

The Vermont Connection

Volume 38 *Retracing Our Paths: Reclaiming
Narratives in Higher Education*

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Executive Board Note

Executive Board TVC

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EXECUTIVE BOARD NOTE

A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin
and culture is like a tree without roots.

—Marcus Garvey

As the Executive Board of The Vermont Connection (TVC), we are honored to present the 38th volume of the student affairs journal of The University of Vermont (UVM). Many of us have recounted the story of how TVC and UVM's Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) program became a part of our narratives, shaping our time in the classroom or the workplace. Whether because of the students, faculty, and staff we met, the challenges we encountered, or the successes we achieved, the experiences we share through The Vermont Connection provide a point of convergence in our paths in higher education.

However, each of our individual experiences are just that - individual. Our connections with UVM, TVC, and higher education as a whole are shaped by the identities, backgrounds, and experiences that we carry with us, resulting in as many different narratives as there are members of The Vermont Connection. Not all of these stories have been heard, and many of our narratives have been told for us. We envisioned Volume 38 as an opportunity to counter this and take these narratives back into our own hands. Our hope is that each author's voice will resound loud and clear as their stories are told, the way they are intended to be heard.

To honor the value of taking ownership of our stories, this year's journal theme is *Retracing Our Steps: Reclaiming Narratives in Higher Education*. As we move through the educational system and the professional world, we often lose connection with our roots to survive in a society that praises normative ways of knowing and being. This form of survival is oppressive to those whose ways of navigating the world do not conform to dominant practices. To counter these normative perspectives and practices, we have invited scholars and practitioners to express the ways they navigate through their work, space, and scholarship. This theme explores how we as emerging, current, or former higher education and student affairs professionals bring our whole selves to the work that we do.

We hope that this year's theme will allow writers to acknowledge and affirm the experiences, cultural roots, and people who have shaped them to be the individuals

that they are today. Moreover, we hope that readers will feel inspired to revel in their past, and bring aspects of who they are to their work. This unique theme recognizes the diversity that exists within our field and the plethora of knowledge that we have gathered throughout our journeys, allowing us to challenge dominant narratives. We remember that the reclamation of narratives is not simply a solo process, but one that also takes place in community. Our roots are intertwined with the communities we have come from, and our narratives are woven in with those we are surrounded by. We honor the people, places, and cultures that continue to shape us each day.

Our own HESA community continues to flourish in times of change. Dr. Tracy Arámbula Ballysingh and Dr. Jason C. Garvey are our two new faculty members who also serve as advisors to the Executive Board. Furthermore, we are excited to have Dr. Jill Tarule return as the HESA Program Coordinator. Dr. Tarule previously served as the Dean of the College of Education and Social Services at UVM for 13 years, and brings her expertise of the HESA program to this vital position. We also look forward to the possibilities presented by the arrival of Dean Scott Thomas to the college this year.

This October, students, faculty, and alumni collaborated to make Phone-a-thon 2016 a success. Current cohorts connected with alumni across the country to build community and sustain the strong relationship that unites The Vermont Connection. To continue connecting our current students with HESA alumna, we continued the TVC Mentorship Program with 18 new mentor/mentee pairs this year. Additionally, we premiered the Professional Development Fund, which allows us to distribute funds to current students and facilitate access to new opportunities. These initiatives, in conjunction with our longstanding traditions, have continued to cultivate a thriving HESA community.

We hope this journal is able to reflect the rich experiences held within each individual narrative. With great pride, we invite you to delve into the unique stories of our community in the 38th volume of *The Vermont Connection*.

The Vermont Connection Executive Board, 2016-2017

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