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attaining a very narrow idea of diversity and the factors that shape it.

CORE 100 stereotypes students. Many assume that Meredith women are typically wealthy

"daddies' girls" who know little outside of North Face jackets and Vera Bradley handbags. I have witnessed this assumption when my CORE 100 teacher asked my class if we knew what a Jew is. My professor also asked if everyone knew what a nun was. Thus, students leave the

class feeling offended and unintelligent.

Because the problems within CORE 100 reflect the college's lack of diversity, the solution lies in addressing Meredith's internal structure. Students do not feel obligated to approach the unknown with an open mind if their

professors do not. If the staff and leadership are not following the message that they preach, Meredith students will not feel the need to become well-rounded and tolerant individuals. A change in Meredith's student body will come only when the college holds the same ideals. By shifting the

focus of the staff and changing the structure of the CORE, students' resistance will subside. Until then, however, the college will continue to face criticism, angry students, and a lack of diversity. ☒

# Justice For All?

By Heather Blanchard  
Contributing Writer

A frequent topic of discussion in CORE 100 is homosexuality. As a reflection leader in the CORE program, I've noticed that the discussion often deadlocks around the specific issue of marriage. While discussing this issue, students are often unaware of the specific challenges facing individuals who are unable to legally marry in our society. This lack of knowledge can lead to strong opinions

rooted more firmly in stereotypes and fear than in clearly reasoned facts.

"Gay marriage is a radical notion for straight people and a conservative notion for gay ones" argues Quindlen in her article, *Evan's Two Moms* (1992). However, this statement is a broad generalization of the views of two populations, and as such is flawed. Quindlen's assumption that all homosexuals are unequivocally for gay marriage does not recognize the growing number of feminists, lesbian and gay, who do not wish to take part in what many see as a patriarchal and outdated social structure. Nor does it account for the significant number of heterosexual allies who advocate equal marriage rights for all people.

The debate over marriage equality in American society is one charged with emotions, tinged with opposing value sets, and muddied by hidden, (and sometimes not so hidden), agendas. Staunchly conservative groups such as Focus on the Family and the Christian Broadcasting Network have taken pains to hide overt injustice inside a cloud of debates over perceived issues of morality (Dobson, 2006). These debates, which have fueled the opposition against equal rights for sexual minorities for

decades, ignore the fact that their insistent denial of marriage robs many stable families of the protection of legal marriage in society. It is a grievous offense to deny justice to any family living within our borders, especially when to do so would harm none.

One of the most striking rights of marriage is the ability to adopt a child that does not share your DNA. In North Carolina, second parent adoptions are prohibited. If the two adults who wish to share custody of the child are unmarried, only one of them may legally become the parent of a child (NC Gay and Lesbian Attorneys, 2007). In the event of the death of the primary parent, or the dissolution of

the relationship, the second parent is left with no legal rights or standing. Therefore, if a grandparent or other relative seeks custody, a child who has been raised with two loving and supportive parents may suddenly find himself doubly traumatized to lose not only one, but both of his parents.

Partners in a lesbian or gay relationship also are unable to file as next-of-kin in a situation where one partner has been hospitalized. Gay partners can be denied visitation in the hospital, funeral

decisions, and inheritance rights. They have no legal standing without a living will for decisions such as continuing life support to a partner in a comatose state. Furthermore, without the benefits of legal marriage a gay or lesbian partner has no standing in wrongful death suits, or eligibility for bereavement or sick leave from employment (Religious Tolerance, 2001).

Lesbian couples in particular are at-risk for financial challenges, due to gaps in economic equality: women still make on average about seventy cents for every dollar a man makes for equal work (NOW, 2006). Discrimination in the workforce is particularly striking when both heads of a household are female.

Furthermore, women are often "mommy-tracked", passed over for promotions and raises. Marriage would allow lesbian couples the benefit of filing taxes jointly and receiving credit for the children raised in their home. Marriage would also allow the rights of social security benefits, pension plans, and the ability to jointly own property such as a home that would revert to the surviving partner

in case of death. In the case of abuse, marriage would provide the abused partner with the right to file for a special domestic violence protective order, and to access certain services for victims of domestic violence.

None of these rights must be taken away from heterosexual cou-

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