

Summer 7-12-2017

# The Griz in the Zoo: Evaluating the Relationship between the City of Missoula and the University of Montana

Eliud Uresti  
eaurest@ilstu.edu

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## Recommended Citation

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*Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development*. 23.  
<http://ir.library.illinoisstate.edu/scced/23>

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**The Griz in the Zoo:  
Evaluating the Relationship between the City of Missoula and the University of Montana**

Eliud Uresti

Stevenson Center for Applied Community and Economic Development

Politics and Government Summer 2017

Capstone Advisor: Dr. Lori Riverstone-Newell

## Abstract

This study serves as a qualitative, descriptive case study analyzing the social, economic, and political relationship between the University of Montana and its host municipality, the City of Missoula, often referred to as “The Zoo.” The University of Montana is home to “The Griz” student body; 12,000 of Missoula’s 70,000 residents. Being that the student population in Missoula is a significant portion of its total size, the impact that the university has on Missoula and its residents is quite noticeable, most often in a positive manner, but at times strenuous. This paper provides a brief overview of what are commonly referred to as “town-gown” relations from a historical perspective, beginning with the first established universities in Europe, through the Morrill Land Grant Acts and the post-World War II boom in student enrollment in the United States. In specific reference to The Griz and The Zoo, this research presents findings, using grounded theory, from surveys and interviews with Missoula residents, ranging from students, to alumni, as well as residents, and community leaders. The research identifies and evaluates the feedback from the research participants, and highlights positive interactions between the two entities, while also suggesting actions for improvement in less than ideal areas, as well as recommendations for future research in related areas.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
I. Introduction.....	4
II. Literature Review .....	10
III. Theoretical Framework.....	24
IV. Methodology.....	25
V. Findings.....	31
VI. Discussion.....	39
VII. Limitations.....	42
VIII. Recommendations.....	43
IX. Conclusion.....	47
References.....	49
Appendices.....	53

## **Introduction**

The presence of a college or university in a locality can mean potential benefits for towns and cities. These institutions increase the overall population of the municipality and in turn increase local economic spending and create more job opportunities for local residents (Kenyon & Langley, 2011). In metropolitan areas, universities consistently rank among the top employers as well as the largest and most permanent land and building owners (Perry, Wiewel, & Menendez, 2009). Colleges are also positive for localities in that the result of increased population of the town provides more potential participants (i.e. students) for local community service activities, as well as more qualified candidates eligible for local employment, especially in their postgraduate years (Massey, Field, and Chan, 2014).

However, the presence of a postsecondary education institution and their student body alone is not enough of a factor to bring actual, positive change to a locality. These institutions are most successful as catalysts for urban change when they are fully engaged in the collective capacity of civic leaders to achieve the multiple interests of cities and communities, as well as universities (Perry and Wiewel 2005).

## ***Background***

In the pursuit of healthy, functional relationships between institutions of higher education and localities, challenges will inevitably arise. Disputes between colleges and towns, universities and cities, vary for many reasons, as does the magnitude of these "town-gown" disputes. The issues may be related to economic or geographical issues and may be magnified or mitigated depending on factors such as the sizes of the institutions and localities, either in population or physical area. The social relationship between college students and municipal residents, as well as the direction and significance of the economic impact a college or university has on its host

municipality, are potentially areas of contention between “town” and “gown” groups as well. University-city issues in Fort Collins, Colorado, the host city for Colorado State University, for example, include typical occurrences related to noisy partying, alcohol and drugs, housing, and parking (Wenzel, 2015). Much like the degree or nature of town-gown issues can differ, however, the potential solutions to these problems can also take many different forms. In the simplest of terms, different problems require different solutions and different approaches have different results.

### ***Rationale***

Prior research has demonstrated evidence that the interaction between universities and their surrounding communities can have both negative and positive impacts on each of the involved parties and their constituents. As the area of literature concerning this topic has grown, so too, have the recommended approaches to addressing town and gown relations. Inevitably, there will be nuances in these recommendations specific to each individual case. Therefore, the topic addressed in this research study is to add to the established literature concerning university-community partnerships. The purpose of this study is to identify factors influencing town-gown relations in one particular case, with the objective of proposing recommendations for the maintenance and potential improvement of the aforementioned partnership.

