

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Changing Names

Your *Connection* to New England higher education and the economy is now *THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*. ... As we were working through the “re-branding” of the journal this past spring, I had the privilege of participating in a roundtable discussion on “Education of Black Youth in Boston” at the University of Massachusetts Boston. The educators and community activists who descended on the university’s Dorchester campus that muggy afternoon were worried about the standard fare of achievement and standards of course. But they were also asking questions that are foreign to white suburban discussions of school success and college readiness.

How is it that gangs do a better job “retaining” members than schools and colleges do? How can immigrant parents collaborate with their children’s teachers when a visit to the school might prompt a visit from Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents? Is it fair to expect a non-English-speaking student arriving in Boston Public Schools in 9th grade to attain government-defined “proficiency” in four years? How might an effective truancy system help steer urban youth away from courts and jails and toward college instead? How does Endless War play out in the schools and the streets?

UMass professor Denise Patmon sums up the roundtable proceedings for us in the lead story of this inaugural issue of *THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*. That the voices in Patmon’s piece belong to neighborhood youth organizers, an urban sheriff and frontline teachers should serve to confirm that our name change does not signal a shift to the tweedy insularity of scholarly journals.

Nor have we entered some sort of witness protection program for magazines. To the contrary, our goal is to build on *Connection’s* 20 years of hard-hitting commentary and analysis with a brand whose serious look and feel matches its content. Readers can expect more of the best practices pieces, more of the trend analysis and more of the visionaries and gadflies that made *Connection* must-reading for New England decision-makers from its emergence as a newsletter in the 1970s through its graduation to journal/magazine in 1986.

In this issue, Nick Donohue, Jamie Scurry and Dennis Littky are thinking way outside the box. Donohue explains how reinventing education means much more than reforming schools. Scurry and Littky explain how the Providence-based Big Picture Company, having transformed the American high school experience for low-income, urban students, is girding for a new challenge: redesigning the American college.

Economist Ross Gittell, whose knack for turning dry numbers into powerful imperatives has made him a valued *Connection* contributor over the years, offers a grim demographic warning for New England—we’re losing our young people. John Humphrey, a journal editor and father, urges colleges to say no to credit card companies. And in this issue’s “Forum” section, Patricia Flynn, Zorica Pantic, Brigid Sullivan, Bernard Gordon and James Brett look for ways to unclog New England’s science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) pipeline.

So why the new tag? Put simply, there are a lot of *Connection* magazines out there, from “The Good News Magazine” to “The #1 Reggaeton Magazine” to “Your Worldwide Link for Swinging” (don’t ask). Our content often distinguished itself but our name didn’t.

Moreover, it’s not lost on us that just as New England’s pre-eminence in medicine has made it a uniquely suitable home for perhaps the world’s most authoritative medical journal, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, the region’s pre-eminence in higher education, though threatened mightily, makes it the only home for *THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*.

It’s all a work in progress, mind you. As befits a nonprofit publishing operation, there’ll be no slick media campaign or chichi launch party, just a pledge: to earn the authority our new name implies, while we build on the relevance and accessibility our old name came to stand for.

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