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Students as neighbors: utilizing dialogue and deliberation to manage town-gown tensions

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Utilizing Dialogue and Deliberation to Manage Town-Gown Tensions

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Abstract

The integration of the university and its students into the broader Harrisonburg community has promoted increased interaction amongst JMU students, JMU faculty and staff, and community members. Navigating this complex relationship can be challenging and, in recent years, this relationship has become increasingly strained. The following research seeks to cultivate processes that aid in its improvement. The research finds that utilizing dialogue and deliberation as an approach to designing public process is a promising approach to mending and maintaining the relationship between JMU students and the broader Harrisonburg community, as well as to addressing town-gown tension at large. The research also employs a unique, flexible, methodology to allow for ongoing learning in developing a multi-phased, responsive process that helps participants move from understanding to finding sustainable solutions. The research offers insights into how information and perceptions that emerge in dialogic conversation can be used to design processes that transition into collaborative solutions for town-gown tensions.

Introduction

David Bohm, a quantum physicist interested in communication and interconnectivity, describes dialogue as a "stream of meaning flowing among and through us and between us...out of which will emerge some new understanding. It's something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all. It's something creative. And this shared meaning is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together" (Bohm, 2004, p. 2). With an ever-increasing presence across the United States, "college-towns" are fraught with tensions caused by conflicting expectations between different interest groups, or "stakeholders". One significant area of tension centers on the expectations and behavior in neighborhoods that are shared (or not shared) between "townies" (community members/residents) and "gownies" (college student community members). With an apparent need for the "glue" that Bohm references, this study explores ways that dialogic and deliberative processes can and should be used to improve town-gown tensions, specifically regarding tensions that arise with having "students as neighbors."

Literature Review

What is Dialogue and Deliberation?

The terms *dialogue* and *deliberation* cross multiple disciplines. This study draws upon both the dialogic theory of communication studies and the political theory of deliberative democracy. Though the word "dialogue" is most often known by its everyday meaning of two or more people talking back and forth, the definition of dialogue in the context of public processes is much more complex. As stated by Bohm, dialogue not only involves the exchange of personal meanings, but also requires the development of a shared meaning, understood among an entire group.

To get to this place of shared meaning, those participating in dialogue can also deliberate amid their various thoughts and ideas. Deliberation "emphasizes the importance of examining options and trade-offs to make better decisions concerning issues of importance" (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, 2010, para. 2). When used in unison, these two processes enable participants who are discussing a particular issue to not necessarily come to an agreement, but to understand and learn about each other's various perspectives. This understanding can then be used in a variety of ways which can include resolving conflicts, building understanding about complex issues, or even just giving communities the ability to solve their own problems (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, 2010, para. 2). Notably, the process of dialogue and deliberation is in great contrast to a standard public hearing, where participants listen to those that have expertise and who are authorized to make decisions, but fail to express their own views because of knowledge that these preferences will likely not be taken into account (Fung, 2006, p. 70). Dialogue and deliberation works to integrate perspectives and create shared meaning.

Dialogic and deliberative processes tend to use skilled facilitators and predetermined ground rules to guide the conversation and ensure that all participants are treated equally (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, 2010, para. 3). These facilitators are impartial and maintain a neutral position that does not sway the opinions of those involved in the discussion. Rather, facilitators encourage depth of discussion, call upon quieter participants, and ultimately keep the conversation on track. Ground rules work in a similar vein, but focus more on the mindset of an individual participant. These guidelines encourage everyone involved in the discussion to suspend all preconceived notions and stereotypes about the issue and therefore

enable open conversation without fear of judgment (National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, para. 3).

For participants involved in dialogue, the opportunity to take part in open conversation enables unique perspectives and experiences to be shared without fear of judgment (NCDD, 2010, para. 3). Such an atmosphere encourages the discussion of difficult topics that would normally not surface in typical conversation, particularly among a large group of people. Overall, dialogue's goal of reaching understanding, not necessarily a solution, builds trust within its participants, often resulting in collaborative action that benefits all parties involved (NCDD, para. 4).

Importance of Dialogue and Deliberation in Promoting a Healthy Democracy

Specific to political theory, dialogue and deliberation provides unique contributions to democratic governance and outcomes—namely, increased citizen involvement, enhanced community problem solving, and more fair and improved outcomes (Nabatchi, 2010; Young, 2000). At a broader level, dialogue and deliberation are key components in promoting a healthy democracy. Deliberation in particular can be used as an instrument to promote active citizenship—a crucial element of democracy. Citizen involvement and "community participation" are promoted by engaging in deliberation and are key "for promoting healthy communities and enhancing the quality of life for individuals and groups," (Mannarini, 2013, p. 239). Because an active citizenry is key to a well-functioning democracy, dialogue and deliberation is of great value in that it can yield such citizenship through promoting additional channels to communicate.

Beyond promoting active citizenship, dialogue and deliberation can also aid in reaching "fair and equitable outcomes" when solving community problems (Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 26).

These public processes can include disadvantaged individuals (who are sometimes excluded from public decisions) as well as people who do not typically enjoy a certain public good, therefore serving to more closely approximate the democratic ideal of justice. Because dialogue and deliberation provides an additional channel of voice, it increases participation amongst ordinary citizens. A community can thus utilize public process in order to "pursue 'inclusive participatory politics' and open "more inclusive frameworks of power," (Overfelt, 2013, p. 606-607). Employing dialogue and deliberation helps groups select measures that "upon reflection win the deepest and widest appeal" and are therefore perceived as fair (Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 26). Actions that stem from deliberative decisions are seen as more legitimate and the process of deliberation can "heighten participants' commitment to implement decisions," as they are not enacted from above (Fung & Wright, p. 25). Involving citizens through deliberative processes helps shift away from secrecy and keep the public engaged and satisfied.

Not only are the outcomes that deliberation yields more fair, they can also be *better*. "Deliberative processes is likely to generate superior solutions than a hierarchical or less reflective procedure," because participants are given the opportunity to offer information and "consider alternative solutions more deeply" (Fung & Wright, 2001, p. 25). Decisions yielded by public process are grounded in the everyday experiences of citizens rather than filtered data. Citizens of a democracy are likely to have "superior knowledge of local conditions" and in many public services, the involvement of citizens in important discussions can truly improve the products of these services (Fung & Wright, p. 29 and 73). Utilizing public processes that promote dialogue and deliberation can be a way to more closely approximate the ideals of democracy that can be lost through political representation and the hierarchy it creates. Essentially, deliberative processes can be helpful in "facilitating active political involvement of

the citizenry, forging political consensus through dialogue, devising and implementing public policies that ground a productive economy and healthy society, and, in more radical egalitarian versions of the democratic ideal, ensuring that all citizens benefit from the nation's wealth," (Fung & Wright, p. 5).

The United States College Town

A college town is defined as any city where a university or college has a dominant influence over the culture and character of the community (Gumprecht, 2003). This typically does not include cities that are simultaneously major metropolitan areas, and excludes all cities that are merely home to a college with minimal influence on community culture. For those outside of the academic community that reside in college towns, the benefits of the institution's presence extend far beyond the campus. College towns are typically described as youthful places with highly educated populations, low unemployment rates, higher family income, diverse population makeups, and a high level of sophistication (Gumprecht, 2003; Weill, 2009). With a considerable purchasing power, students also bring economic vitality to local areas, creating increased business opportunities for local merchants.

These beneficial consequences of college town environments are balanced with an array of negatively perceived attributes. Typically, college towns have large rental housing and group housing cultures that contributes to transiency. Housing transiency can cause a divide between student and resident populations based on differing expectations of neighborhood culture. Additionally, student housing has a proven negative impact on the local real estate market, driving housing prices downward (Brailsford & Dunlavey, 2014; Weill, 2009).

Based on the college town, actions such as university expansion can straddle the line between being perceived as beneficial or detrimental. If the non-academic community is

informed early on of the campus development, they can assist in alleviating growth tensions through collaboration (Brailsford & Dunlavey, 2014). However, if the non-academic community views the expansion projects as an encroachment on their community, major conflict can result.

Town-gown relationships.

Town-gown relationships refer to the two communities presumed to comprise a college town: "town" which is the non-university population, and "gown," the academic community surrounding the university. The term "townies" typically encompasses town residents, government officials and departments, and business owners, while "gownies" generally refers to university students, faculty, administration, and graduates (Aggestam & Keenan, 2007). Though modern views of town-gown relationships echo the largely beneficial consequences of collaboration between the two populations (Weill, 2009), the United States higher education communities have not always coexisted this way.

Universities across the country have historically experienced tenuous relationships with their host communities due to the perceived, and often times, physical, wall between the university and community (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2004). These tensions generally stemmed from academic institutions feeling compelled to "protect" their student populations from morally corrupt external environments. These protective attitudes lead many universities to develop in rural locations away from "city evils" (Brockliss, 2000; Gumprecht, 2003). This move resulted in pairings of disjointed communities sharing common geographical locations.

Common conflicts that arise in town-gown relationships.

While each college town is unique, commonalities in areas of tension exist across the country. The 2014 Town-Gown Survey Assessment conducted by the International Town-Gown Association revealed similarities in the perceptions and strategies of town-gown communities

throughout the United States. On average, a college was more likely to rate the town-gown relationship in their community better than their municipal counterpart (Brailsford & Dunlavey, 2014). While not necessarily surprising, this fact sheds light on the differences in perceptions between the two groups about a given college or university's impact. The same survey revealed the most common issues facing town-gown communities— [college student] house parties, late-night noise, and underage drinking (Brailsford & Dunlavey, 2014). Other notable contenders were issues surrounding housing: affordability, availability, and unsightly appearance.

"Students as neighbors."

Student housing not only has a decisive impact on the local real estate market, but also on the dynamic of a neighborhood (Brailsford & Dunlavey, 2014). College students often differ in their community expectations compared to more permanent residents, as "the transient students see themselves as the rightful inhabitants of the sociocultural terrain," as opposed to a member sharing a communal space (Aden, Pearson, & Sell, 2010, p. 288). The transiency of college students can lead to a lack of genuine investment in the growth, development, and stability of the wider community.

Without a shared sense of community, university students and community residents often struggle with differing expectations of the word "neighbor," stemming from a disconnect between the two groups' values and norms (Weill, 2009). For example, while some students might value a late-night party atmosphere with loud noise and unrestricted fun, community members might instead value a quieter atmosphere for their families, neighborhood safety, and property upkeep. Though there is variation amongst these groups in value and perception, the challenge for town-gown communities is to discover ways for each interest group to understand

the perspectives of the other and to use that information to build a community and peacefully coexist.

Public Dialogue For the Purpose of Improving Town-Gown Relationships

        Suggested and previously attempted approaches to town-gown conflicts.

Town-gown communities are often faced with conflicts that require community intervention to solve lingering issues. In the case of Fairfield, CT where a controversial Luau of local college students in 2000 contributed to a rift between "townies" and "gownies," the town officials held a meeting to air grievances (Ageestam & Keenan, 2007). Unfortunately, this town hall meeting only further contributed community "othering" as those present were community members and students who found themselves on the extreme ends of the conflict. In this case, "groups with less personal interest in the conflict either avoided or stayed out of the public discussions" (p. 437).

With only those persons with the strongest viewpoints present at the meeting, two groups emerged: the confrontational and the cooperative. Though several attendees wanted to cooperate with those of a different perspective, they were far outnumbered by the confrontational attendees. The authors used the term "contraversation" to describe the dialogue that was "particularly and publicly directed against one faction" (p.429). In the Fairfield case, the identified faction was the college students and the community members used the town meeting as a way to air their grievances, rather than improve the tensions. The community dialogue was not successful at rectifying the conflict, because participants did not come together with a goal of understanding one another and moving forward, instead it was an opportunity for community members to complain in public.

Other authors (Bruning, McGrew, & Cooper, 2006; Weill, 2009) suggest that the college or university carries a large portion of responsibility in fostering positive relationships between "townies" and "gownies." While this may be true in creating town-gown partnerships and development, or increasing community visits to campus, a university's over-involvement in improving areas of tension could be negatively perceived by community members (Aden, Pearson, & Sell, 2010). A university may be better served as a "proactive" body, rather than a "reactive" force to community tensions.