Specifically, for the purposes of this research, the evaluation of town-gown successes, problems, and subsequent recommendations will be analyzed specifically in relation to the case of the University of Montana and its host municipality, the city of Missoula. The researcher will take a qualitative approach, interviewing both university affiliates, community leaders, and residents of Missoula whose identity and status are independent of the university. The study will be a descriptive study, meaning it will not outright seek to declare any particular cause or

relation between existing factors influencing the partnership between UM and Missoula. Instead, the researcher will only observe, describe, and invoke and elaborate on what already exists in the case study. Specifically, the researcher will be using grounded theory, originally developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1967. According to (Charmaz, 2006), grounded theory “involves the progressive identification and integration of categories of meaning from data... as a method, it provides us with guidelines on how to identify categories and... how to make links between categories and how to establish relationships between them.” As a theory, Charmaz explains further, grounded theory “provides us with an explanatory framework with which to understand the phenomenon under investigation.” In other words, the use of grounded theory serves the researcher as both a method for discovering, categorizing, and analyzing data, and then, once coded and interpreted, allows the researcher to develop new theory about their findings. The process of collecting and recording data using grounded theory involves multiple strategies, including constant comparative analysis, theoretical sampling, memo-writing and theoretical coding. Each of these methods used by the researcher will be discussed in depth in conjunction with the analysis of the data found using these methods in the Discussion section.

Such a study will serve the University of Montana and Missoula specifically, of course, but can also serve as a template for other locations who wish to analyze their own local higher education institution’s relationship with its community. Each town-gown relationship will have its distinctive determinants, and this study may help others seeking to complete similar research on a similar case study as that of Missoula and the University of Montana.

Whereas in other practices a research question is developed beforehand and subsequently tested following data collection and the formation of a hypothesis, in grounded theory the research question is formulated not only once at the beginning of the research, but at various

points throughout the data collection process. One of the goals of using grounded theory is to minimize the potential occurrence of bias. However, the researcher must have a general idea of what it is they are seeking to discover and analyze prior to beginning research, of course. So, the initial research question was simply to ask and find out how residents around Missoula and on campus felt about the general state of the relationship between the city and the university.

To minimize the probability of researcher bias, only minimal and general assumptions were made but, inherently, as in any research question, there were preconceived assumptions. For example, in asking how Missoula residents felt about university-community partnerships, the researcher is assuming that citizens are aware of and do in fact have an opinion on the matter. Additionally, after further refinement of the original research question, the researcher sought to discover what exact issues were positive or problematic in the relationship between Missoula and UM and what factors influence this dynamic. These questions assume that there are issues present, and that they can be worsened, solved, or mitigated by outside influence.

### *Significance*

Recently, enrollment at the University of Montana has been in a decline. In a statement released last year from Tom Crady, UM's Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, confirmed this occurrence. In a UM press release, Crady noted that the combined Fall 2016 semester enrollment across all UM campuses was 12,419, representing a 4.8 percent decrease in total enrollment, with a 6.1 percent decrease in the main campus located in Missoula (UM News, 2016). This negative trend in enrollment has been a steady decline for the last decade, with a 9.7 percent average decrease since 2006 (Montana University System Data).

With such an entrepreneurial spirit in its residents, and in turn the students' learning happening within an environment seemingly thirsty for participants, why has this been the case?



Of course, the response involves a variety of factors. However, surely the university-community dynamics of an area play into a student's decision when comparing different options for pursuing a postsecondary degree. If the University of Montana could find a way to leverage their relationship with their host, Missoula, perhaps this could be one of the ways to combat the declining enrollment trend.

