues* to include issue-based articles.

To this end, articles that you will find in the Fall 2005

publication address a range of educational topics. The issue as a whole should be considered as a forum for the exposition, discussion and exchange of educational information. What I like about this new format is that it includes a wide range of perspectives that don't always align with each other (see "Our Schools Today-Are They, in fact, Obsolete?" by Roger Wilson and the response by Sean Lancaster) and may challenge existing practice (see "Faith-based Science? Intelligent Design Is Not Science," by Roger Wilson and "Study Great Ideas, but Teach to the Test," by Michael Winerip). My hope is that in reading these articles you will find utility as well as information to reflect upon or rethink current practices.

Also included, you will find helpful articles that will bring you up to date on higher education issues facing the College of Education. I am excited by the challenge of current issues in higher education. As one example, consider that with costs rising and the workforce increasingly dependent on knowledge production, public universities provide genuine educational opportunity to students who might otherwise not be able to attend classes beyond the high school or community college levels. Ensuring public educational access is particularly important in a society where skills and work force development guarantee the successful transformation of millions of lives in a global economy.

In considering the issue of accountability and accreditation, Barb Fournier addresses issues related to our upcoming NCATE visit. She underscores the importance of engaging in a continual improvement process and using data to promote a high quality organizational, programmatic, and personnel review. Participating in the NCATE review process allows for the College of Education to reflect purposefully about day to day work and generates insight of how change (when needed) can strengthen practice.

Finally, you will find included articles that celebrate the work of our dedicated faculty and staff. In this issue, I draw your attention specifically to Dr. Antonio Herrera's thirty-three years of contribution to Grand Valley State University that includes the creation and coordination of a variety of graduate programs. Representative programs include Adult Secondary Education, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), and International Global Education. Although Dr. Herrera's upcoming retirement will leave a void, clearly his intelligence, his insightfulness, and his genuine care for the campus community will always be remembered.

If I were asked to identify a specific theme for this issue, I would identify two common threads – those of educational reform (e.g., "The Cherry Commission: A Set of Powerful Ideas Leading to a Brighter Future" by Stephen J. Worst) and K-12 curriculum. It is anticipated that upcoming issues will include a broad range of topics of interest to the school practitioner including high standards for schools, teachers and students, optimal class size, early childhood education, international issues, the No Child Left Behind Act, school quality, school safety, special education, student success, teacher quality, technology in schools and vouchers.

We hope that this issue will contribute to continued collaboration between K-12 and higher education communities. The editorial board and I would like to thank the faculty and staff who have worked within tight time constraints to produce this first themed issue. As we continue this focus, I would like to hear your thoughts about what issues are of particular interest to you as practitioners. Additionally, your comments and suggestions are always welcomed.

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