

# The Vermont Connection

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Across Difference in Higher Education*

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## Editors Note

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*There is a need to acknowledge each other's pain, even as we attend to our own.* (Beverly Tatum)



Expression through scholarship is a tool on which the academy prides itself. My experience in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration (HESA) graduate program at the University of Vermont (UVM) has validated this statement. Within this program, we explore our peers, our students, our pasts, our futures, and ourselves. For the past 27 years, *The Vermont Connection* (TVC) has been the scholarly venue in which we, the HESA community, come together to share such explorations in order to encourage dialogue, provoke new thought, and develop change. In particular, *The Vermont Connection* is HESA's opportunity to share academic excellence within our community. Furthermore, TVC provides higher education practitioners with the knowledge needed to better serve students and develop more inclusive colleges and universities in which we learn, work, and live.

The 28th volume of *The Vermont Connection* is a collection of diverse, compelling, and innovative articles that create powerful connections between higher education and social justice. This year's Moral Conversation theme, *The Common in Community: Engaging Across Difference in Higher Education*, espouses an important message for practitioners within our field. This message is best expressed in the above quote by author, practitioner, and educator Beverly Tatum; in order to create a world of peace, we must start with acknowledging the pain both of ourselves and of others. The articles presented throughout this journal deliver personal and universal experiences that provide opportunities for self-reflection in order to find a collaborative middle-ground of acceptance and change.

This year's publication also allows us to pay homage to two immensely influential people in the HESA community as they retire at the academic year's end: Dr. Keith Miser and Jackie Gribbons. It was 27 years ago when Miser developed *The Vermont Connection* to be the nation's first professional-quality journal to be published by students of a higher education graduate program. The creation of this journal has led to other fine publications in similar graduate programs, such as the *Journal of Student Affairs* by Colorado State University, and Indiana University's *Journal of IUSPA*.

Jackie Gribbons, another major contributor to the field, strived to create a more skill-based experience for HESA students when she imbedded practica into the program's curriculum. Gribbons set the trend among many other higher education

graduate programs as her practica model truly embodied the idea of theory-to-practice. It is with great honor and pride that we in the UVM HESA community acknowledge these two individuals for their passion for this field and the influential change they embodied.

As we continue to create the field in which we so passionately work, it is up to student affairs educators to speak truthfully about the issues that drive us, intimidate us, and allow us to create the change we wish to see occur. *The Vermont Connection* is our opportunity to express academically our voices as we strive to be heard and genuinely listen to voices that have gone unheard for so long. As Editor, I welcome you not only to hear the voices that are expressed throughout this journal but also to reflect on the authentic ways you as an educator can commit to creating a field that is collaborative rather than combative, inclusive rather than exclusive, and proactive rather than reactive. Individually we hold many truths; together we hold the possibility for change.

Adam-Jon Aparicio