### *Definition of Terms*

In order to gather the most holistic representation of the different key demographics of residents in Missoula, four main groups of participants were targeted and assigned according to their membership to either the town of Missoula, the University of Montana, or both, and their role in each or either category: University of Montana students (those who have previously or are currently attending UM), UM affiliates (faculty, staff, alumni), non-UM affiliates (residents of Missoula who do not have any official relationship with the university), and community leaders (business owners, city/neighborhood council members, community activists, etc.). It is important to note that these groups are not mutually exclusive, and so, a participant's membership may belong to more than one group. For instance, a student may also be a community activist, a professor may also be an alum, a resident, and a community leader, and so on. Lastly, the terms "interviewee," "participant," and "respondent" will be interchangeably to refer to the participants in the research collectively or generally, irrespective of their assigned group categorization.

### *Demographics*

Missoula, referred to as "the Zoo" by many, is a town located in Northwestern Montana. Although it is not a particularly large municipality, with a population of about 70,000 in the city (United States Census Bureau, 2017), it is considered a metropolitan area. The surrounding area in Missoula county includes over 100,000 residents in and around the area, and has been growing

steadily for the last 15 years or so, growing from about 55,000 residents in 2000 to its current size in 2017. Amongst the 70,000 inhabitants of Missoula are about 12,000 students attending The University of Montana, also known as the home of “the Griz” football team.

With its sparse population and wide-open rural areas under much of its famed “Big Sky,” Montana may still be easy to think of as part of the old Wild West, but it will become rapidly apparent to outsiders that this is certainly no longer a place for gunslingers on dirt roads. Instead, students like those at UM, and other entrepreneurs are in charge of paving those antiquated dirt roads with innovation. The University of Montana student body is made up of 25% of students coming from out of state, with every state being represented, as well as more than 70 countries (UM Admissions Website).

In fact, Missoula was recently the subject of a research study funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, a nonprofit foundation that focuses on entrepreneurship and education. Specifically, the report by Motoyama, Fetsch, and Davis (2017) was the first ever to focus solely on Montana’s “business ecosystem,” and found that Missoula, Montana has the 9<sup>th</sup> highest business startup rate per capita in the United States, out of 394 total metropolitan areas (Bozeman, a slightly smaller Montana city, where Montana State University is located, ranked 12<sup>th</sup>).

With a young, capable, student population, combined with literal and figurative open space as far as the eye can see, Missoula is a prime location for exploration, discovery, and learning aimed at shaping the future. The average thinker may conclude that  $1 + 1 = 2$  and that Missoula and the UM are a foolproof recipe for mutual success, and they would not be wrong in their guess at the result, but the formula is more complex than addition.

In order to further understand the current conflicts and subsequently the recommendations for town-gown relations, it is essential to understand what elements have led to friction in the past. Martin, Smith, & Phillips (2005) note that historically, universities and their surrounding communities have failed to work cooperatively to address common problems, due to conflicting philosophies and practices. More recently, Martin et al. describe the period from 1914 to the late 1980's in the United States as being a time of localities displaying hostility towards universities, initially due to geographical isolation of universities. Originally located in rural or remote areas far removed from everyday society, expansion of urban areas resulted in the universities becoming surrounded by localities. In response, the schools built higher walls and gates to maintain their separation from surrounding communities, hence the given name to this time span commonly referred to as the "Ivory Tower" period in American collegiate history.

The resulting, obvious contrast between the large, looming appearance of educational institutions during this time in comparison to regular-sized, ordinary town buildings, as well as the distinction between professors and students dressed in academic gowns and the normal townspeople, resulted in the now prevalent use of the term "town and gown."

## **Literature Review**

### ***History and Evolution of Town-Gown Relationships***

Firstly, the term "town and gown" inherently revolves around a clear distinction between a university and its affiliates and the municipality in which it is located. The town side of the term, of course, refers to the location of the educational institution. The gown part of the phrase is in reference to the earliest of establishments, when universities came into existence in Europe (Brockliss, 2000) and served largely to educate the clergy. Those roaming about town in a gown with arms and bags full of books were obviously not ordinary townspeople. Although the

disparity was apparent, property owners welcomed the influx in population due to increased need for housing for the students (156).

