

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION (formerly *CONNECTION*) is published five times a year by the New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111-1325
Phone: 617.357.9620 Fax: 617.338.1577
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Vol. XXIV, No. 1 Summer 2009

ISSN: 1938-5978

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Publisher: Michael K. Thomas
Executive Editor: John O. Harney
Managing Editor: Charlotte Stratton
Editorial Assistant: Amanda Silvia

Design and Production: HM Studios, Boston, Mass.

Back Issues: Back issues are accessible on the World Wide Web at www.nebhe.org/nejhe/archives. Hard copies of regular issues may be purchased from NEBHE for \$3.95 each; annual directory issue, \$20.

For advertising information, contact Charlotte Stratton at cstratton@nebhe.org.

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION is printed in New England.

THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION is indexed and abstracted in EBSCOhost's Academic Search Elite, Academic Search Premier and Professional Development Collection, and indexed in the MLA International Bibliography and ERIC's Current Index to Journals in Education.

The New England Board of Higher Education is a nonprofit, congressionally authorized, interstate agency whose mission is to promote greater educational opportunities and services for the residents of New England. NEBHE was established by the New England Higher Education Compact, a 1955 agreement among the states of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

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EDITOR'S MEMO

Inspiration

How are campus dining, college athletics and Native American history related? Friend and mentor Bob Woodbury sees them as chapters in the eclectic story of New England higher education and economic development—a story he helped write as chancellor of the University of Maine System and in other key higher ed posts. Now a member of the *NEJHE* Editorial Advisory Board, he inspired the articles on those topics for this issue.

• In “Learning to Eat,” Bowdoin College executive chef Kenneth Cardone savors an overlooked asset of the college experience for students reared on fast food and hyperscheduled high school years: the development of taste buds and good dinner conversation—the *sobremesa*, as the Spanish call it.

• In “Double-Teamed,” Amherst College athletic director Suzanne R. Coffey urges college coaches and faculty to work together to bridge the divide between the classroom and “fields and courts that are humming with good minds processing complex patterns, reacting to variations, listening for cues, unpacking and reassembling the next moves (of the ball, the teammates, the opponents) before they happen.”

• In “The Dark Ages of Education and a New Hope,” Donna Loring, who represented the Penobscot Nation in the Maine Legislature for 12 years, describes the law she authored requiring Maine schools to teach Native American history and help heal the “Soul Wounds” that education has inflicted upon generations of Native Americans.

Bob broached all three angles and suggested the authors. They were the easiest story assignments I’ve made in two decades as editor. First of all, if anyone knows a good *NEJHE* angle, Bob does. Secondly, once I told each author Bob had suggested I contact them about writing the piece, they were *in*—no further negotiation needed. As Loring said, “Bob Woodbury is my friend as well.”

Recently, Bob has been battling cancer with the thoughtfulness and humor that have marked his career.

When we created the journal’s advisory board in 2003, Bob’s was the first name to come to mind. He had already chaired NEBHE. He had inspired the journal to devote itself to the nexus of higher education and economic development and had written perhaps the most requested piece in the journal’s history, his 2003 “How to Make Your College No. 1 in *U.S. News & World Report* and Lose Your Integrity in the Process.” The article described how the newsmagazine’s popular ratings issue encouraged colleges to produce an application deluge, reject as many students as possible, avoid nontraditional students and favor quick fixes over long-term improvement.

In 2004, Bob and I coauthored a chapter on “Academic Regionalism: Higher Education Cooperation in New England” for a book on *Regionalism in a Global Society*, and we got a good laugh out of dreaming up how we would spend the \$75 honorarium the publisher sent us. (*Bob is an avid and intelligent sports fan. We may have spent it on snacks at a Sea Dogs game.*)

When *NEJHE* celebrated its 20th anniversary a few years later, Bob noted that the journal had “codified the notion that economic development was and is ever more based on the quality and creativity of our higher education enterprise.”

When I was sick, Bob was a steady source of warmth and comfort for my family and me. Needless to say, we’re now pulling for Bob.

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For this issue’s Forum, we asked thinkers to assess President Obama’s goal to make the U.S. the world leader in college degree attainment. Authors include U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Capitol Hill education expert Terry Hartle, Muriel Howard (the first minority woman to lead one of the big D.C. higher education groups), and Nellie Mae Education Foundation President Nicholas C. Donohue. Notably, Donohue urges attention to another group lacking college attainment: “disconnected” young adults who are unemployed and not enrolled in school.

This issue also explores policy-oriented publishing in a blogging/Twittering age, and indeed the print-and-paper future of *THE NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*. We begin this exploration just as the tide seems to be turning against many print publications. Please weigh in, of course.

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