The university's support is necessary for positive community relationships, but only so much can be solved from the "top" of the university, especially in regards to students as neighbors. Attempts to resolve conflicts among community members and students from upper levels of the university may be viewed as the university or local officials making a one-sided effort without seeking outside assistance (Bruning, McGrew, & Cooper, 2006). A one-sided approach ignores potential lines of collaboration and communication.

The importance of understanding language in town-gown conflicts.

The absence of a shared community identity can often lead to an "othering" of the different community perspectives developed through language construction. The terms "townies" and "gownies" themselves contribute to the linguistic identities developed for the different groups through stereotypes that often accompany the terms, both positive and negative. Communities can only hope to resolve and improve town-gown tensions and conflicts if the respective parties understand the linguistic construction and organization of the others' reality.

Language provides context and understanding for different social groups and often assists in indicating who belongs to that group and what sort of behaviors and norms are acceptable in that space (Aden, Pearson, & Sell, 2010). If we examine college students and permanent

community members as separate social groups, it is reasonable to assume that some norms deemed acceptable for college students may not carry over into the community space. Students may envision that their places of residence reside in "student neighborhoods" that are a separate entity from the surrounding communities (Aden, Pearson, & Sell, 2010).

In the Fairfield, Connecticut case, Ageestam and Keenan (2007) conducted a case study that looked at the importance of language in the aftermath of the conflict and the attempts made to rectify the rift. The authors noted that different parties often exaggerate certain features of a conflict over others, making common ground more difficult to find. While "some definitions of the situation had been developed prior to the luau event, other definitions were being made for the first time" at the town meeting dedicated to the discussion (p. 437). The emerging definitions were an opportunity to develop understanding.

Recognizing the need for developing increased understanding in town-gown conflicts and with knowledge of the ways that dialogue and deliberation can help promote shared meaning in mind, this research will examine the effectiveness of public dialogue processes when used to address town-gown conflicts and tensions. By using the previous research as an examining lens and focusing on a single community case, this research study seeks to 1) reveal how dialogue and deliberation can help ease town-gown tensions and 2) show how information and perceptions that emerge in dialogic conversation can be used to design processes that transition into collaborative solutions for town-gown tensions. First, historical and demographic information about the university community for this case is offered. Then the research methodology is explicated and findings from the 14-month applied research study are offered. Finally, implications for this community are discussed as well as theoretical understandings of the role dialogue and deliberation can play in managing town-gown tensions.

This research will aim to answering the following questions:

RQ1:

How can dialogue/deliberation processes help address town-gown tensions?

RQ 2:

How can we use information and perceptions that emerged in a dialogic conversation to design processes that transition into collaborative solutions to address town-gown tensions?

RQ 3:

To what extent will the dialogue and deliberation processes influence policy and decision-making?

A Case Study: James Madison University and the City of Harrisonburg

Located in the Shenandoah Valley, the city of Harrisonburg (home to over 50,000 residents) enjoys a rich history, dating back to 1737 (Harrison, 1935). For more than 100 years, James Madison University has played an important part in the history and development of the city of Harrisonburg and the surrounding community. Established in 1908 as the State Normal and Industrial School for Women, the institution quickly expanded, through several land acquisitions, over the course of a few decades (Crowley, 2008, par. 4). By 1952, what was now known as Madison College (renamed for founding father James Madison) had expanded south and east of its original property, bringing the total campus size to more than 300 acres (Crowley, para. 4). At the turn of the 21st century, James Madison University, renamed for the final time, boasted a 495- acre campus that included 110 acres across Highway 81, as well as an enrollment total of more than 15,000 students.

Presently, James Madison University's 721-acre campus is home to more than 20,000 graduate and undergraduate students, as well as hundreds of staff, faculty, and administration (Just the Facts, 2014, para. 1). In order to accommodate its increasing enrollment, the university

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pushed its development into the city of Harrisonburg, purchasing the city's retired hospital, Rockingham Memorial, an old nearby hotel, and the former Harrisonburg High School Complex (Just the Facts, 2014, para. 5). These buildings were then either converted into academic buildings and dormitories or demolished to make way for newer construction projects.

Perceptions of Town-Gown Relationships in Harrisonburg, VA

The present relationship between James Madison University and the surrounding community includes a range of both positive and negative perceptions. Researchers reviewed a variety of sources as a means of examining the situation, including a 2008 Martin Research Inc. survey conducted by the university that intended to gauge community members' sentiments about JMU, as well as various posts from Harrisonburg's Old South High blog. Both areas of research provided vital information via the use of two different processes; the survey collected a quick quantitative snapshot of the feelings of many participants whereas the blog captured the lengthier thoughts and experiences of a select few.

On the whole, residents who find JMU to be a positive presence in the community outweigh those who view the university as negative. When asked to describe their overall perception of JMU, 55.1 percent of participants in the 2008 survey responded positively, with only 16.1 percent describing their sentiments as negative (Martin Research, 2008, p. 5). This left JMU with a positive to negative ratio of 3.44:1, far better than university administration had initially anticipated (Martin Research Inc., 2008, p. 5). The remaining portion of the group, 28.9 percent of those surveyed, cited a neutral or "don't know" response, a perception that surveyors concluded had the potential to become positive in the future (Martin Research Inc., 2008 p. 5).

Yet, despite more than half of Harrisonburg residents identifying positively with the university, those with negative perceptions continue to exist. When looking at the causes of

division between JMU and the surrounding community, two different factors proved to have the greatest impact on creating tensions in the town-gown relationship: unruly student behavior and JMU's aura of "arrogance" with its growing budget and rapid expansion (Martin Research Inc., 2008, p. 12). In describing their thoughts on the student population, community members' opinions are incredibly diverse and depend upon the nature of their interactions with the largest portion of the JMU population. For some survey participants, responses to questions concerning students included phrases such as "hardcore partiers," who disregarded the community's people, history, and, at their worst, behaved as "immoral, anti-family, snobbish rich kids" (Martin Research Inc., 2008 p. 12). These comments were often accompanied with a lack of respect for the university's attempt to control such misconduct, with residents believing JMU's regulations were nothing more than a "wink" from administration at the institution's party and behavior problems (Martin Research Inc., 2008, p. 12).

Other community members, however, cited their experiences with students to be generally positive, acknowledging that the bad behavior of some should not affect the overall perception of the group. This is epitomized in the words of a local cab driver, who wrote a guest post in September 2013 on the Old South High blog. Self-described as a "typical college-educated, underemployed American," the driver details his experiences driving students around during the twilight hours of the weekend, recounting stories of interactions with young people and their various levels of good character (Old South High, 2013). He begins with the stereotypical party boys off on their "sexual conquests," and groups of girls who have had far too much to drink as they drunkenly stumble home (Old South High, 2013). Yet, he does cite several occasions of having "meaningful conversations with a stranger," as many students turn to him on their ride home as an anonymous outlet for confessions of guilt, anxiety about the future, or just

general conversation (Old South High, 2013). It is from these moments that the driver concludes JMU students are not all "party bros and puke bags," and are just trying to get through their educational experience, without any malicious intent toward others.

Although the survey and local media indicate that not all Harrisonburg residents view students in such a negative light, those community members who did cited JMU's rapid expansion as the ultimate cause of tension. Issues with students tended to stem from the university's overall reputation among Harrisonburg residents as "the elephant in the room with unlimited state money," whose administration "railroads decisions with no opportunity for input from the community," (Martin Research Inc., 2008, p. 15). Blog posts echo this "school that ate the town," mentality and often discuss how JMU's Board of Visitors, the school's governing body appointed by the governor of Virginia, has little to no care about how campus expansion is affecting the surrounding area (Jenner, 2012b). The disconnect between administrators' and residents' beliefs concerning the Board's responsibility to inform and include the community has provided the ultimate source of tension and continues to do so as the university further expands into the town's territory (Jenner, 2012b).

Ultimately, research concluded that the negative perceptions of JMU among community members originated from an overall belief that these aforementioned variables were slowly destroying the uniqueness and culture of the city of Harrisonburg. Due to the administration's perceived lack of concern for external input in the expansion process, residents are left feeling frustrated and helpless, with no other option but to watch the university "gobble up" what was left of their town to make way for more students (Martin Research Inc., 2008, p. 15).

Careful analysis of the university community relationship supports that new processes should be explored to help manage these ongoing tensions. Next, the ways that dialogic and

deliberative processes were designed, analyzed and assessed is explained.

Methodology

Overall Study Design

The research design utilizes chronological process development, wherein each step of the research is based upon and responds to the findings of previous steps. To collect the data required to assess the extent to which town-gown tensions in Harrisonburg, VA could benefit from dialogue and deliberation, researchers:

1. Conducted stakeholder interviews with both campus and community members to develop the research topic
2. Piloted the selected research topic at a community forum
3. Used the background research from stakeholder interviews and the community forum to structure and plan the first forum
4. Developed assessment tools for data collection at the first forum
5. Analyzed the data from the first forum
6. Used the analysis of the first forum to guide creation of the second forum, and
7. Used steps 1-6 to design a post-forum interview process intended to capture a holistic view of the research process.

Chronological Process Development

Stakeholder interviews to develop research topic.

In developing the first forum, it was important to conduct preliminary research to better understand how people talk about the town-gown relationship. The first step in this process, after looking at previous research data about the conflict, was getting out into the community to understand how it currently is experienced. To narrow the research topic, the researchers utilized stakeholder interviews to gauge current sentiments among Harrisonburg and JMU community members and determine which areas people sought to discuss and change.

The researchers compiled a list of "stakeholders," otherwise known as members of the community who have a vested interest in engaging in dialogue on town-gown relationships. This list of stakeholders included apartment complex landlords, local media, members of JMU

fraternity and sorority life, JMU organizations, police officers, etc. After compiling this list, researchers developed a series of questions that would be asked in informal stakeholder interviews to increase the team's understanding of how members of the JMU and broader Harrisonburg community understand the relationship.

These questions were framed with neutrality in mind and assessed both the positive and negative aspects of the current town-gown relationship, what words community members use to describe the relationship, and in what ways they see the community as cohesive or divided (Appendix A). JMU students enrolled in a class centered on facilitating public processes conducted these preliminary interviews and gathered the data used to structure and frame the first forum. These interviews revealed that the topic of students and community members living as neighbors was a principal grievance. These trained students would also serve as facilitators in the upcoming forum.

Piloting the research topic.

Upon examining results from the stakeholder interviews, the researchers elected to focus on students as neighbors and attended a dialogic forum held by local Harrisonburg officials in September of 2014. Here, community members were encouraged to create discussions that focused on an issue of their choice, with participants free to come and go from these conversations as they pleased. To pilot the research topic, the researchers established a "Students as Neighbors" topic and many community members joined in the conversation to provide insight on both the positive and negative elements of having students living within their residential communities. Many participants felt students were positive additions to Harrisonburg and some participants described an inability to get to know their student neighbors as their principal concern. Ultimately, the conversation had a central theme—that is, the importance of respecting

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the differences in lifestyles that members of each group wished to carry out as a Harrisonburg resident. In addition to providing valuable insight to the researchers, this conversation illustrated a significant interest among Harrisonburg community members in continuing dialogue surrounding students as neighbors.

Construction and planning of the first forum.

To structure the first forum, it was important to first identify primary goals of the process. Because the researchers sought to foster understanding amongst participants before engaging in a more deliberative framework to affect change, the first forum was structured as a facilitated dialogue that would allow participants to share stories and learn from one another. This forum structure would also yield information about what areas were most ripe for action moving forward. Consistent with the idea that it is crucial to listen to participants in framing these public processes, researchers designed a two-forum structure with flexibility in mind. Specifically, the first forum would center on promoting understanding and sharing meaning through dialogue, while the second forum would build upon this meaning deliberatively to identify specific areas for action.

