

The Vermont Connection

Volume 39 *Dear Student Affairs: Reflections on the Past and Hopes for the Future*

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Executive Board Editors Note

TVC Executive Board 2018

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EXECUTIVE BOARD NOTE

Armed with the knowledge of our past, we can with confidence charter a course for our future. Culture is an indispensable weapon in the freedom struggle. We must take hold of it and forge the future with the past.

- Malcolm X

The Executive Board of The Vermont Connection (TVC) is honored to publish the 39th volume of our student affairs journal of The University of Vermont (UVM). The theme for the 39th volume emerged from an idea after a classroom discussion about the changing voices and perspectives of student affairs. As professionals, scholars, and practitioners, we each hold a piece of the changing future that will take student affairs in many directions. However, as many of us in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program learned, we cannot change the future without the knowledge of all of our pasts. An understanding of these pasts is what ignites our spirits and passions to make change and hope for something different in the future.

This year's journal theme, *Dear Student Affairs: Reflections on the Past and Hopes for the Future*, invited authors to directly write to the field to address cultures, ideologies, structures, and systems from various points in the past and balance these ideas with the hopes desired for the future. Our intentions of the open letter as the framework was to invite readers to think critically while utilizing new perspectives. What emerged was a collection of analytical, constructive, and aspirational works that make up the 39th volume of TVC.

Purple captures this spirit and passion. The Executive Board chose purple as the cover color for its symbolic connection to spirit. In the LGBTQA pride flag, the color purple represents spirit and every member of this year's TVC board identifies within the LGBTQA communities. When we reflected upon our identities and what each stripe on the pride flag represents, we instantly resonated most with purple. To have "spirit" means to have something that is intangible, but nonetheless inspires action from within a person. Although spirit, much like the past and future, is invisible, it has the ability to influence people's behavior. More than anything, our driving force behind the work that we do in student affairs is the spirit of learning. We hope to learn from our past so that we may better educate those in the future. It takes a great deal of spirit to challenge traditions, self-advocate, and inspire hope. We believe our authors were able to capture the spirit of student

affairs in their writings.

Within this note, we would like to take a moment to reflect on TVC's past and how it may inspire hope for our future. At the end of the fall semester, the TVC community said goodbye to our staff advisor Kim Monteaux De Freitas, who served not only TVC for the past six years, but also the HESA and broader UVM community. In addition to Kim's departure, we will also bid farewell to Margie Dunki-Jacobs at the end of the 2017-2018 school year. Margie served as an Administrative Assistant to the College of Education and Social Services at UVM for the past 10 years. The faculty and students in HESA and TVC all benefited from Margie's kindness and tireless effort to make everyone feel supported. Kim's wisdom and Margie's generosity carried TVC into its 39th volume and we cannot thank them enough for their dedication to our community. We know that in their future work, Margie and Kim will continue the TVC legacy.

In early October, our annual Phone-A-Thon event successfully connected current students to past students, faculty, staff, and friends of TVC. The generous donations made by those individuals will make the 40th volume of TVC possible. The personal connections forged on the phone continued as more alumnx joined the TVC Mentorship Program, where the members of the first year cohort were paired with new mentors. For those who wanted to connect with other alumnx outside of their mentors, we hosted an alumnx networking event where past HESA students shared their personal narratives and wisdom about navigating the field of student affairs. In the second year TVC's Professional Development Fund, more UVM HESA students utilized the opportunity to attend and present at professional conferences. These initiatives maintain the strength of The Vermont Connection beyond the journal and are foundational to cultivating TVC's vast community and its future.

We hope this journal embodies the diverse experiences of student affairs professionals, all of whom must attempt to balance the implications from the past and the bright hopes for student affairs' collective future. With great pride, we invite you reflect on the past and examine the future throughout the 39th volume of The Vermont Connection.

The Vermont Connection Executive Board, 2017-2018

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