However, in America the dynamic was vastly different. The first universities in the United States were intentionally built isolated from the rest of the community, in order to avoid the economic and social issues already experienced overseas. This occurred early on during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but as schools expanded they were inevitably absorbed into their new surroundings made up by their host municipalities (Martin et al. 2005). Mainly, towns were upset at the lack of imposed property taxes for universities. In present day, universities are still largely exempt from property taxes due to their non-profit status.

The divide experienced between universities and their surrounding communities was due to the geographical isolation and architectural disparities that highlighted a larger disconnect between the remote, rural educational institutions and the towns that eventually would grow to include them in their municipality.

### *Medieval Times and Religion*

Although the use of the phrase is a relatively recent practice, the origin of similar conflicts constituting the use of the term stems back to the world of academia in the mid-14th century, namely due to the events that occurred on February 10, 1355. This day came to be known as the St. Scholastic Day riot. Prior to this day, negative town-gown relations had indeed already occurred, albeit rarely. In fact, as mentioned on the official Oxford City Council website, the University of Cambridge was actually founded by Oxford students who fled the city of Oxford following riots that occurred after the murder of a local townswoman in 1209. Such an instance was a highly unusual incident, as situations of conflict typically only involved a handful of unruly students and equally disorderly townfolk. However, according to Dr. Carol M. Miller,

a professor at Tallahassee Community College, the St. Scholastic Day riot of 1355 was “unprecedentedly bloody” compared to any other disputes between the scholars and the townspeople of Oxford.

The exact events of what occurred on February 10, 1355 and the following days are not recorded or remembered in their exact occurrence, however, she recounts in her paper, “The St. Scholastic Day Riot: Oxford After the Black Death,” the riots, their cause, and their subsequent repercussions as accurately as possible given the sparse and fragmented remaining records of the event. Her retelling of the events, presented at the Florida Conference of Historians in 1993, is summarized below:

On February 10, 1355, a Tuesday, two scholars of Oxford University went for a drink at a nearby tavern in town. The two scholars did not like the taste of the wine they were served and complained to the man who was serving them. The situation ended with the scholars throwing the wine in the man’s face and assaulting him. The man who was assaulted, John Croidon, rallied his family and friends and word of the assault committed by the scholars spread around town. The town bailiffs requested amends be made by the two assaulters, but they refused. Additionally, multiple requests to the Chancellor to discipline the two scholars were denied as well.

(it is important to note here that Dr. Miller proclaims the request was made by the mayor to the Chancellor of the university, as the mayor was not allowed to discipline the students himself; she points out that, during this time period, university students held clerical status and so universities had their own jurisdiction separate from town law).

After the two students failed to be disciplined, it is said their fellow students replicated their unruly behavior, rallying around them as they assaulted the mayor and several other citizens of the town. The following day, the mayor of Oxford, John Bereford, rode to visit and file his grievances with King Edward III. In his absence, the violence on behalf of the students continued and in fact, escalated. The scholars proceeded to rob the homes of many innocent townspeople and wounded or killed others. In response,

approximately 80 townsmen gathered to seek retribution and did so by attacking and killing students they found exercising in the campus' field. The violence would continue for one more day, this time while Chancellor Charlton visited the king. The conditions between the students and townspeople intensified, as townsmen invaded university grounds, reciprocating the offenses that had been committed by the students the day before. Not only did the involved townsmen kill more students in return, but went as far as to scalp some scholars and wrongfully imprison others who had not committed any crimes.

Following the riots and the events leading up to it, King Edward reprimanded both the university for the conduct of its students, and the town for its handling of the situation, by removing both their charters. Upon reinstatement of those charters, the town was now obliged by the king to repay any costs associated with the riot resulting from damage to the university and students' property. Furthermore, the king also gave the university more control over their host locality, by extending the jurisdiction of the university to include legal removal of arms if the townspeople threatened to disturb the peace. The king justified his actions by noting the contribution educational institutions gave to his rule, claiming "... the clerks and the government must exist in a symbiotic relationship, for learning regulates military power" (Miller, 1993).

