



Building Town-Gown Relationships: In the Heart of the Student Experience

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2016 NASPA Region IV-West/East Conference | St. Louis, MO



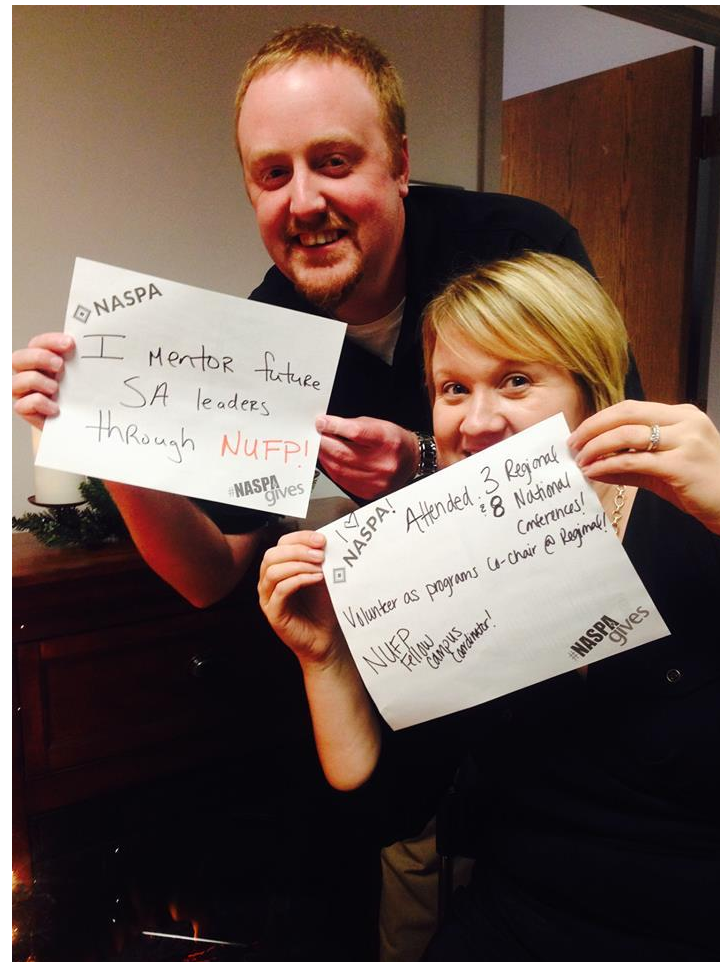
- Learning Outcomes
- Introductions
- Overview of Institution & City
- Theories & Research
- Applying Theory to Practice
- Lessons Learned Along the Way
- Closing and Q&A



Learning Outcomes

As a result of attending this session, participants will:

- Identify key principles of partnering with their local community to improve town-gown relationships.
- Describe the four-square typology of town-gown relationships.
- Apply the principles to create 1 new strategy related to their student affairs functional area(s) to enhance the student experience through town-gown relationships.





- Regional, comprehensive, public university
- Established in 1902
- Located halfway between Kansas City & Denver
- Approximate student populations
 - 4,500 on-campus students
 - 5,500 virtual students
 - 3,000 international partner students
- On-campus living requirement for first-year students



- Largest city in Northwest Kansas
- Crossroads of Interstate 70 & US Highway 183
- Incorporated in 1883
- 20,000 residents





How do you see a connection between your student affairs role and your local community?

We do not learn from
experience... we learn
from reflecting on
experience.

- John Dewey



Gavazzi, S. M., Fox, M., & Martin, J. (2014). Understanding campus and community relationships through marriage and family metaphors: A town-gown typology. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39(5), 361-374.

- History of Town-Gown Relationships

- At first glance, however, much of the literature on campus-community relationships can appear to be anything but optimistic.
- “Historically,” Bruning, McGrew, and Cooper (2006) wrote, “town-gown relations have been a source of difficulty, frustration, and annoyance for both the town and the university” (p. 125).



Gavazzi, S. M., Fox, M., & Martin, J. (2014). Understanding campus and community relationships through marriage and family metaphors: A town-gown typology. *Innovative Higher Education*, 39(5), 361-374.