Researchers used the information gathered from the stakeholder interviews and at the community forum in order to identify discussion areas for discussion centered on what it means to be a neighbor. To guide the first forum, researchers developed a comprehensive facilitator guide that outlined the structure of the forum with questions to guide discussion. The facilitator guide was designed to take participants through 5 "sessions" including: what it means to be a neighbor, the perceptions and sentiments that exist with the community, current lifestyle differences and safety concerns, systems that exist within the community that both help and hinder neighbor relationships, and how engaging in a public process might help enlarge

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participants' perspectives moving forward (Appendix B). The forum also included a large group debrief session where facilitators would have the opportunity to report out what perspectives were uncovered at their respective tables and where the dialogue was headed next.

   Location matters. When beginning the process of designing the forum, researchers identified many elements that needed to be addressed. Though the theoretical groundwork had been laid, one of the biggest (and most unforeseen) issues in planning the forum was finding a space large enough to hold participants as well as tables, white boards, and facilitators. On campus event spaces were quickly ruled out, for although they had the required space, researchers feared that community members may feel more like subjects in a college experiment and less like participants in an open dialogue if the forum were to be held there. The perfect venue seemed to lie somewhere in the community, within reach of the JMU population— particularly of those students who lived on campus and would need to walk to the event. Researchers finally settled on the Harrisonburg Baptist Church's Fellowship Hall, which was a community meeting space in the basement. The church was positioned on the outskirt of JMU's campus and Harrisonburg's downtown, making it the perfect location for both residents and students to come together.

   The second forum took place inside JMU's new Student Success Center. Although this choice may appear contradictory to the location strategy used earlier in the process, picking an on campus space was done in response to data collected from the first forum. During conversations about the physical "bubble" of isolation that surrounds the university, many community members vocalized that they would like to visit campus, but have no information on how to do so, due in part to the gates positioned at most campus entrances that are only open on the weekends, as well as JMU's lack of available parking. Taking this feedback into account,

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researchers decided to hold the second forum in the university's newest and most technologically advanced building, which also happened to be the former community hospital purchased and revamped by the university. By providing community members with exact details on campus parking and visitation, researchers hoped that the forum would not only bring groups together through dialogue, but also through introducing Harrisonburg residents to a new building that JMU is happy to showcase. Researchers believed this action of sharing such a new and unique on campus space would make community members feel more welcomed and comfortable on university grounds, which was one of the main goals of the dialogue in the first place.

Participants. Participants were recruited from the Harrisonburg and James Madison University communities through social media advertisements, flyers, bulk email distribution, and local news broadcasts (see the promotional messages, Appendix C). There were no listed requirements for participation in the forum, but only those of at least 18 years of age were included in survey data analysis.

Getting people to the table. Once all of the planning was completed, the next task was to advertise the event to potential participants in the JMU and Harrisonburg communities. Since these two groups have different means of communication, two different strategies were put in place in order to contact the maximum number of people.

The easier group to contact was the JMU community due to the university's mass email system. An email describing the event's purpose, location, date, and time was sent out to students, faculty, staff, and administration on November 5, 2015, one week before the forum. A Facebook event page detailing the same information was also created around the same time as a means of further advertisement to students. Promotional flyers were hung around campus in various highly trafficked locations, particularly in the buildings that house the Communications

and Political Science departments, as it was believed these students would be mostly likely to attend the forum. Members of JMU's faculty who were involved in the forum's planning process or who simply had interest in the forum's success also spread word of the event throughout their various networks.

Reaching out to members of the Harrisonburg community to market the event was markedly more difficult. Fortunately, contacts in JMU's Department of Public Affairs were able to send the promotional flyer via email to the Harrisonburg Chamber of Commerce, where it was published in their weekly newsletter. The building that houses the Public Affairs department, which is located in downtown Harrisonburg and is frequented by JMU and Harrisonburg community members alike, also displayed a slide on its promotional flat screen TV in the downstairs lobby. Promotional flyers were also hung in various locations that Harrisonburg community members were known to frequent such as shopping centers, churches, and grocery stores. Local media including Harrisonburg's local newspaper, the Daily News Record, and JMU's student newspaper, The Breeze, were also contacted with information about the event in hopes of promotion and coverage.

Even with all these measures, there were certain groups of people that still required a more deliberate contact, primarily due to their value in being part of the conversation, for example, the individuals that attended the community forum where the topic of students as neighbors was tested. These individuals provided their contact information at the previous event, which allowed an informational email on the event to be sent out. Others included town officials, such as the mayor and Harrisonburg city councilmen. Unfortunately, the night of the forum (a Tuesday) was also the night this group holds their weekly meetings, so these individuals were unable to attend.

Assessment of the first forum.

Survey instrument. Measuring effectiveness of a public participation event is a difficult task, as dialogue effectiveness in this context is largely subjective. While public dialogue processes generate useful information from the conversations of participants, essential information for future public processes can also be gathered from evaluating the forum's overall effectiveness. In fact, evaluating a deliberative process contributes four beneficial outcomes to public dialogue research (National Collaborating Centre, 2010):

> "1. To ensure the proper use of public or institutional resources;
> 2. To determine whether the process works and to learn from past experiences
> 3. To determine whether or not the process was fair (e.g. that the views of participants were accurately represented); and
> 4. To better understand which deliberative process is effective for different types of issues and contexts (Abelson & Gauvin, 2006)."

According to researchers Abelson and Gauvin (2006), a deliberative process can be evaluated in two ways: by its process and/or its outcomes. A *process* evaluation focuses on monitoring the implementation of a public dialogue process, namely whether the process gave participants adequate information, had any apparent biases, or the approach to the subject matter. Questions a researcher might ask are "what problems did we experience?" or "did participants have access to the resources they needed?" An *outcomes* evaluation measures whether changes occurred in specific areas and seeks to establish whether or not the deliberative process was effective in achieving its goals. Outcomes evaluations require appropriate measures to track changes that must be stated clearly at the beginning of the process. These changes could occur in participants (i.e. their attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives) or in public policy and decision-making (i.e. decision consensus, rule changes).

Using two different evaluative frameworks, Frewer and Rowe's (2005) "Nine Evaluative Criteria" and De Vries et al. (2010) "Four Dimensions of the Quality of Deliberation," the

research team chose six process criteria and four outcomes criteria to test the forum's effectiveness through a survey format:

Process Criteria	**Outcomes Criteria**
1. All concerned parties represented at the table	1. All concerned parties able to talk to one another
2. Participants able to express interests	2. Participants willing to participate in future events
3. Participants feel heard by "other"	3. Participants understand the "other"
4. Process was neutral/unbiased	4. Participants changed their opinions/perspectives
5. Participants had necessary and sufficient information	
6. Process was clearly explained to all participants	

Each of these criteria was broken down into individual elements that drove the creation of questions for the survey. The survey administered during the forum had two components, a pre-survey and a post-survey. The two-fold design was necessary to evaluate whether changes had occurred in participants' opinions or their understandings of the "other," before and after involvement in the forum. (See the Forum 1 Pre and Post Survey, Appendix D)

The survey was given in physical form to participants at Forum 1 who were asked to fill out the pre-survey as they arrived and took their seats at the respective tables. At the conclusion of the table dialogues near the end of the forum, participants were asked to complete the "post-survey," on the opposite side of the survey paper. Survey questions included requests for general demographic information, as well as requests for information regarding each participant's perspectives, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences from the forum. Post-survey questions were designed to compare answers to similar pre-survey questions. Forty-three participants (30 female, 12 male, 1 unknown) completed surveys about their experiences at the first forum and demographic information and thus, the survey data provided relevant information about who

attended the forum (a completed survey consisted of at least some responses on both the pre-survey and post-survey).

Qualitative Data Collection. In addition to collecting survey data, researchers collected qualitative data via seat and table note takers, who captured the words and sentiments of the participants at each table. Participants' statements were prompted by the facilitator guide discussed above, which included questions to guide the discussion and foster increased understanding. The seat note takers captured longer statements, including important quotations, and recorded these on a personal laptop. The table note takers captured shorter themes onto a large easel facing the table so that participants could see where the dialogue had been and where it was headed, while simultaneously having the opportunity to verify whether their feelings were being captured correctly.

As participants engaged in guided dialogue with one another, two of the researchers took on the role of process observers who noted the overall atmosphere during the event. Much of this duty included moving among the groups as a bystander to briefly listen to and analyze overarching themes about how participants and facilitators engaged in the process. Witnessing the process from an outsider's perspective was an opportunity for researchers to truly experience the effects of dialogue without actively taking part in the conversation. This reflection enabled researchers to analyze the effectiveness of the process as a whole after the event, rather than just focusing on the content insights from the facilitated conversations.

Analysis of the first forum.

A summary of the overall process of thematic analysis is as follows:

1. Statements condensed by individual participants via seat and table notes
2. Integration of notes from the tables as well as notes about the process (in order to provide a holistic view of the forum)

3. Systematic analysis of the language and the purposes it serves for participants using line by line coding and gerunds
4. Identification of the primary themes that emerged (in this case, the primary tensions according to participants)
5. Identification of which of these themes are most ripe for discussion and improvement
6. Production of final report or write-up of findings and next steps

To analyze the data from the first forum, all of the seat and table notes were combined, classified by table, and organized into a master document that was used to uncover the principal themes that emerged at the forum. In addition to the notes taken at each table, on the night of the forum each of the researchers walked around and took general notes about the process, how participants were interacting with one another, and general themes that were surfacing. All of these notes were integral in conducting a thematic analysis in that they captured data at each level of the process—from specific statements made by participants, to more generalized sentiments and ideas at each table, and finally, statements of how the process of dialogue and deliberation was working as a whole.

The process of thematic analysis occurred in multiple steps as the data was filtered to uncover its most important themes. Though the data in raw form constituted what was actually said at the forum by participants, as framed in terms of the questions they were asked, it inevitably moved through its first filter when it was captured by the seat note takers, condensing what participants were saying in a way that was able to be recorded. This type of summation is an inevitable part of the dialogic process and requires that note takers be committed to capturing the data in a way that approximates the participants' statements as closely as possible, especially because subsequent qualitative analysis seeks to "arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those experiencing it," (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013, p. 398).

Thematic analysis puts the data through a second filter in order to discover the meaning behind these captured ideas. A theme refers to a "specific pattern found in the data," and can refer to ideas at both the manifest and latent levels (Marks & Yardley, 2004, p. 57). In other words, these themes can be directly observable or implicitly referred to, both of which are important to uncover. Thematic analysis, though at times very systematic and methodical, should still allow adequate room for the data's broader context and overall meaning to emerge (Marks & Yardley, 2004). The research team began using this systematic approach, by identifying gerunds to uncover what the words and statements captured by the note takers were accomplishing for participants at the forum; what purpose the words were serving. This analysis of language focused on what was happening on each line of the data, for example, *explaining, blaming*, *complaining*, etc. Understanding the way in which words were functioning for participants was crucial in creating meaning from the data.

Next, researchers looked at where, as a whole, the primary tensions were in the eyes of participants. This involved grouping these tensions into basic "themes" that captured the essence of the grievance or general sentiment. Findings were compiled into a "Forum 1 Report" which provided context for each of the sessions (groupings of questions that facilitators asked participants) in order to create a clear presentation of what occurred at the first forum. Moreover, in going through the data, researchers asked questions like: "How do people talk about or define the problem?" "What needs to be fixed?" and "Who would need to fix it?" These questions helped segue into the development of the second forum in that they illuminated specific areas that were ripe for further dialogue and improvement, also captured in the Forum 1 Report (Appendix E).

Construction and planning of the second forum.

