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Executive Board Editors' Note

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EXECUTIVE BOARD EDITORS' NOTE

The Vermont Connection is excited to publish the 41st volume of our higher education and student affairs journal. The journal is a space for authors to co-create knowledge and engage with the journal's theme through traditional scholarly works, personal stories, and creative pieces. This year's theme is *Embracing the Whole: Sentience and Interconnectedness in Higher Education*. What follows are messages from TVC 41's Co-Content Editors about the journal, making meaning of the theme, and our experiences.

Brie

TVC 41's theme was truly co-created, cultivated through the beautiful and creative theme suggestions we received from our community from connection and (dis)connection, relationships, resistance and justice, untold stories, and so much more. During the summer of 2019, Laura and I were navigating the process of creating the journal theme, and were challenged with how to choose just one of the amazing suggestions offered. We struggled with what that would mean for our visions of the journal and the vision of others. After discussing, we realized that we didn't need to choose just one. The theme could be a manifestation of our collective thoughts and feelings - a harmonious flow of multiple ways of knowing and being. Thus, the theme *Embracing the Whole: Sentience and Interconnectedness in Higher Education* emerged. While the theme was cultivated and inspired by many, each person has their own personal interpretation of what the theme means to them, which appears in the unique variety of pieces we have in this year's journal.

To me, this theme embraces what it means to be human, recognizing the multitude of thoughts, feelings, and experiences that make us who we are. It's the disconnectedness we may feel when our personal values don't align with the institution's. It's recognizing the roots of higher education in the United States as stolen Indigenous land, forced assimilation, and redistributing that land and wealth created by slave labor to white settlers. It's how we embrace the fullness of ourselves and the emotions we feel. It's the interconnectedness that creates who

we each are as whole individuals, and who we are together as a collective. I truly hope you enjoy reading and experiencing the amazing pieces in this journal, as I know I have.

Laura

I am elated to share with Brie the experience of offering the theme for TVC 41's scholarly journal: *Embracing the Whole: Sentience and Interconnectedness in Higher Education*. Let TVC 41 serve as a reminder: a reiteration of one's humanity and all that makes one whole rests on each page of the journal. Underlying the creation of the theme is the notion that there are a multitude of ways of knowing and being that deviate from white supremacist mechanisms. Operations of power and domination persistently demand [in the form of macro-violence to microaggressions] that lived experiences and the documentation of emotional involvement in one's work are the antithesis to worthy scholarship and practice. Within this journal are symbolic calls to action in the field of higher education that attend to the transformative potential of education. By grounding the journal in sentience and interconnectedness, TVC 41 aspires to uplift what makes student affairs and higher education practitioners feel alive in their work.

Each contribution to the 41st volume demonstrates a bold act of vulnerability and an embodiment of one's wholeness. The root of embracing parts of oneself as a single whole is when one makes the brave decision to choose loving their entirety. I hope that with the 41st volume of the journal, readers embrace themselves as worthy, whole beings too.

“And I think it is healing behavior, to look at something so broken and see the possibility and wholeness in it” (brown, 2017, p. 19).

In Community,
The Vermont Connection Co-Content Editors
Laura M. Aguilera & Brie L. Hornig

Reference

brown, a.m. (2017). *Emergent strategy: Shaping change, changing worlds*.
AK Press.