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## Editor's Corner: Confronting the Presence of Difference through Civil Discourse, Open Dialogue, and Respect

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## **Editor's Corner: Confronting the Presence of Difference through Civil Discourse, Open Dialogue, and Respect**

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It has been an honor and privilege to serve as the editor-in-chief for volume 3 of *College Student Affairs Leadership*. Throughout the past several months, I have witnessed this publication develop its core purpose and have seen the tremendous learning it has facilitated for emerging student affairs professionals, current practitioners, and scholars throughout the country. While this publication remains in its early stages of growth, it is clear that it will continue to expand and serve as an integral part of the learning process for authors and readers of all levels in higher education.

As my term as editor-in-chief comes to a close, I reflect on the importance of publications like *College Student Affairs Leadership* and countless others, considering the manner in which these publications serve to challenge our frames of thought. In the midst of perhaps the most controversial political year for a presidential election in history, we must challenge ourselves and our fellow students and colleagues to examine complex social issues in an atmosphere of civil discourse. We live in a culture of noise, one that places societal perspectives in the hands of the media, powerful politicians, interest groups and the privileged populations. As student affairs professionals, we must demand safe spaces and the upmost levels of respect and tolerance on our campuses to amplify the voices of our underrepresented student populations and all those who are left unheard. Publications like *College Student Affairs Leadership* and others allow open submission of individual discussions, but we must do more than publish these pieces. We must challenge ourselves to examine these discussions in a forward-thinking manner, one that recognizes our own biases and challenges ourselves to accept when we are wrong. We must continue to read the work of others, research for our own understanding, advance our writing to encourage ongoing discourse, and most importantly, we must ask questions. We cannot begin to solve complex social issues or create a culture of inclusivity and tolerance on our campuses until we ground our practices in asking questions when we do not understand another's perspective. We need to equip ourselves with the tools and resources to confront the presence of difference on our campuses with open minds. We must lead by example for our students and move through our profession with continued curiosity to understand those around us.

In this issue, a variety of topics are examined that further solidify the need for civil discourse and to reexamine our own perspectives at times. Laura Klinger examines hookup culture, discussing how this culture is driven by perception, rather than communication between college students. ReChard Peel brings Historically Black

Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) into discussion by examining the intentional nature of these institutions to develop students beyond acquisition of knowledge. Nicole Rombach reflects on her experiences with HBCUs as well, but through the lens of Catholic school, bringing a religious frame of thought into discussion. Finally, Gregory Lowe examines the necessity of Hispanic-Serving Institutions and the exclusive nature of language associated with these designations. Each of these articles provide critical thought and profound messages that will undeniably spark dialogue among readers. As we engage in that dialogue, we must remain cognizant of our own voices and ask questions about the experiences, struggles, triumphs, and daily lives of others with whom we know nothing about.

As student affairs professionals, how can we best teach our students to follow our lead with this in mind? How can we ensure the safety of our campus spaces in and out of the classroom to be inclusive for all students, regardless of their identities? When the world at large often is so loud, how can we support our students and each other as professionals to not only hold our energy high through political and social oppression, but also hold our own strength and empowerment to excel? These are the questions that we must challenge ourselves with. With continued publications, civil discourse, safe campus dialogue and open respect for those who hold beliefs with which we do not agree, we will begin to tackle these questions and move toward social tolerance.

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