After conducting thematic analysis using the methods outlined above, researchers compiled the findings (discussed later in "Findings") to frame and construct the second forum. Similar to the first forum, it was important to design the second forum with particular goals in mind. Researchers recognized that participants would need to begin taking ownership of the process, as they would be the ones carrying out the action in the future. Because of this, the research team structured the dialogue in a way that was less tightly facilitated and more self-guided, encouraging participants to build upon the understanding they gained in the first forum and shift their thinking into specific visions and action steps moving forward. In light of the perspectives uncovered at the first forum and in keeping with the spirit of a self-guided process, researchers identified five areas to address at the next forum. These areas included: 1) student knowledge about their choices when moving off-campus, 2) promoting positive messaging and changing perceptions, 3) learning to be a citizen, 4) enhancing community safety and decreasing risky behaviors, and 5) developing places to share community. The second forum was structured in a way that promoted collaboration and innovation, as participants would be encouraged to work together on a vision for the community and would have the opportunity to suggest alternative "areas" to work on, in addition to the five developed by the researchers (as listed above).

Researchers developed the second forum's facilitator guide, which outlined the structure of the forum (Appendix F). The forum began with a large group activity where participants envisioned what they would like to be able to tell someone moving here in three years about the JMU-Harrisonburg relationship. This appreciative inquiry-style component allowed participants to develop a broad vision for what they want the relationship to be before discussing how to

make that a reality. Following the large group activity and a presentation of the findings from the first forum, participants transitioned into smaller groups based upon which of the five areas they were most interested in. To encourage participants to take ownership of the process, they were able to contribute ideas to as many groups as possible and the forum structure was designed to allow innovation and the development of new areas for improvement.

In small groups, facilitators now acted in a less guided role, helping participants create a more specific vision statement based upon what they wanted the relationship between JMU students and community members to look like and then prompting them to think about how to put this plan into action. Participants were each given "WATER" worksheets, which helped guide the group from the broader vision statement down to the smaller details necessary to grow (water) the vision and make it a reality. These details included thinking through how the vision fits into improving town-gown relationships, what actors and assets are already in place in the community that can be used to make this a reality, what steps must be taken in order to achieve it, what experiences and perspectives are necessary in taking action, and what resources are necessary to ensure that the effort is mutually beneficial and sustainable. The worksheet provided a structure to move broad visions into specific action steps, guiding the process though not limiting the types of initiative participants could take.

The second forum was structured to conclude with a large group debrief on what visions the tables came up with and how best to sustain these efforts with the help of a newly formed campus group that was bringing together multiple task forces and committees into one coalition – the Campus and Community Coalition. Following the first forum's success, the second forum received offers for partnership and support from several JMU organizations that were affected by the issue of town-gown relations. The first, and most notable, was the partnership formed with

JMU's Campus and Community Coalition. This recently formed organization focuses on the university's relationship with the surrounding community and consists of students, faculty, administration, and local Harrisonburg leadership. Since the data collected from both forums can directly inform this group's goals and overall mission, the Coalition was interested in assisting in the planning aspects of Forum Two. This included booking space for the event in the university's brand new Student Success Center as well as providing a budget for refreshments. Fraternity and Sorority Life and the Office of Off Campus Life also provided additional support, sending representatives to the event and pledging assistance in future dialogic efforts by the Campus and Community Coalition.

An unexpected obstacle. Although the second forum was originally planned for mid-February, severe weather conditions forced researchers to cancel the event at the last minute. Unfortunately, the university's class make-up date for a previous snow day, followed by spring break, consumed the next three weekends, so an immediate reschedule of the event was not possible. As a result, researchers chose to hand the event's primary responsibilities over to the Campus and Community Coalition as a means to mark the group's first collaborative efforts to improve town-gown relations. The researchers still fulfilled the roles as organizers and facilitators of the process, but the Coalition took on the responsibilities of marketing the event and the follow-up analysis of the process due to time constraints (See Forum 2 Report, Appendix G).

Post-process interviews.

To determine whether dialogic processes had an impact on the town-gown issues as a whole, we identified six forum participants to engage in 30-minute interviews in the weeks following the forums. These interviews were designed to assess the extent to which the forum

process had or would influence policy and decision-making. The interviews consisted of six questions, asking participants to elaborate on their experiences with the forum, define public dialogue in their own words, and describe whether, in their opinion, the forum process had or would continue to have an impact on the town-gown relationship.

Researchers chose interview participants based on their role in university, city, or community policy and decision-making. Each participant was identified as a key actor in influencing the JMU-Harrisonburg relationship, maintaining varying perspectives of both past and present efforts for improvement. The five interviewees included JMU administration, JMU staff, a JMU student, and an influential Harrisonburg community member. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed.

Findings: Understanding and Adjusting the Process

Survey Data and Results

The survey data gathered at the forum indicated which of our overall process and outcomes criteria goals were met. In regards to the six process criteria used to evaluate the effectiveness of the forum, survey results revealed that the participants represented a wide array of roles and identities in the Harrisonburg and JMU communities. Of the 43 participants who completed the survey about the first forum, 58.1 percent of participants indicated they were college-aged (18-22) and 11.6 percent indicated they were young-adult aged (23-30). Over half of the participants (28) indicated that they were current JMU students, and of those JMU students, 25 lived in off-campus housing. Those who indicated they were not JMU students reported assorted roles, including JMU alumni, JMU employees, residents living in close/not close proximity to JMU students, and one property manager.

Regarding the process, of the forty-three respondents, 70% indicated that they were able to engage with participants that had a different perspective than them. When asked to what extent the participants felt that the format of the forum had been clearly explained, and to what extent they felt that the ground rules had been clearly explained, 79% of respondents and 84% of respondents replied with "great extent" respectively. Regarding any perceived biases of the forum, 95% indicated that their facilitator did not favor one perspective over another, and 86% indicated that the process did not favor one perspective over another. 70% of respondents indicated that they had a "great extent" of sufficient information to engage in the dialogue. Moreover, when asked to indicate the extent to which they felt others used body language that showed they were listening, the extent to which they felt participants truly listened and recognized the truth in their perspectives, and the extent to which they felt participants acknowledged their perspectives, all but one respondent indicated "some extent" or "great extent."

Regarding the outcomes, of the respondents, 77% indicated that they would be willing to engage in a follow-up forum later in the year. The other questions designed to yield data regarding the outcomes of the forum were largely inconclusive, due to nonresponse and confusion on the part of the respondents. This is discussed further in the "Challenges" section below.

Understanding the Process of Dialogue and Deliberation

Though the act of organizing a community forum might have appeared rather straightforward at first, researchers soon discovered the need for flexibility in the process, especially as it relates to both the planning and execution of these community conversations. While planning for a dialogue, it is easy to envision the event in a room that is spacious and

equipped with every material necessary. Realistically, however, this ideal venue is often difficult to find, making the ability to adapt to *any* space a necessity. Choosing a date for the forum also provides a challenge, for what may work well for one group of desired participants could leave another group unavailable. Ultimately, there is never one perfect time and place for dialogue to occur, but flexibility enables organizers to work within various constraints and help communities engage in important conversations.

Flexibility remains an important asset during the forum as well. Because finding a date and time where all desired groups are available is frequently an unachievable feat, there is a possibility that the date chosen could yield a small amount of participants. In these cases, (as with the second forum) though the structure of the forum might be geared towards a larger group, flexibility enables facilitators to cater to this smaller group, allowing conversations to arise in a different, more organic manner than originally predicted. Although the second forum in this series of research had many less participants than expected, it still generated valuable conversation among participants—flexibility on the part of the research/facilitation team made this possible.

Moreover, as it relates to the more deliberation-focused second forum, it is interesting to note how conversations about goal creation and solutions were still driven by dialogue. Even when working within a deliberative format, participants remained eager to share stories and to illustrate their points, either elaborating on topics that were already discussed or personally relating to an issue that was entirely new. This revealed to researchers how important it is for participants to create shared meaning through dialogue and that dialogic elements must be woven throughout the entirety of a deliberative process—not merely in group introductions or during community conversations for the sole purpose of engaging in dialogue. Participants are

constantly striving to get to know one another and relate through these shared experiences and meanings, which helps to unify the group's cognitive processes when trying to create solutions.

Engaging in Dialogue and Deliberation for Town-Gown Relationships

Utilizing the previously delineated methods for thematic analysis and as captured by the Forum 1 Report many themes emerged from the first forum that helped generate areas ripe for further dialogue and action moving forward. These included:

1. The idea that both communities are seeking greater understanding and respect from others of their respective lifestyles
2. That each group wants to create more opportunities to interact with one another
3. How the relationship between students and community members has frequently been reduced to a mere business relationship—a fact that has been perceived as offensive by both groups;
4. A need for increased communication, as a mutual desire to enhance safety for everyone in the community
5. A desire to change the perceptions and stereotypes that exist that serve to typecast each member of the community by the actions of a small minority

Seeking greater understanding and respect.

One overarching theme revealed from the conversations among participants is that of both the student and resident communities seeking greater understanding about their respective lifestyles. This was perpetuated by the idea that differences in lifestyles make these groups feel like "two distinct communities" that aren't meant to interact. Students often described the thought of improving their neighborly habits as "pointless because the community perception of students won't change anyway," due to this lack of understanding. On the other hand, community members feel as though their lifestyles are "disrespected" and "often an afterthought by students who only want to party."

Through their conversation, prompted by neutral questions and occurring in a "safe" space, both community members and students realized that what they really wanted was "basic respect" from the other group, despite not truly being able to relate to each others' lifestyles.

Dialogue enabled students to confess their frustration with the "careless, partying," stereotype, just as residents expressed their desire to "be friendly," with the students that live next to them. Overall, both sides of the conflict gained respect from the other group by openly listening to their rationale and attempting to enlarge their perspective.

Creating opportunities for interaction among groups.

Throughout their conversations, many participants expressed that their lack of understanding of the other group was due in part to a lack of opportunities to interact with one another. One participant voiced this idea as a want to "build a community, but with an extreme lack of chances to do so." Fortunately, many who held this same desire also recognized the value that public processes can have in facilitating this interaction, specifically those that utilize dialogue and deliberation. This is epitomized by a description of the event by one group, who called it a "brief moment when [they] created a shared situation of knowledge," and came together to work as a single unit. Although such instances require planning and forethought, participants recognized dialogue as a "good start" to producing more of these positive relationships and were willing to put in the effort to continue such processes in the future.

Business nature of the town-gown relationship.

When asked about the nature of the existing town-gown relationship between Harrisonburg and JMU, both students and community members were quick to mention the financial gain the university's presence brings to the surrounding area. Yet, many residents referred to this fact with disdain, noting that the common student perception of "the town relying on JMU to survive," was very offensive. One community member mentioned that many students seemed to think all Harrisonburg residents were "poor and need jobs the students create," which residents believed was untrue. In the same vein, students also disliked their relationship with

Harrisonburg being reduced to a business transaction, often citing they are not just "rich white kids with [their] parents' money."

By participating in the dialogue, both students and community members realized a collective desire to make a change in the way the economic contributions of JMU and its students are understood. The conversation evolved from discussing negatives to embracing the positives, as many participants realized the opportunity that this financial relationship could provide in getting to know one another.

Increased communication to increase safety.

Safety was one of the most important topics of conversation during the forums. Community members expressed feeling less safe when students were gone for the summer due to a decrease in police surveillance of the area, yet also mentioned anxiety about students risky "weekend behavior." Students also expressed their views on safety in the community, stating that they would appreciate a little warning before "the police arrive at the door at 11p.m. on a Friday," even if they were just having a small get together. Many students in downtown houses also mentioned their concern about break-ins downtown and said they would appreciate "knowing someone could watch out for them too."

Through this discussion, participants concluded that the ultimate solution to enhancing safety was simple communication. Students recognized that their lack of communication resulted from their presence as "transient" community members and that they needed to improve their interaction with neighbors in small, but consistent ways. For community members, this change was as simple as getting a call from student neighbors to make them aware of any predicted loud activity, as well as providing a number they could call should anything get too out of hand. The dialogue ultimately emphasized the need to get to know someone, even if the relationship won't

be long term, as a means of strengthening safety in the community and the quality of relationships with neighbors.

Change perceptions and stereotypes.

