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Editor's Note

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I begin by humorously admitting that the “struggle” is real. As I struggle to put into words my feelings about my graduate experience, I also find myself deeply embedded in the finalization of the 35th volume of *The Vermont Connection* (TVC). This past year has been difficult, not only due to the amount of change and loss, but also because as a collective unit we dealt with personal and professional challenges. As I sit at a table full of editors, writers and enthusiasts of the journal, I reflect on lasting memories of phone calls, endless nights, and outlandish laughs that every single member of the full board experienced in our process of producing this year's volume. The meaning behind this volume is twofold in that for some authors it contains their first article published, while our seasoned authors utilize this medium as a way of sharing their wisdom. Nonetheless, the journal possesses the fears, smiles, tears and collective emotions of our beloved communities.

As we produce this journal in the midst of winter, it makes me reflect on the process of transformation. Transformation is a means of conserving what exists and building on what currently is nestled underneath the frigid ground. This concept relates very much to the experiences of the current cohorts. As some of us are about to graduate and utilize the skills we have germinated through our experience, others are only in the midst of sprouting through their anxieties of being at the University of Vermont. What we have noted is that higher education is ever-changing; students and institutions continuously reframe and recreate their experiences through multiple identities and dimensions. The theme of this volume, “(Re)creating New Domains: The Future of Higher Education”, is therefore used to discuss the very domains that we believe will shape the future of higher education.

This volume in particular is unique because it acknowledges and gives gratitude to the trailblazers within *The Vermont Connection* that continuously created the domains that we redefine within the academy. We lost a remarkable alumnae and member of our community Kathy Cook, who devoted her life to being an ally and mentor to everyone she touched. We also lost a pioneer within *The Vermont Connection* who laid the roots of our esteemed Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program, Jackie Gribbons. Additionally, two of

our current “connections” - collectively holding more than half a century of experience at the University of Vermont - are parting ways with their professional careers. The first, Dr. Jill Tarule, has graciously mentored and advised students throughout her time at UVM, and the second, Diana Dubuque, has seen the transformation of the HESA program and closes our volume with her thoughts and wisdom in The Final Word.

I am unable to express all the gratitude due to those who came before us and those who humbly serve the academy. Last year during production week, the cohorts utilized the mantra of “it takes a village” as a means to push through not only the creation of the 34th volume, but to address the way in which we supported each other throughout the year. The cohorts this year are (re)creating that mantra, and in observing their high spirits and proactive systems of support, it reinforces the life-force that is The Vermont Connection. That is why I not only thank the entire board, but I also thank the continuous support of our advisors Kimberlee Monteaux De Freitas and Nick Negrete ('06), and our faculty advisor Deb Hunter. Lastly I would like to thank our friends and alums of the HESA program who show support financially and personally throughout the year as we prepare and assemble The Vermont Connection.

The process of creating this volume has been a humbling experience, but it is also one that has made me very proud. It is with this great pride that I introduce the 35th volume of *The Vermont Connection*.

Marco A. Blanco
Executive Editor
The Vermont Connection