The events of the St. Scholastic Day riot may be a dated example of town-gown relations resulting in conflict, however, the causes of and repercussions resulting from that day's events still occur between universities and their surrounding communities today. Miller's paper concludes by describing the possibilities for what incited the riots, and presents potential causes beyond two students unhappy with the quality of their local tavern's wine. The concluding analysis presented is vital because the potential reasons presented for the start of the riots are issues that are still topics in conversations concerning town-gown relationships today.

*Morrill Land-Grant Acts*

The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 are some of the earliest instances of an attempt at establishing healthy "town-gown" relationships between a university and its host community, albeit from a federal level rather than a local one. Law enacted with the passage of this act included terms requiring the educational institution to provide a public service in exchange for receiving the aid, as well as have certain subjects included in their curriculum. Specifically, the 1862 act said,

without excluding other scientific and classical studies and including military tactic, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.

- United States Constitution, Article 7, Section 3

Almost 30 years after the passage of the original act, the Morrill Act of 1890 was passed, aimed at former Confederate states during the Civil War. This time, the act was aimed at defeating race as an unfair or implicit criteria for admissions at higher education institutions in these states. Alternatively, these states had the option to designate a separate land-grant school for persons of color (US Constitution, Article 7, Section 323). Many of the presently designated "Historically Black Colleges and Universities" (HBCUs) were formed as a part of this passage of the second Morrill Act (Earl et al., 1995).

*Post-Morrill Era*

Upon the passage of the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, inevitably, there was now a connection between the townspeople of college towns, and the students obtaining their degrees at said college. After all, the original Morrill Land Grant act was passed to address the increasing

need for farming and mechanical workers as the country was becoming increasingly industrialized. However, at the beginning of this correspondence, town-gown relationships, unlike some present-day efforts, were not focused on active, continuous community engagement from the students, or vice-versa, but instead depended more on a “community as a client” model. In this setup, the typical interaction between farmers and university scholars at the new agricultural and mechanical colleges resembled more of a doctor-patient type relationship. The farmer, or the patient, would describe their “symptoms” to the experts, or “doctors,” at the university, in hopes of finding a solution to their problem.

The passage of the Morrill Act resulted in some attempts at establishing community-university initiatives, but had few successes. One of the more notable positive outcomes as a result of the act, however, was the establishment of the Hull House by the community and University of Chicago (Maurana et al., 2000). Although farmers and non-educated workers benefitted from this system, most instances were largely impersonal and provided the most advantage to the university affiliates. Researchers, for example, sociologists in particular, using a “settlement house” philosophy, used their university’s surroundings as their own living, breathing experiment, allowing them to completely immerse themselves in their research. As Mayfield (2001) describes it, “the community was their laboratory, and the residents were test subjects. Neither reform nor service was... the desired outcome of their work, only the creation of new knowledge.” Thus, “town” and “gown” remained separate entities.

#### *Campus Model (1945 to Present Day)*

Increases in enrollment in Post-World War II America helped alter this community-as-a-client model. Eight years after the original Morrill Act was passed, the percentage of students in the 18-24 age group who were pursuing a higher education was only 1.3%. By 1945, this same



group had 10% enrolled in a college or university (Mayfield, 2001). The increasing numbers of enrolled students rendered universities unable to maintain the rate of housing necessary for the growing student population. This resulted in many students being forced to seek off-campus housing. To help visualize this boom in emphasized importance on a college education in Post-World War II America, Gumport & Pusser (1997) notes that in 1939, Delaware's student population was 602. By 1956, enrollment had reached almost 2,000 students, and by 1977, total enrollment had risen to more than 11,000.

Obviously, part of this increase in enrollment was due in large part to the returning veterans and the resulting Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill. The act included several provisions, including business, farm, and home loans, but is relevant here for the financial assistance it provided for veterans seeking to pursue higher education. The GI bill provided former soldiers with a monthly stipend for tuition and living expenses.