Despite the wide array of issues discussed at the forums, the negative stereotypes and perceptions that each group held of the other was an integral part of the overarching dialogue. Community members were long aware of their "townie" nickname given by students, which often implied that they were slow, "hick-like," and resentful of students' money and general presence. Students rebutted this by describing their own battle with the "partying, disrespectful rich kid," stereotype that they felt community members often used to describe them. Both sides were quick to express their offense at this lack of respect, wanting to explain to the other side how those perspectives were "the exception, not the rule" to the way they behaved.

Through the process of getting to know one another and through sharing individual perspectives, dialogue enabled these groups to dispel stereotypes of the other group, or at least temporarily set them aside. By working together toward a greater cause, participants were able to see the value of engaging with others and the knowledge that many participants maintained, thereby joining with them as not an "us and them," but as a "we." This unification allowed the groups to create ideas and solutions that could benefit all members of the community, using both students' and community members' resources collectively, not as two disjointed units.

Emergent patterns and cycles of communication

After collecting information from the first forum's thematic analysis, researchers were able to visually map the various factors that contribute to the current relationship between JMU students and the Harrisonburg community. This was created using "VenSim," a computer program that allows the user to make a visual representation of how data functions within a

larger picture. The thematic analysis from the first forum was broken down into three sections: student behavior, community behavior, and JMU behavior. Variables within each of these sections were pulled from the data and linked together to show how various actions related to one another and perpetuated the current Town-Gown relationship within each group.
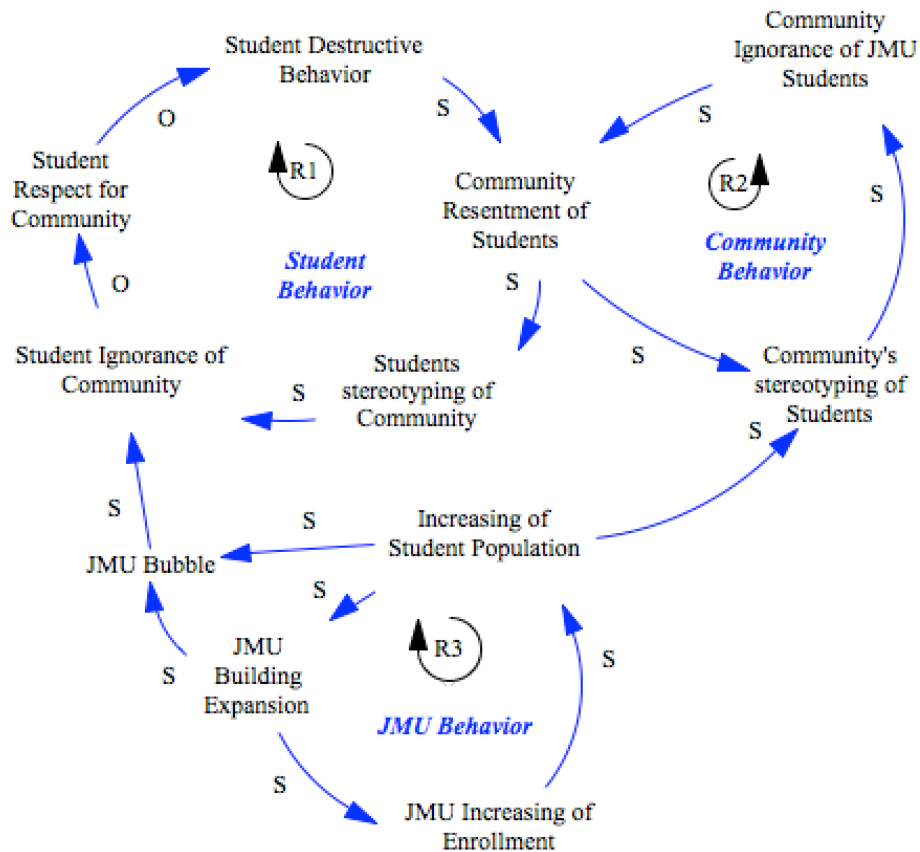

Figure 1

To better understand the visual, each "R" represents a behavior that reinforces the current state, all of which interconnect. In this case, those are the behaviors of JMU, its students, and the Harrisonburg community. Within each of these are a cycle of factors that lead to the behavior's continued occurrence. "S" represents same direction, meaning that a certain factor leads to

another factor's increase. "O" represents opposite direction, meaning a certain factor's presence results in another factor's decrease.

Overall, it was found that JMU's behavior is a continual cycle of increasing enrollment that leads to a larger student population and more building expansion. This expansion of campus contributes to the idea of the "JMU Bubble" of isolation, which contributes to current student behaviors. JMU's isolation from the community leads to a lack of respect and destructive student behaviors, which creates community resentment and student's negative stereotypes of community members. This community resentment also connects to community behaviors, wherein this dislike of students perpetuates student stereotypes, which leads to ignorance of what students are actually like.

Dialogue and Deliberation in Supporting Ongoing Efforts: Future Action and Possibilities

Throughout the post-forum interview process with key actors and influencers and subsequent thematic analysis, several themes emerged that shed light on the process of dialogue and deliberation in addressing town-gown tensions. First, each interviewee indicated their role in the university, city, or community/neighborhood decision-making. Though some participants had more formal decision-making influence than others, each recognized their many roles on-campus, off-campus, and in the community. The interviewees offered varied responses based on how they came to be in their roles, but all six noted a common denominator as a concern for safety that led them to their work in the community.

Interviewees offered varied responses when asked how they defined "public dialogue" based on their experience with the forum, but several phrases were common across the responses. Many stated that it was an opportunity for perspective sharing, listening, and being heard. Some explained that the dialogue process was a chance for these stakeholders to engage in

learning, sharing, and understanding. Overwhelmingly, interviewees noted that public dialogue must consist of a coming together of different parties and stakeholders, with diversity of perspectives being key for an effective public dialogue process.

One interviewee who is a key decision-maker in JMU administration noted that the forum was an opportunity to hear all perspectives, but most notably for faculty and administrators to hear student perspectives. The interviewees that had previously been members of an alcohol and substance abuse awareness taskforce echoed that the best surprise was the broadening of the conversation from just alcohol and substance abuse. They stated that the broadening of the issue offered a way to look at the whole problem rather than isolated incidents. A further surprise for several interviewees was the dialogue surrounding stereotyping in the community and an overarching desire to feel valued. Based on the interviewees experience at the forum, there was genuine interest from "both sides" to address this issue productively and both community members and students communicated feeling devalued in Harrisonburg

The remainder of the discussion of post-forum interview results will focus on two key thematic lines that emerged from the responses. These themes reflect how the forum will influence decision makers going forward and how they will approach the town-gown relationship:

Tangible Goals for Growth

The most obvious response from each interviewee about the influence of the forums as it relates to their future work was the promise of the tangible goals, ideas, and resources developed and learned during the forum process. Interviewees specifically noted the creation of new contacts to be integrated in their ongoing work: "contacts to plug in to, get answers from, or plant some seeds with." Additionally, one campus and community partnership interviewee noted

how the process could inform better education and training practices within the town-gown conversations.

Several JMU staff noted that the forums illustrated the need to approach town-gown conversations more narrowly. Instead of an open call to all JMU and Harrisonburg community members, these interviewees saw the need for community specific, street specific, and decision-maker specific dialogues.

An influential member of the campus community partnership showed particular excitement about the forum process shaping the partnership as it grows into something new, citing the group's opportunity to be intentional moving forward in using "specifically the elements of this experience in the public dialogue." Other interviewees, including the JMU student leader, indicated that the forum brought forth the chance to seek new opportunities and partnerships outside of previous attempts—here, many cited the previous alcohol and substance abuse prevention task force that provided the foundation for the growing campus and community partnership.

The Spirit of Dialogue

Moving forward from the forum process, the interviewees indicated practical applications and knowledge for future work. The "spirit of dialogue," as one interviewee called it, was the unexpected result of forum involvement. Interviewees described this "spirit" and the effect they anticipate it will have on their future work and the ongoing town-gown conversation.

Interviewees described the language, conduct, "plugging in" and flexibility of the forum as an integral part of any work they will conduct moving forward. Interviewees also expressed their desire to take what they had learned from the process and apply it to future conversations

and initiatives—"having dialogue as part of the fabric of our community should be the expectation as opposed to a one-year project or a one-time conversation."

Discussion

The present research study revealed that, in the case of the Harrisonburg/JMU relationship, dialogic and deliberative public processes provided stakeholders with opportunities for learning and growth, developed open lines of communications between stakeholders, and influenced future policy-making for solving and improving town-gown tensions. All of these consequences proved beneficial for addressing and improving town-gown tensions surrounding "students as neighbors." However, the research was not without its obstacles and limitations.

Challenges and Limitations

Just as the forums were a process for learning and growth, so was the process of this research study. Researchers were faced with several significant challenges throughout the research process, specifically in communication between researchers, facilitators, and participants and a discussion of these challenges can help promote better understanding of the process of organizing community dialogue. During the first forum, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of JMU, which oversees and safeguards all research involving human subjects, required researchers to read a script to participants before administering the survey for data collection. With the significant amount of information required by the IRB, the script became quite lengthy, and in reading it at the beginning of the forum, participants became wary of the process. Several participants voiced that the script made them feel as though they were a research subject, rather than a community stakeholder that wanted to engage in honest conversation. This could have prevented participants from fully trusting the process and sharing their honest perspectives and opinions.

Another challenge became a lesson about the nature of public dialogue processes: some information cannot be collected well with a survey instrument. Often times, the use of face-to-face conversation can provide more accurate and reliable data than a survey instrument. Researchers experienced this obstacle specifically with the pre- and post-forum surveys. The survey was designed to assess whether participants understood the "other," and whether they experienced a change in perspective. The questions used to assess these two criteria were free-response, but the wording confused many participants, and others were fatigued from the process and did not want to write at length. Therefore, the data collected from these questions was inconclusive. These sentiments were more easily assessed through table notes and process observation data, retrieved through face-to-face interaction with participants.

The nature of public dialogue often presents a need for trained and competent facilitators. For the forum, facilitators were recruited from an undergraduate communications course that trained students in public dialogue and deliberation. Though the facilitators were both trained and competent, the facilitators being students provided an inherent layer of complexity during the forum. Because both the student facilitators and the student researchers maintain a vested interest in the topic and conversation, participants, interviewees, and other involved parties may have altered their words so as not to offend those "in charge" of the forum. Still, this was not formally stated by any of the participants or captured in data analysis.

Summary of Findings and Contributions to the Field

Collaboration among different members of a town-gown community is vital for groups to understand each other's various perspectives and lifestyles. In the case of Harrisonburg and JMU, holding conversations about what it means to be a "good neighbor" opened up entirely new lines of communication among students and community members that were not previously

present. Although these dialogues might not have provided a solution to community members' frustrations with the university's rapid expansion and the growing off-campus student population, they did provide an answer as to how these processes can assist in improving the town-gown relationship through the development of this shared meaning.

Though the case of Harrisonburg and JMU is its own unique entity, the themes of desired respect and understanding that persisted throughout the conversations can be applied to town-gown relationships on the whole. In this situation, the notion of the resident community and the student community arose from a lack of opportunity for organic interaction, which led each community to view the opposing group as the "other." Even in instances of small talk and storytelling, residents and students left the conversations feeling heard and, at the very least, with a new level of respect for what it means to be a neighbor in this diverse community. The hope of using dialogic and deliberative processes might best be summed up in the words of a participant who, envisioning what the town-gown relationship should look like in three years offered, "That community members and university students and residents all refer to *our university*, *our community*, *our students,* and *our residents*" abandoning the use of "*these* or *those*."

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APPENDIX A: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SCRIPT & QUESTIONS

My name is _____ and I am a student at JMU. Myself and a few other honors students are conducting a dialogue on the topic of _____. We are trying to understand the issues from the perspectives of a wide variety of community members. Can I ask you a few questions that should take no more than a few minutes?

