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Editors' Note

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Editors' Note

Joy Emmanuel & Madison Pimental

Joy Emmanuel (she, her) is a second-year Master's candidate at the University of Vermont in the Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration Program and holds a BA/Ed in English/Education from Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria, West Africa. She holds her Graduate Assistantship with the Department of Residential Life as an Assistant Residence Director and serves as a Senator on the UVM Graduate Student Senate. She is passionate about social justice and inclusion, equity, and access for historically underrepresented and marginalized students in higher education and seeks ways to create equitable opportunities to help them succeed.

Madison "Maddy" Pimental (she/her) is a second-year graduate student earning her Masters of Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration Program at the University of Vermont. Madison holds her Graduate Assistantship at the University's Center for Student Conduct. She earned her B.A in English and American Studies from Stonehill College and is an AmeriCorps alum from Maggie's Place in Phoenix, AZ. Throughout her college and AmeriCorps experience, she discovered the power of community and love as a driving force for changemaking.

Joy

As someone who possesses marginalized identities as a Black international student, this year's theme resonates deeply with me, especially with the prevalent socio-political climate in the United States. Coming from the lens of my identities, I can relate to the emotions of frustrations and anger commonly experienced by historically marginalized communities due to the ingrained racism, systemic discrimination, inequities and exclusionary practices that permeate the higher education landscape and work environment. As people with marginalized identities, there is always a need to navigate a system that often fails to acknowledge and address our unique challenges and perspectives. Having engaged in research activities that center the needs and experiences of underrepresented folks, most especially people of color, I further recognized the impact of these systemic issues and injustices and the need for radical change to occur.

While brainstorming an accurate description for this theme, Maddy and I wanted this journal to embody a call to action for our authors' targeted audience to engage critically with the issues of power, privilege and representation and work towards meaningful change. We are glad the collated wisdom

and contributions in this journal offer innovative insights, transformative solutions, and compelling narratives that challenge conventional ways of knowing and inspire action towards a more just and inclusive higher education system. As one of the Co-editors for this year's journal, I count myself privileged to present a collection of thought-provoking articles and narratives that confront pressing issues facing higher education today. As you journey through this volume of The Vermont Connection, I invite you to engage critically with the ideas presented herein, to challenge your own assumptions, confront status quo, interrogate entrenched power structures and join us in the collective effort to create a more inclusive, equitable and transformative higher education system.

Madison

When reflecting on this year's theme with my cohort, mentors, and community, I felt tension between the rage I felt regarding the world around me and the love I held on tightly to. I remember in the summer of 2023, reading and listening to the Supreme Court strike against my identities, and feeling nothing but rage. I sighed as life changing student loan forgiveness was denied in *Biden v. Nebraska* (2023). I cried while reading *303 Creative LLC v. Elenis* (2023), as the Court decided that my partner and I may be legally discriminated against. I raged as the Supreme Court deemed affirmative action as unconstitutional in *Students for Fair Admissions Inc. v. Harvard College* (2023). I remembered during my first-year in college, when a white woman shared she believed affirmative action prevented her from getting into the elite schools she felt deserving of attending. I asked myself then and I ask you all now, where can this rage go?

I am humbled and honored to share this year's edition of the Vermont Connection. I resist the temptation to call this edition a counter to TVC 44. When Joy and I wrote the description for this year's theme, we wanted to be intentional with our purpose. My partner once jokingly shared how she wants to end her emails with the sign off, "With Love and Rage." I think love, rage, and revolution can exist in harmony. With this edition of The Vermont Connection, I turn my rage to love and my love to rage. I focus my anger on change-making. This year's journal centers radical feelings with radical action - I ask you to reflect on how you can center love and rage in your personal and professional lives.

References

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