Furthermore, President Truman formed a commission to evaluate the status of the United States higher education system in 1946. Led by the president of the American Council on Education, George F. Zook, the findings and recommendations of the committee were published in a report titled *Higher Education for American Democracy*. In it were the committee's suggestions, aimed at increasing enrollment at colleges and universities, specifically with a goal of 4.6 million enrolled by 1960, and to increase the amount of federally funded scholarships for at least 20 percent of the undergraduate nonveteran student population (Cardozier, 1993).

Lastly, the committee called for community colleges to be established in every state. By 1990, there were 1,000 public, community, junior, and technical colleges in the United States (7). In 1945, about 10 percent of American youth aged 18-24 was enrolled at a community college or

university, but this number skyrocketed to 51.1 percent, or 13.5 million students, by 1990. In fact, following the Second World War, support from the federal government made up almost half of revenue for all private and public schools (Snyder, 1993).

Concurrently, this spike in student populations meant a parallel spike needed in filling faculty and staff roles to match the increasing demand. In turn, more university personnel who differed from the white, male traditional standard were being hired. Many of them had no prior experience teaching in higher education, and consequently some of them supported a model for their university that was not one of strictly academic research (Mayfield et al., 1999). This resulted in the emergence of an alternative type of research, a community-based approach, often called “participatory action research” or “collaborative community research”, along with other advances in community-university dynamics. (Mayfield, 2001).

As student populations grew, so did the need for larger facilities in which to educate them. From the outside looking in, all many municipalities hosting these growing institutions saw was the increase of more and more land in their city being dedicated to the construction of new university buildings. Even with more positive initiatives like a community-inclusive approach to academic research, pushback from non-university affiliates on this and various other issues, would accompany this trend of growth for American universities.

### ***Positive Impacts***

#### ***Economic***

One major reason that universities are beneficial to a community is for economic reasons. Firstly, colleges and universities are primary employers in the towns they exist in. Additionally, the increased population due to university students becoming residents of a new town means increased spending in terms of lodging and students working and shopping in the area. Stokes

and Coomes (1998) suggest that the most often used method to measure these direct and indirect economic impacts is the Caffrey-Isaacs model using indicators of spending within an economic region.

More commonly known as the ACE model, this model was developed for the American Council of Education in 1971. Through this method, Caffrey and Isaacs (1971) claim that an institution of higher education can determine its economic impact by analyzing spending indicators in and around their geographic location. Variables used in calculating this amount include purchasing by the university from local vendors, which would be considered a direct expenditure. Indirect economic impacts include secondary use of currency originally generated by the institution. For example, local spending by students, employees, and visitors of the campus would all be examples of indirect economic impact from the university. Finally, an economic multiplier is applied to both types of expenditures to determine the overall economic impact of the university on its surrounding area.

*Partnerships*

Early on, institutions of higher education were seen as separate entities from their host localities. As time went on, students became more involved and ingrained in the towns they lived in while attending college and though problematic in earlier times, more recently town-gown partnerships have evolved to be more positive and productive in a number of diverse ways. For example, at Keene State College in New Hampshire, a partnership was formed between the Keene State Mason Library and the Keene Public Library in the 1980's to combine and automate their collections for improved maintenance for employees and access to more resources for each library's patrons. At the time, the use of computers for such task was not yet an established practice so automation for a library, let alone combining two separate database collections, was a significant financial undertaking for both institutions.

To address the financial burden behind the project, it was agreed that the university, with higher user traffic and a bigger budget than the public library, would pay two-thirds of the total cost for the new system. Of course, this was an action viewed favorably by the Keene Public Library and the community as a whole and thus established a functional, mutually beneficial partnership from that point on. The sought benefit from combining the institutions resources was for the institutions themselves, however, residents and students benefitted from the partnership as well.