- In what way, if at all, do you interact with the JMU (Harrisonburg) community?
- Are you a resident of Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, JMU on-campus, JMU off-campus, and how long have you lived here?
- What do you believe is the impact of Harrisonburg residents on the Harrisonburg community as a whole, both positive and negative?
- What do you believe is the impact of the JMU community on the Harrisonburg community as a whole, both positive and negative?
- What are advantages that JMU brings to Rockingham/Harrisonburg, if any?
- What are disadvantages that JMU brings to Rockingham/Harrisonburg, if any?
   - (We discussed using words such as impact, or role instead of advantages and disadvantages for these first four questions)
- What word or group of words comes to mind when you hear JMU?
- Would you say that, considering everything, you have a positive impression, a negative impression, or a neutral impression of JMU?

Students As Neighbors: Sharing and Shaping Community
An Important Community Conversation
November 11, 2014 6:30-8:30pm
Harrisonburg Baptist Church, Fellowship Hall

FACILITATOR GUIDE

Welcome and Introduction: Large Group (6:35-6:40, 5 minutes):
- Welcome participants to the forum and go over the structure of the forum; you will be in a large group just for a couple minutes and then will split up via the numbers we handed out

A Bit of Background (6:40-6:50, 10 minutes):
- Address the issue: this is why we are here
- PowerPoint (made by Courtney and Lauren)
  - This is what dialogue is and this is why we are doing this
  - Establish that there has been growth
    - We are not trying to control growth; this is the situation we find ourselves in, so how do we best manage this situation?
    - The growth of JMU is outside of the scope of this dialogue
  - We are trying to get at both students as neighbors that live beside each other and in close proximity, but also in the broader sense

Welcome and Introduction- Small Group (6:50-6:55, 5 minutes):

Welcome. We are looking forward to the opportunity to allow community members to talk to one another about this issue. Our goal in these small groups is not to completely resolve an issue, to seek a winner, or to ask people to change their views. We ask you to listen and understand others viewpoints and to enlarge your thinking – meaning we encourage you to hold your own beliefs and also acknowledge the beliefs of another. We are hoping that by holding this dialogue, together we can improve the relationship between JMU students and the broader Harrisonburg community. This first forum will be structured as a dialogue that will seek to identify the main sources of tension amongst neighbors and the main issues that should be addressed. After this forum, there will be another forum will have more of a deliberative format to find sustainable solutions that help improve the issues we uncover in this first forum.

Ground Rules: **We ask you to follow these agreements**
- **Be respectful of all voices.**
- **Get to know those around you by referring to each other by the names on our nametags.**
- **Speak for yourself and your views, not for any organization or position.**
- **Listen fully to others even when that feels difficult.**
- **Ask questions of others in a spirit of inquiry and understanding, not as a way to make someone defend their perspective.**
- **Share the limited time we have to learn from one another.**
- **We encourage you to talk about the discussions here with others when we leave, but agree to share the ideas rather than specific statements and maintain people's confidentiality**

Are there any other ground rules that you all would like to add to the list?

Introduction (6:55-7:00, 5 minutes):

As a way to learn more about each other and our views about our community, we will ask everyone to briefly introduce yourself and perhaps provide a little information about what brought you here tonight. We can go around the circle, and of course you may pass if you do not wish to share with the group.

Session 1: Being a Neighbor (7:00-7:15, 15 minutes)

When we think of neighbors in its largest sense, in what ways have students contributed to the community as neighbors? How does the community benefit?

Being a neighbor is also a more localized concept of living in close proximity to people whose everyday behaviors effect and impact your quality of life.

What does the ideal student as neighbor look like? What about the ideal community resident as neighbor?

Right now for many people, this ideal is not the lived reality, so lets talk about some of the current perceptions that exist.

What perceptions do you believe people hold about the JMU student community? What perceptions do you believe people hold about the Harrisonburg community?

How do those perceptions influence our actions towards one another?

In what ways or when do we feel like this is one community? In what ways do we feel like two distinct communities?

Session 2: Perceptions and Sentiments (7:00-7:15, 15 minutes)

Some people in the community, both permanent residents and JMU students, have discussed the idea of students as transient members of the community—that after four years, many of these students leave the community rather than stay.

How does the fact that students sometimes leave the area upon graduation impact the relationship between JMU students and community members? Does this matter?

How does this idea effect how much permanent residents are willing to invest in relationships with students?

What would both long-term and short-term community members want out of a relationship with one another?

Session 3: Lifestyles and Safety Concerns (7:35-7:50, 15 minutes)

In conversations prior to this forum, the topic of having different schedules and routines has come up as a challenge.

What implications, if any, does being on different time schedules have on the relationship between students and community members?

Are there certain times where these differences in time schedules is more evident or more burdensome than others?

In what ways does having a significant number of students impact community safety?

What about in specific neighborhoods? What impact does having both JMU students and Harrisonburg residents sharing a neighborhood have on neighborhood safety?

Session 4: Systems that Exist Within the Community (7:50-8:05, 15 minutes)

There seem to be forces at work beyond individual people that need to be addressed at well.

Do you think that being a good neighbor can be enforced?

What are those systems that help us be neighbors through support or hinder us perhaps through pitting us against one another?

> *What agencies or entities help protect senses of neighborliness and community and are they efficient?*

> *Are there agencies that work to legislate or govern the behavior of neighbors? Should there be more of this? If we have more of this, what do we lose?*

Session 5: Wrap up and Next Steps (8:05-8:15, 10 minutes)

We have covered a lot of ground tonight. Lets think about some areas in the community where positive interactions between students and community take place.

> *Where are there places in our community where there is positive interaction between JMU students and community members?*

So just conclude our small group session before we debrief as a large group, here are a couple questions about the process.

> *Have you learned any perspectives during this process that has enlarged your thinking?*

One of the things we need to do when we revisit this topic at our next forum is to build on what is already working well, as well as to address the areas of concern.

> *What might be important for you to see addressed at the next forum?*

Large Group Debrief (8:15-8:25, 10 minutes)

Debrief in the large session.
- Include how moving forward involves building upon what we have established while still addressing concerns

Forum 1 Flyer:

Forum 1 Blast Email:

Interested in participating in important public dialogue?
Participate in the community forum:

"Students as Neighbors: Sharing and Shaping Community"

Who:
Students, faculty, staff, administration, and Harrisonburg community members

What:
The 4C Campus Community Civic Collaborative Initiative will host a community dialogue about Students as Neighbors: Sharing and Shaping Community. The discussions will be facilitated by trained JMU communication students, faculty and community members, each of whom will serve as a passionately impartial facilitator. This dialogue will help create conversations that promote understanding of different perspectives and provide ways for us to think together concerning our feelings on students' roles and relationship with the Harrisonburg community. This will be the first of two forums. The second forum which will happen in January 2015 will use the input gathered in this first session to design a process where together we can craft sustainable solutions to address the issues identified and improve the overall relationship.

Where:
Harrisonburg Baptist Church
501 South Main Street
Fellowship Hall (basement)
Space is limited, so please reserve a free event ticket at SANdialogue.eventbrite.com

When:
Tuesday, November 11th
6:30p.m. to 8:30p.m.

Why:
As JMU's student community expands, it is important to come together and discuss various tensions and opportunities that affect both the university and Harrisonburg. We would like to offer an opportunity for members of our Harrisonburg community to discover the many ways we think about the role of students in the surrounding area.

Questions: Contact Dr. Lori Britt, Director 4C, brittll@jmu.edu 540-568-5028

Everyone is encouraged to come participate in the dialogue!

This message complies with the University Policy Committee's criteria for use of bulk e-mail.

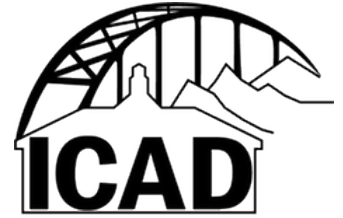**Forum 1 Ice House Slides:**

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Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue
Harrison Hall, James Madison University
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22807
Phone: 540-568-6228
www.jmu.edu/icad

NEWS RELEASE

February 11, 2015
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

<div align="right">

Contact Information:
Courtney Herb, SAN Marketing Coordinator
Phone: 973-229-3268
Email: herbcc@dukes.jmu.edu

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ICAD'S 4C INITIATIVE TO HOLD "STUDENTS AS NEIGHBORS" COMMUNITY FORUM

Harrisonburg, Va.- James Madison University's Institute for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue (ICAD) announced Monday that its 4C Initiative will be holding the second "Students as Neighbors," community forum on Saturday, February 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the university's new Student Success Center. This conversation, subtitled "Engaging for Sustainable Solutions," aims to bring members of the JMU and Harrisonburg communities together to create collaborative solutions that will strengthen the relationship between students and city residents for years to come.

Back in November, the 4C Initiative, a group that teaches students how to create and guide productive conversations on challenging topics, invited students, members of JMU's faculty, staff and administration, and Harrisonburg residents to attend the "Students as Neighbors: Sharing and Shaping Community," forum. Designed to be a guided conversation, this discussion allowed participants to openly express their thoughts and feelings concerning JMU students' role as neighbors in the Harrisonburg community.

In "Engaging Sustainable Solutions," five overlying areas of concern that were identified in the previous forum will act as the topics of focus. In small breakout sessions,

participants will envision an ideal future in area of their greatest interest, and then shape

and create goals that will lead to productive and positive action for all parties involved.

Afterwards, all groups will come together for a large debriefing session to discuss each

area's potential solutions.

"We hope this event will bring together students, residents, city officials, and JMU

staff and faculty who are interested in collaborating and addressing issues in a way that

helps us learn from one another and shape our community," said Lori Britt, Director of

ICAD and 4C. "We want people to dream and then dig in and figure out how to move from

dreaming to doing."

Those interested in participating in the community dialogue are encouraged to

register for the event at jmu.edu/SANforum. With any questions, comments or concerns

about the "Students as Neighbors" dialogue series, please reach out to Courtney Herb, the

forum's marketing director, at herbcc@dukes.jmu.edu.

-###-

ICAD is an umbrella entity within JMU's School of Communication Studies that houses

the Center for Conflict Analysis and Intervention, the Center for Health and Environmental

Communication and the Campus Community Civic Collaborative (4C). The institute's goal is

to bridge the gap between the university community and the world outside through

outreach, community service, research and scholarship centered on productive

communication processes and efforts.

Pre-Survey

Age:
- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-22
- ☐ 23-30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41-50
- ☐ 51-60
- ☐ 60+

Gender:
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Other _____

Do you have experience with public dialogue?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are you a current JMU student?
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you are a JMU Student do you live
- ☐ On-Campus
- ☐ Off-Campus

If you are a JMU Student that lives off-campus, do you live in a theme house?
(i.e. Greek organization, sports team, organization affiliation, etc.)
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you do not identify as a JMU student, please check all that apply
- ☐ JMU Alumni
- ☐ JMU Employee
- ☐ Business Owner
- ☐ Local resident who lives in close proximity to students
- ☐ Local resident who does not live in close proximity to students
- ☐ Local Government Official
- ☐ Retiree
- ☐ Other: _____

1. First, if you are not a student, put yourself in the shoes of a student community member. Or, if you are a student, put yourself in the shoes of a permanent community member. Now, thinking from their perspective, list the issues, interests, and concerns about sharing community and being "neighbors" you think <u>they</u> might have:

2. I would use the following adjectives to describe the actions, behaviors, and expectations of student community members.	3. I would use the following adjectives to describe the actions, behaviors, and expectations of permanent community members.

Post-Survey

Re-read your answer to #1.
First, on the opposite side, put a check next to the issues, interests, and concerns that you identified before that participants raised tonight.
Then add issues, interests, and concerns that were new to you below.

Reread your initial opinion of student community members as neighbors in question #2. Indicate below whether the entirety of you opinion/characterization still holds and indicate any specific changes.	Reread your initial opinion of permanent community members as neighbors in question #3. Indicate below whether the entirety of you opinion/characterization still holds and indicate any specific changes.