- Introducing Marriage & Family Metaphors





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- Couples Relationships
 - Devitalized
 - Conflicted
 - Traditional
 - Harmonious
 - Vitalized



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- Balancing Individual & Common Goals





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- Application to Town-Gown:
4x4 Typology

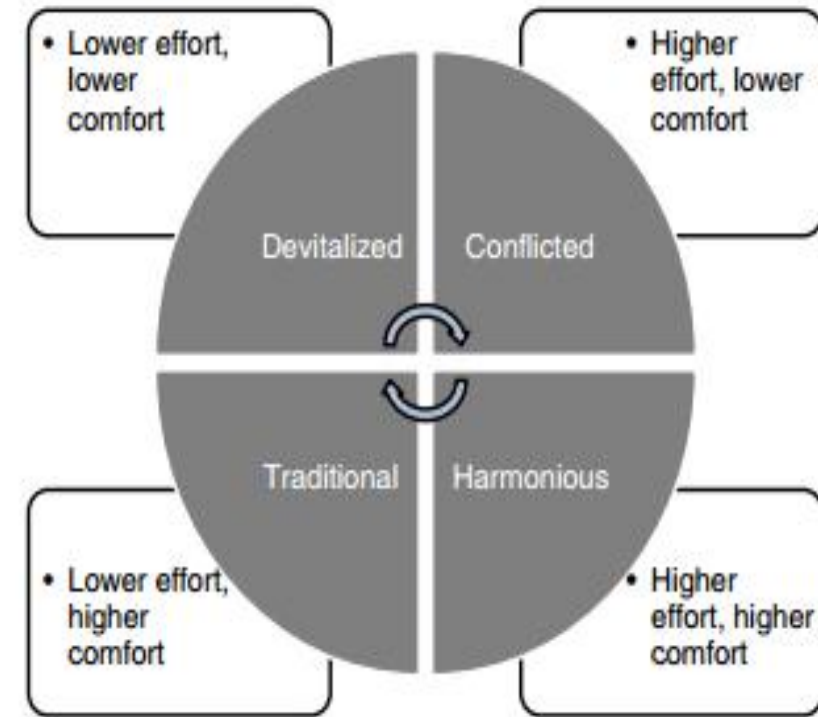


Figure 1 A Four-Square Typology of Town-Gown Relationships



Where do you see your institution & town's relationship fitting within the 4x4 typology? Why?

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Kull, R., & McGirr, D. (2004). Ten principles of community partnering. *Business Officer*, 1-3.

- Build relationships – don't just “show up” at community meetings to brief those about events & issues on campus
- Mutual benefit – give equal weight & attention to institutional & community goals
- Local representation – community partnering needs to be done with the recognized community governance organizations, not just interested and/or active individuals



Kull, R., & McGirr, D. (2004). Ten principles of community partnering. *Business Officer*, 1-3.

- Neighborhood identity – recognition that each neighborhood is different & form multiple partnerships to pursue each unique common agenda
- City relationships – resolve differences before going to the city



What common trap does your institution fall into regarding community building with your town?

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- First-to-second year student retention
 - Historical 68% average
 - Spring 2012 – partnership with Hanover Research
 - Most cited issue for reason FHSU = disliking Hays, Kansas
- Investigation of options to resolve the issue
 - International Town-Gown Association (www.itga.org)
 - Dr. Nichols – Certificate in Town-Gown Relationships



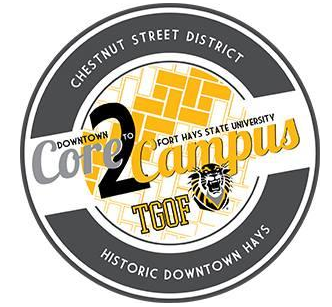
Applying Theory to Practice

- Town-Gown Committee Formation
 - Associate Vice President for Student Affairs/Title IX Coordinator (*chair*)
 - Director of Transition & Student Conduct
 - Graduate Assistant for Off-Campus Life
 - Chief of Hays Police Department
 - Executive Director of Hays Convention & Visitors Bureau
 - Executive Director of Hays Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Executive Director of Downtown Hays Development Corporation
 - Hays City Manager
 - President of FHSU Student Government Association



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Applying Theory to Practice

- Tree Campus USA
- Life in the City of Hays, America presentations at New Student Orientation
- International Student Orientation partnerships with HACCC, CVB & DHDC
- Alcohol Town Hall
- Party Registration Packs



Lessons Learned Along the Way

- Conduct research on what is already being done on-campus and within city organizations
- Understand each unique role within community leadership (and being prepared to understand the politics)
- Rotate your meetings into the community
- Start small – you won't revolutionize the relationship overnight
- Compare with peer institutions and peer towns



What is 1 new strategy related to your functional area to enhance the student experience through town-gown?

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