Originally, although the updated database allowed access for both students and residents, individual membership was required at each institution. Eventually, the partnership amended its original agreement so that membership at either library allowed for full access to all media at either location. More importantly, since its initial establishment, this partnership has resulted in more communication between both staffs and between the university and a community on a

higher level than just sharing a collection of books. Halverson and Plotas (2006) reported on the partnership, noting that the joint project “created a real community tie, which brings members of the college and the city of Keene into contact with each other on a regular basis.” (627).

Now, Keene State College faculty often host public lectures at the public library in addition to the campus library, and community members now have Mason Library available to them for assistance when conducting academic research. A strong, long-lasting connection was made because of the shared interest, respect, and contributions from both parties involved.

### *Negative Impacts*

#### *Alcohol*

Gumprecht (2009) claims that the most prevalent issue between student and resident populations revolves around alcohol. Although the increase in population from having a university has significant positive economic impacts, including increased and concentrated consumption of alcohol, a large part of it being done by underage undergraduates, which can have quite the opposite effect when it comes to taxpayer money being spent on the resulting consequences of the increased influx of alcohol-related reported incidents.

High rates of alcohol consumption, and more importantly the acceptance of it on college campuses, in the United States have been well researched and documented. The action of alcohol use, as well excessive consumption, is generally seen as expected behavior and even described as a “culture of alcohol abuse on college campuses” by some (Trockel et al., 2008; Lopez-Caneda et al., 2014); Iwamoto & Smiler, 2013). The physical and mental effects alcohol has on a student’s academic performance have been a prevalent topic of discussion in academic literature as well (Singleton & Wolfson, 2009; White & Hingson, 2013; Miller et al., 2007).

Aside from established literature discussing the cognitive, social, and physical aspects of alcohol consumption by college students, there is also work recorded concerning the secondary effects of alcohol. As Wechsler, et al. (1995) describes, these secondhand impacts referred to are those effects of excessive alcohol consumption that not only impact the consumer, but those surrounding him or her. In the case of a community-university dynamic, college students' behavior due to alcohol use impacts their neighboring residents in a variety of ways; noise, litter, vandalism, and sometimes violence occurs.

In the most extreme cases, the effect of alcohol use by college students has forced communities to respond to the secondary effects of their behavior with actions of their own, such as increasing policing. For instance, at the University of Delaware in Newark, Bishop, Downs, and Cohen (2008) found that the majority of offenses in the Newark community were alcohol-related. Although the stat held true for both campus police and city police, indicating the trend could possibly be unrelated to college attendance, it was also found that most of these offenses occurred at single family rental houses in the area, a type of property commonly rented out to college students. Furthermore, areas occupied by college students were reported as also being the most difficult type of residences to monitor for noise complaints and underage drinking citations. As a result, the increased need for policing results in a subsequent rise in taxes required to fund more police activity, an action that is seen as burdensome and unnecessary by many taxpayers (44).

#### *Tax Exempt Status*

Under Section 501(c)(3) of the International Revenue Code (IRC), an organization may qualify for exemption from federal income tax if it is organized and operated exclusively for a variety of listed purposes, one of those purposes being educational. According to the Association

of American Universities, made up of 62 public and private research universities in the United States and Canada, “the educational purposes of universities and colleges have been recognized in federal law as critical to the well-being of our democratic society... higher education institutions are exempted from income tax so they can make the most of their revenues... this tax exemption enables these institutions to maximize the benefits that they provide society.”

In addition to federal income tax exemption, all 50 states have laws that provide nonprofit organizations, including colleges and universities, with exemption from property taxes on the basis that, aside from not having a profit motive, these institutions provide services that contribute to communities in ways for-profits don't (Kiley, 2011). According to this rationale for tax-exemption qualification, known as quid pro quo theory, because nonprofits provide benefits to society, including reducing the services that need to be provided by government, they are deserving of a tax subsidy (Kenyon & Langley, 2011). Kenyon and Langley note, however, that since tax-exempt nonprofit organizations like colleges and universities still use public services provided by its municipality, the property tax burden used to fund some of these services lies heavier on homeowners and businesses, especially in communities heavily reliant on property tax. Irrespective of the rationale, tax-exemption status remains one potential cause for friction in town-gown relations