To what extent....	No Extent	Some Extent	Great Extent
did other participants use body language that showed they were listening to you?			
did you perceive that other participants truly listened and were able to hear and recognize your perspectives as true for you?			
were other participants able to acknowledge your perspectives?			
did you feel that the facilitator affirmed your comments?			
did you feel that the other participants affirmed your comments?			
did you have sufficient information to be able to engage in the event?			
was the event format clearly explained?			
were the ground rules clearly explained?			
did facilitators favor one perspective over another?* *Please indicate which was favored in your view _____			
did the event process favor one perspective over another?* *Please indicate which was favored in your view _____			

1. Did you meaningfully engage with a participant from an opposite perspective tonight?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No   If so, how many? _____
2. Are you willing to participate in the follow-up forum in January?   ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Was there anything not covered tonight that you feel is crucial to the conversation about students as neighbors? ☐ Yes ☐ No *Please indicate what you felt was not covered* _____

Students As Neighbors: Sharing and Shaping Community
An Important Community Conversation
November 11, 2014 6:30-8:30pm
Harrisonburg Baptist Church, Fellowship Hall

FORUM 1 SUMMARY

The forum was structured as a dialogue, seeking to identify the main sources of tension amongst neighbors and the main issues that people would like to see addressed. In the spirit of dialogue, participants were asked to listen and understand others' viewpoints and to enlarge their thinking – meaning they were encouraged to hold their own beliefs while simultaneously acknowledging the beliefs of another. The goal of the forum was for participants to gain an increased understanding of fellow Harrisonburg community members and feel as though their voice and their story was heard. This forum was a precursor to a second forum, "Students as Neighbors: Engaging for Sustainable Solutions," set to take place Saturday, February 21st from 10:00am-12:30pm in the Student Success Center.

Over 40 people attended the forum, including 15 community members (9 of whom also identified as JMU faculty and staff) and 28 JMU students. In each small group of participants and trained student facilitators and notetakers, rich discussion and a great deal of personal story telling contributed to gaining new perspectives and hearing other points of view about sharing community. The forum was split into 4 "sessions," developed from pre-forum interviews and encompassing some of the main sources of tension within the community. We have compiled our major findings from the first forum as prompted by the questions developed by our team and asked by small-group facilitators.

FORUM 1 REPORT

Session 1: *Being a Neighbor/ Perceptions of Neighbors*

Basic Premise of the Session: In this session, participants were asked to think about ways that students and community members have benefited from one another. They were asked to envision what the ideal "student neighbor" and "community resident neighbor" would look like. Because this ideal is not yet the lived reality, facilitators asked participants about some of the perceptions that currently exist, how each group describes one another, and in what ways or when people feel like they are living in one community or two.

Major findings: This session allowed participants to highlight many of the benefits they gain from one another so as to set the stage for a positive dialogue. Envisioning the ideal neighbor allowed participants to identify what the *wanted* out of a relationship with one another. It also allowed participants to talk about what many see as ill-informed perceptions of the group they belong to. Participants discussed the following:

- JMU students often volunteer and JMU has a lot of programs that "help out" the Harrisonburg community
    - The community wants more engaging WITH the community, not just giving to the community
- JMU students can learn from Harrisonburg residents through a diversity of perspectives and the ability to learn from people other than students
- Many participants emphasized current places to interact such as at the Farmers' Market and some restaurants
- JMU students felt as though they were being unfairly characterized for the actions of a small minority of the JMU population and that their positive impacts on the community are overshadowed by the misconduct of a few
    - Students want to discount the perception of a strong party culture
    - Community members want to dispel the perception that they are unwilling to reach out or compromise and want to fix the "townie" classification
- This section prompted a lot of discussion about JMU's economic contribution to the Harrisonburg community
    - Some Harrisonburg members are offended when students focus on or overstate this contribution; "it's like, you are poor, we are giving you money. That is offensive,"
    - JMU students are also sensitive to the focus on their economic contribution in that they want to be seen as providing more than just money to the area
- Businesses are the areas that make people feel like this is one community as opposed to two distinct communitites

Session 2: Investment in Being a Neighbor/ in Community

Basic Premise of the Session: Many people in the community, both non-student residents and JMU students, have discussed the idea of students as transient members of the community—that after four years, many of these students leave the community rather than stay. In light of these finding from pre-forum interviews, participants were prompted to consider how the reality that many students leave the area upon graduation impacts the relationship between JMU students and community members and how it impacts the extent to which more permanent, non-student residents are willing to invest in relationships with students. Understanding that transience is an inevitable part of living in a community with college students, participants were then asked to consider what both long-term and short-term community members would want out of a relationship with each other.

Major findings: This session allowed participants to uncover the ways that having both permanent and non-permanent members in a community impacts that relationship while still being able to identify some guiding principles that both groups want during the time they spend as neighbors, namely, respect. Some of the other sentiments uncovered during this session were:
- Neighbors should be respectful of families and different time schedules
- Neighbors should take care of the property
    - Shoveling walks in the winter and picking up trash in particular
- The desire for negative perceptions to change if actions improve
- Most participants sought politeness and an attempt to understand one another out of their relationship

Session 3: Lifestyles and Safety Concerns

Basic Premise of the Session: Here, participants were asked to consider how different lifestyles could impact their relationship with neighbors. They were asked what implications, if any, different time schedules and maintaining different routines have on the relationships between student and non-student neighbors and asked to consider at what times are these differences were more burdensome than others. They were also asked to consider the current state of neighborhood safety and what they want this to look like.

Major findings: This session allowed participants to recognize the many differences in lifestyles between students and residents. Shedding light on this difference helped to promote understanding and dialogue about the need for increased respect regarding these differences. Some of the major findings from this section included:
- Both communities seem to want a greater understanding of their respective lifestyle and more involvement with one another
- Many community members are worried about driving safety
- Many people feel less safe when students are gone from the crimes that are committed during those times
- Some students feel safe from things being stolen on campus and frequently leave things unattended, but do not feel this way when they step off campus
- Multiple tables talked about fireworks being set off at night and how this can be interpreted as gun shots
- Community members are worried about the risky behaviors that some students engage in

Session 4: Systems that Exist Within the Community

Basic Premise of the Session: In session 4 participants were asked to reason more broadly about the forces that impact where and why students live in neighborhoods. They were asked to consider how these forces impact neighborhood relationships

between students and non-students. Facilitators asked whether or not being a good neighbor can, in fact, be enforced through rules and regulations, and which of these rules and regulations help us produce positive relationships versus which create barriers to doing so.

Major findings: This session allowed participants to understand that large forces, some unchangeable, have an impact on the relationship of neighbors, beyond their individual actions. Participants were able to identify systems currently in place that can be utilized to promote a more positive relationship as well as rules and regulations that hinder the relationship and that many community members would like to see changed. Some of the main ideas collected from this session were:

- Many participants believe that JMU's campus is not community friendly, that it lacks the accessibility necessary for interaction
- Rules and regulations need a certain amount of communication in order to be successful
- JMU students feel pressure to move off campus

Wrap up and Next Steps

Basic Premise of the Session: At the conclusion of the dialogue, participants were asked to share something they learned or identify a new perspective gained from engaging in this process that expanded their thinking about the topic. They were also asked what might be important to see addressed at the next forum.

Major findings for forum 2: This wrap-up allowed participants to develop an increased understanding of how the process of dialogue can be valuable in creating an understanding that can help support future efforts to work collaboratively on issues that impact the community. Participants were made aware that a second forum would use the perspectives shared in these discussions to design an opportunity to create sustainable solutions moving forward.

Below are areas we believe are ripe for discussion for the next forum. These areas were identified in light of the information collected from Forum One and chosen because they lend themselves to sustainable solutions to be created by members the Harrisonburg community.

1. **Knowledge of the Neighborhoods That Make Up Our Community:**
   - How can we best communicate the character of various neighborhoods in our community so all residents know what is valued?
   - How do we contribute to informed choice by students about where to live off-campus?

2. **Promoting Positive Messaging and Changing Perceptions:**
   - How do we encourage positive messaging and promote positive perceptions of students and community members?

3. **Learning to Be A Citizen:**
   - What rules and regulations are citizens required to uphold?
   - How do we set behavioral expectations and monitor them?

4. **Enhancing Community Safety and Decreasing Risky Behaviors:**
   - How can we ensure safe communities?
   - How can we all play a role in decreasing risky behaviors that impact safety?

5. **Places to Share Community:**
   - How do we develop positive shared community experiences?

*It is important to note that community members will have the opportunity to raise new "areas" at the second forum if they seek to add to this list.

Students As Neighbors: Engaging for Sustainable Solutions
An Important Community Conversation
February 21, 2015 10:00am-12:30pm
James Madison University, Student Success Center (4044)

FACILITATOR GUIDE

<u>Welcome and Introduction (10:05-10:10, 5 minutes):</u>
- Welcome participants to the forum and go over the structure of the forum; you will be in a large group for a quick presentation and then will engage in small group discussions and activities

<u>Presentation: A Bit of Background (10:10-10:20, 10 minutes):</u>
- Discuss why we are here and generally what we uncovered from the last forum
- PowerPoint
  - ○ Goal of dialogue at the last forum was to develop understanding and now our goal is to identify where we want to go and collaboratively work to get there
  - ○ Put up pictures from the last forum
- Discuss what we are going to do during this forum; explain the structure (Ali)
  - ○ Large group interactive activity and then break into smaller groups to work with specific areas we wish to improve (the role of the facilitator/note taker is to support the process but the process is yours)

Session 1: Large Group Activity

<u>Appreciative Inquiry/Envisioning (10:20-10:35, 15 minutes)</u>
(People stay in a large group to do this activity)

3 years from now, somebody is going to move here; what do you want to be able to tell them about the JMU-Harrisonburg relationship?
- For students: *What do you want to be able to tell people about being a member of the Harrisonburg Community?*
  - ○ *What do you want to be able to tell people about your time in Harrisonburg as it relates to your relationship with the community?*
- For faculty & staff: *What do you want to be able to say about your student population and the ways they engage with community and represent JMU?*
- For community members: *What do you want your community to look like and particularly, what do you want relationships with student neighbors to be like?*

Here, people will have the opportunity to write their own visions on the walls: students, faculty & staff, and community members

- These questions will be written already on the walls and uncovered at this time
- *Note that if one person belongs to multiple groups, they may choose to contribute everywhere

Quick Debrief & Transition: Identification of Areas For Energy (10:35-10:45)

(Lauren will point out some of the broad visions people came up with)
- o Present the findings from forum 1:
  - o At the last forum, we specifically talked about these types of topics:
    - 1: When we talked about **Being a neighbor,** this is what people said _____.
    - 2: When we talked about **Perceptions and Sentiments,** this is what people said _____.
    - 3: When we talked about **Lifestyles and Safety Concerns,** this is what people said _____.
    - 4: When we talked about **Systems that Exist Within the Community,** this is what people said _____.

Now we are looking for your ideas about how to make these visions a reality. We have set up a few areas already with topics uncovered from the previous forum but we will save other areas for people with new ideas that we might not yet have a table for. Basically, the process is one of self-organization: you aren't locked in to just one area. If you are at a table and feel like you want to give your input at other tables or explore talking about other topics, feel free to go to move around. We need your creativity and willingness to ask questions and contribute! (Courtney moves us to the next step of the process)

Here are the tables that we have come up with to get people started:
(Include slide of what these 5 "areas" are and what room they will be in)

1. Knowledge of the neighborhoods that make up our community
   - How can we best communicate the character of various neighborhoods in our community so all residents know what is valued?
   - How do we contribute to informed choice by students about where to live off-campus?
   -
2. Promoting Positive Messaging and Changing Perceptions:
   - How do we encourage positive messaging and promote positive perceptions of students and community members?

3. Learning to Be A Citizen:
   - What rules and regulations are citizens required to uphold?
   - How do we set behavioral expectations and monitor them?

4. Enhancing Community Safety and Decreasing Risky Behaviors:
   - How can we ensure safe communities?

How can we all play a role in decreasing risky behaviors that impact safety?
  5. Places to Share Community:
     • How do we develop positive shared community experiences?

So move around, go to a table that interests you, where you will find a facilitator that will help guide you through the next process. Remember, we want to be thinking about what we can do with the people in the room today. And if you have another idea not captured at these five, feel free to start a new table at any time.

