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# Trusting the Process – Building Community

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

### Trusting the Process – Building Community

This year in higher education was like many others. We gained personal, professional, and national victories that lifted our spirits and gave us hope. We suffered terrible personal, professional and national losses that took away our hope and brought our purpose into question. Perhaps because I am relatively new to the field as a second year graduate student, these victories and losses feel all the more palpable. As I sit and write this Editor's Note and take stock of all the lessons I've learned in HESA, "trusting the process" remains the most salient. Through the exhilarating highs, and the heart-wrenching lows, trusting the process has helped steady the course.

When I consider this year's theme, "Critical Truths, Empowered Voices, Changing the Landscape of Higher Education," I am reminded that with every reflection made, "A-ha" moment realized, and voice raised we all contribute to shaping our common reality. Our community is the sum of our individual thoughts, feelings, and actions. In trusting the process, trusting my cohort, and trusting myself, I am filled with something akin to an eternal spring of hope. Trust has given me faith in the power of community, and it would not be possible without the unending support of HESA and the student affairs field.

My critical truth is that, for better and worse, I would not be who I am without the people in my life. I am both honored and humbled to be surrounded by engaging professors and practitioners alike, and inspiring peers. My empowered voice tells me to carry that eternal spring of hope born of trust and community to students. And finally, that through the power of my HESA experience, my actions can help shape higher education and our world. There is no doubt in my mind that TVC is more than a journal, a current graduate student support system, or an alumni network. TVC is a living being that exists by the virtue of our shared commitment to improving the lives of our students, our coworkers, our peers, and our field.

The following articles in the 32<sup>nd</sup> Volume of The Vermont Connection are another year's testament to the passion and dedication felt for student affairs by our current students and alumni/ae. I want to thank every author for sharing their voice in our journal this year; your work better informs our practice and keeps us tapped into the HESA experience.

I also cannot go without expressing the most sincere and heartfelt thank you to our Executive Board who has taken each challenge in stride, and yet again come together for another successful year. Our fundraising efforts, journal production, reception events, and community support programs would not be possible without your hard work and team effort. To our incredible staff advisors, Tricia Rascon '06 and Nick Negrete '06, thank you for sharing thoughts without reservation and your positive energy. To Deb Hunter, thank you for your continued support as our Faculty Advisor. To our donors and alumni/ae, our program and journal would not have the stellar reputation it does without you. To our current students, thank you for your time, energy, and late nights to produce this volume, and your willingness to trust in the HESA process.

Cheers and Happy Reading!

Cait Bjellquist