

A Tribute to Excellence

Jackie M. Gribbons

Greetings to one and all, and heartfelt congratulations to *The Vermont Connection* (TVC) for over 30 consecutive years of publication. And so, here I am again... and eternally grateful that I can say this. It is an honor to have been invited to share some brief reflections about the historical journey of TVC, and I am immediately thrust into a maze of memories about the evolution of this journal.

With this issue, the HESA program is entering its fourth decade of this proud and prestigious publication. Starting with the first volume, TVC was built upon a firm and strong foundation. There has always been a quest and demand for quality, if not perfection. Through the years, these principles and the highest of standards have guided several hundred Editorial Board members to seek lofty and mainly attainable goals, and readers and contributing authors have been the beneficiaries. What makes TVC so special and why was it conceived?

Through my lens, the following highlights have helped me to solidify the enduring nature of TVC:

- The HESA Journal was designed as a laboratory in its purist form using the most recent edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for reference style and general guidelines. Involvement offered the experience of learning firsthand that contributing to the profession's body of knowledge and scholarship was a value that stemmed from the dedication to inform, strengthen, and give meaning to how we think about the work we do. Advising was paramount to cultivating student learning, and exceptionally qualified faculty and staff filled the roles of advisors, teachers, and models of published authors. It is an understatement to say that TVC was and continues to be blessed by this invaluable support. As a leader among competitive higher education graduate programs, we paved the way for our students, alumni/ae, colleagues, and friends to conduct research in multiple venues, and to learn how to write manuscripts worthy of juried publication. Determined to be on the "cutting edge," early journals invited open-ended submissions which were later replaced with a

Professor Emerita Jackie M. Gribbons retired from UVM after 41 years of service as a central administrator and faculty member. She is the co-founder of the HESA program, has five leadership and service awards that honor her name, and received a rare Honorary Doctorate degree from the University of Vermont in 2007.

focus on singular journal themes, reflected again in this current issue. We know it as “making a difference,” and every issue has strived to achieve this entity.

- As publication interns, serving on elected Editorial Boards has been one of the most coveted and regarded responsibilities and commitments to the HESA program. Serving in this capacity, board members have often faced unexpected challenges: authors missing the dreaded deadlines, boards who wanted to reach the same goals but sometimes could not achieve them, printer providers who messed up, the occasional fuzzy understanding of the roles of board members, countless hours upon hours of just plain hard work, and the “five star” stressful production weekend. But, in the end, dynamics between board members, contributing authors, advisors, and faculty served as a real life experience about how to get things done with and for others, effectively, cooperatively, and happily. In the end—professional QUALITY!—and a feeling of well-deserved accomplishments.

- Not satisfied with the annual production of a scholarly journal, through the years TVC leaders have carved out other niches in the organization’s mission. One of the most important niches is the annual phon-a-thon fundraiser, which continues to garner the necessary financial support to sustain publications and other critical activities including annual newsletters, directories, and national conference reunion events. There is just no way the HESA program could be held in distinguished national acclaim without this kind of effort to keep all of us involved in the life of our graduate program to which so many have contributed and hold so dear.

Finally, there have been hundreds of article submissions, thousands of drafts, edits, and re-edits, and “walla,” a journal stands alone among its peers. If it appears as though I have showered accolades upon the virtues of *The Vermont Connection*, it is because I have! Thank you to all who write, read, and lead, and to TVC for being a precious jewel of the HESA program and providing unique opportunities to keep us involved and engaged in the pursuit of scholarly excellence.