Session 2: Small Group Collaboration

Welcome and Introduction- (10:35-10:40, 5 minutes):

Welcome. We are looking forward to the opportunity to draw on what we heard from community members and together collaborate on how we might address these challenges. These efforts require all of us to nurture the kind of relationships we want to be known for in our community. As many of you know, the first forum was structured as a dialogue to identify the main sources of tension amongst neighbors in the community. Now that we have identified many of the primary sources of tension and themes from that forum, we are now going to engage in more of a deliberative format to find sustainable solutions that help improve the issues we have uncovered. It is our hope that by engaging in this process, together we can improve the relationship between JMU students and the broader Harrisonburg community.

Ground Rules: **We ask you to follow these agreements**
  • **Be respectful of all contributions**
  • **Get to know those around you by referring to each other by the names on our nametags.**
  • **Draw on other's expertise and experience… Ask questions!**
  • **Listen fully to others and share ownership of the process**
  • **Share the limited time we have to think collaboratively about what we *want*, not what hasn't worked in the past**

  Are there any other ground rules that you all would like to add to the list?

Part 1: What is the vision? (10:40-11:50, 10 minutes)

Facilitator will prompt the group to work through what a specific vision could be:

Now you have chosen a more specific area to work on effecting change. You just did some envisioning about what you want the community to look like more broadly.

Now we want to see, what specifically do you want this area of the community to look like?

> *What are you envisioning as it relates to _____.*

> *What are some specifics for how this vision might be brought about?*

> *Think back to the large group activity on the wall, specifically what kinds of things do you want to be able to tell people about the community?*

*If the group happens to be large, encourage participants to break into two smaller groups working on the same issue to compare and contrast perspectives and be able to work together more effectively

Part 2: Visions and "Gardening" (10:50-12:10, 1 hour & 20 minutes)

Create Vision and WATER them
- For the area that your group has chosen to work on, first create a vision statement. Regarding your topic, craft a Positive Statement that reflects what your group envisions. *What do you want to grow?*
- Facilitator/note taker job is to help the group identify how to add WATER and grow this vision by working through this planning sheet (there should be one master copy that captures it all)

*At the end, facilitators encourage participants to record contact information for a report of what they worked on (and subsequent survey)

See WATER sheet below

Vision Statement:		
W	**Whole Picture** How does what you envision fit into and support the whole picture of creating the types of town-gown relationships and interactions we want to be recognized for.	
A	**Actors and Assets** What and who do we have in the community already working to make this a reality?	
T	**Taking Steps** What things do we think we might be able to do to grow this vision? What new seeds might we need to plant?	
E	**Experiences and Perspectives** What perspectives, experiences and expertise might we be missing? What questions might we want to explore/ask?	
R	**Resources** How might we envision this as a continual process that involves many people, organizations and actors as resources in order to ensure this effort is mutually beneficial and sustainable.	

Large Group Debrief (12:10-12:25, 15 minutes)

- (Offer for people that are still working to stay after this quick debrief and continue working)
- Begin by asking someone in the group to voice the vision that their table came up with. Ask them to share a few steps or a few of the question that we still need information to work on (this will allow them to own the process!)
- Include information on how to maintain the sustainable solutions we uncovered tonight…

Perhaps include a few minutes for Amy to talk about the coalition that is coming together and how the University is attempting to do this more sustainably

- Instead of focusing on programs, we want to focus on process!

Working Table Ideas:

Knowledge of the neighborhoods that make up our community
- How can we best communicate the character of various neighborhoods in our community so all residents know what is valued?
- How do we contribute to informed choice by students about where to live off-campus?

Promoting Positive Messaging and Changing Perceptions:
- How do we encourage positive messaging and promote positive perceptions of students and community members?

Learning to Be A Citizen:
- What rules and regulations are citizens required to uphold?
- How do we set behavioral expectations and monitor them?

Enhancing Community Safety and Decreasing Risky Behaviors:
- How can we ensure safe communities?
- How can we all play a role in decreasing risky behaviors that impact safety?

Places to Share Community:
- How do we develop positive shared community experiences?

Notes and Reflections

Students As Neighbors: Engaging for Sustainable Solutions
An Important Community Conversation
February 21, 2015 10:00am-12:30pm

Session 1: Large Group Activity

Appreciative Inquiry/Envisioning

3 years from now, somebody is going to move here; what do you want to be able to tell them about the JMU-Harrisonburg relationship?
- For students: *What do you want to be able to tell people about being a member of the Harrisonburg Community?*
  - *What do you want to be able to tell people about your time in Harrisonburg as it relates to your relationship with the community?*
- For faculty & staff: *What do you want to be able to say about your student population and the ways they engage with community and represent JMU?*
- For community members: *What do you want your community to look like and particularly, what do you want relationships with student neighbors to be like?*

Feedback
That Connections exists between students and the community, personally, through projects, and that there are opportunities to learn from each other.

Students are embraced by community.

Respectful communication and shared interest in finding mutual solutions.

Friendly
Collaborative
Open to discussion of issues faces the neighborhood and the city
Opportunities for educational/business development and growth

I want to be able to tell students that I was able to be a part of a group that made a change to make a better, more open community.
- Able to list various activities that I participated in as a student with community members
- Enhance the idea of a student/citizen

- Have a better relationship with the city government

Positive interactions are more frequent
Constructive environment to allow relationships to be lasting
Break down stereotypes of "typical" student/community member

Community has/is:
- Connected infrastructure
- Respectful
- Supportive
- Diverse
- Intergenerational
- Interactive

Tell a student:
JMU isn't a bubble. It is integrated into the community.

There is mutual respect between student and community priorities
You will know your neighbors
Safety – community members watch out for you.

That I made a difference in the community, I wasn't just passing through.

Tell faculty
That student respect the values and priorities/traditions of the local culture/community, but in turn are respected and valued by that community for the contributions they make.

We are on a name to name basis
We respect ourselves as students in a way that community members are proud to have students in town.
We leave the community a better place.

That community/university students and residents all refer to "our university", "our community," "our students", "our residents," no more "these" or "those."

Peaceful, amicable, open.

Areas that were presented for possible discussion and sustainable solution planning.

6. Knowledge of the neighborhoods that make up our community
   - How can we best communicate the character of various neighborhoods in our community so all residents know what is valued?
   - How do we contribute to informed choice by students about where to live off-campus?
   -

7. Promoting Positive Messaging and Changing Perceptions:
   - How do we encourage positive messaging and promote positive perceptions of students and community members?

8. Learning to Be A Neighbor/Citizen:
   - What does it look like to be a good neighbor and how do we learn this?
   - What rules and regulations are citizens required to uphold?
   - How do we set behavioral expectations and monitor them?

9. Enhancing Community Safety and Decreasing Risky Behaviors:
   - How can we ensure safe communities?
   - How can we all play a role in decreasing risky behaviors that impact safety?

10. Places to Share Community:
    - How do we develop positive shared community experiences?

Two groups formed, one that looked at #1 and #3, a second group looked at #4, and #5 and both groups felt that what they would work on in both groups would also likely address #3, perceptions. What follows is the Sustainable Solutions planning documents developed by each group.

Vision Statement:		
Creating a culture change of reciprocity between students and community members that a) emphasizes mentorship/education, b) encourages students to establish a relationship with the community early to empower both sides, and c) encourages respect and collaborative problem solving and safety.		

W	**Whole Picture** How does what you envision fit into and support the whole picture of creating the types of town-gown relationships and interactions we want to be recognized for.	- Getting to know people on a personal level to make connections - Alleviating stereotypes - Respect on a basic level - Learning about neighborhood
A	**Actors and Assets** What and who do we have in the community already working to make this a reality?	- Engaged community members - Campus/Community partnership - Responsible Greek Life/FSL (Adam Lindberg) - Off Campus Life - City planners/neighborhood facilitator/liaison - Police - Castle property - Downtown Renaissance - "One Night" in November - City can incentivize neighborhoods, facilitate neighborhood "coffee with a cop"
T	**Taking Steps** What things do we think we might be able to do to grow this vision? What new seeds might we need to plant?	- Establish dialogue with neighbors before there is a problem - House managers know responsibilities and being more involved - Online education course - Educational events on and off campus/welcome events - Greek village development - Improving parking[1] - Bike ordinance - Create student/community get togethers - Website for community relations - FSL Leadership/Neighbor Forum, opportunities for partnership[3]

E	**Experiences and Perspectives** What perspectives, experiences and expertise might we be missing? What questions might we want to explore/ask?	Information – what neighborhoods have student/community diversity? Police – Chris Mon. (?) Landlords/Realties – Craig Smith Administrators from JMU City Planners House managers National development voices[2] – Riner Rentals
R	**Resources** How might we envision this as a continual process that involves many people, organizations and actors as resources in order to ensure this effort is mutually beneficial and sustainable.	Legacy Houses – Greek life leadership (Sustainability and Stability) Surveys HDPT (?) Chamber of Commerce GIS map of where students live Community/Neighborhood Social media Title searches Restorative Justice

- [1] There was a lot of talk about the impact of parking and transportation options on the choices by students of where to live.
- [2] Hard to connect with national developers
- [3] Vision is for presidents and house managers to meet to discuss responsibilities followed by a voluntary community member meeting.

Vision Statement:		
Celebrate the many ways we connect in our community through a Community Connections event that becomes a tradition.		

W	**Whole Picture** How does what you envision fit into and support the whole picture of creating the types of town-gown relationships and interactions we want to be recognized for.	Helps students learn about and participate in the broader valley community. Offers a place for community to connect and learn.
A	**Actors and Assets** What and who do we have in the community already working to make this a reality?	Education about citizenship - Ongoing learning about community via Passport events - Infuse into Gen. Ed. Classes where appropriate (local laws, ordinances, citizen responsibilities) Off Campus Life *Explore the Valley* program The Breeze – push this out more broadly to the community so the community gets news about campus Off Campus Life Rental Fair – involve community/neighbor associations
T	**Taking Steps** What things do we think we might be able to do to grow this vision? What new seeds might we need to plant?	Big idea – Plan a Community Connections weekend Find a way for first interaction with students and community members to be positive (and not simply related to commerce and purchasing) In terms of a way to let students learn about what it means to be a neighbor, a one-size-fits all approach will not work and should be tailored to different types of neighborhoods. Have a freshman Bucket List in Breeze in fall to encourage students to go different places in the community to gain a more holistic view. Have a Bucket List of things to do at JMU for Community Members
E	**Experiences and Perspectives** What perspectives, experiences and expertise might we be missing? What questions might we want to explore/ask?	Does conversation about being a neighbor start early enough?
R	**Resources** How might we envision this as a continual process that involves	IFC has $60,000 budget, wants to do a Greek community service event – wants to partner and perhaps have this support the larger

many people, organizations and actors as resources in order to ensure this effort is mutually beneficial and sustainable.	community connections event (2015-2016 Pres. Zak Kane, Matt Sarfar – Phi Gamma Delta) Chamber of Commerce [stat-about20% of students are greek affiliated] Association of Young Professionals (has a lot of JMU alumni) Shenandoah Valley Technology Council – has funds and resources to bring together people with corporations to start new ventures.

Some final thoughts about the PROCESS:

1) Generally speaking, participants were engaged but didn't necessarily want to stick to the outline of the sheet, but it was necessary in guiding their thinking process nonetheless and it proved to be a helpful way for the facilitator to summarize ideas and thoughts of the group and check in with them before documenting their thoughts.

2) Although this forum was about deliberation, making choices about options and ideas to move forward with, many participants still wanted to engage in dialogue and not think deliberatively. They often told stories and shared perspectives when asked to think more concretely, although some research says that the use of stories plays an important role in deliberation. It is notable that during the first forum, a strictly dialogic model, some participants wanted to deliberate and begin forming concrete ideas. These forum experiences showed that both elements are necessary in order for participants to feel heard yet still make progress.

3) The importance of partnerships emerged and was a focus of much of the discussion.