### *Studentification*

Various scholars have also defined the overtaking of residential areas in college towns by students as being problematic in town-gown partnerships. While the influx of students in a town means increased economic activity, it also means that there is less town to go around, so to speak. As some on-campus student housing has restrictions, such as curfews or gender-assigned residential halls, and limited space in some cases, a portion of students will always end up

choosing or being forced to live off campus. Inevitably, the change in demographic of students turned town residents has impacts on various aspects of town life. House prices increase due to the endless demand from students allowing landlords to skyrocket rent for potential tenants, and businesses close down during the summer when their main patrons, students, are home for the holidays (Atkinson, 2008).

Recently, scholars have begun to refer to this phenomenon as *studentification*, noting the parallels with the well-researched epidemic that is gentrification (Smith, 1979; Ley, 1994; Freeman & Braconi, 2004; Newman & Wyly, 2006; Atkinson, 2008). Citing the definition of gentrification in Warde (1991), Atkinson notes the other effects studentification shares with gentrification. In addition to the economic repercussions, there are social, cultural, and physical impacts. Socially, the migration of students from campus and into the city results in the replacement of former permanent residents, establishing new patterns of social concentration and segregation in the process. The shared demographic of the new student residents typically results in a cultural shift, and can ultimately cause changes in retail and services offered in a particular area, as business owners strategize to maintain relevance to their new surrounding patrons (76).

Lastly, physical changes come in two forms. First, there is typically an increase in the effort by landlords towards external beautification of properties in order to attract student tenants. However, the long-term effects of having student tenants often result in negative outcomes. Either student-rented properties end up being poorly treated and thus devalued, or the combination of the improvements made on the properties by the landlords and the resulting increased rent renders these homes unattainable for families seeking to move to the town or existing residents seeking to move to a new vicinity.



## Theoretical Framework

Regardless of the times, there has always been efforts to maintain positive relations between towns and colleges. More recently, there have been solutions that involve the integration of the two involved parties, rather than just peacemaking, essentially. What was once seen as a distant, independent entity is now largely viewed as a valuable communal resource and valuable partner. The different ways in which partnerships can and have sought to work together make up the theoretical framework for this research.

### *Governance versus Government Paradigm*

This phenomenon corresponds with that which is described in what is a shift from a *government* paradigm to a *governance* paradigm (Daly, 2003; Newland, 2002; Salamon, 2002). In this more recent paradigm, efforts from the collectively involved stakeholders (here being the university and its host municipality) use a more collaborative and innovative approach to address issues that are of importance to both the institution and the community, in contrast to the earlier practiced doctor-patient type of relationship. Inevitably, problems that arise in the development of said partnership are intricate and complex, differing in causes of individual problems, and finding an adequate and timely solution to such problems, as well as what the recommended action in pursuit of said solution should be.

Moreover, occurrences where only one involved party is affected results in less incentive for other members of the partnership to provide assistance or solutions. In the worst of scenarios, joint members in a partnership may have conflicting goals, however, this scenario is precisely what the governance paradigm seeks to address. According to Martin, Smith, and Phillips (2005), the governance paradigm confronts social issues by seeking the optimal “win-win”

outcome, where both involved organizations in the partnership benefit from the exchange, regardless of whose problem was the catalyst for action.

## **Methodology**

The research methodology used for this case study was qualitative in approach and descriptive in practice. The objective of the researcher was not to prove or disprove a hypothesis using a specific research question, as would be the case in a traditional quantitative approach. Instead, the goal of this study was to simply observe the current state of the relationship between the University of Montana and the city of Missoula, identify previous and existing related themes and issues, and describe the findings to present opinions on the topic from a multitude of perspectives, and finally offer any alternatives or suggestions for improvement in areas where deemed necessary in alignment with the respondents' opinions.

These objectives were pursued using the grounded theory approach. As mentioned, no specific research questions were developed prior to the initial data collection process. This is an inherent part of the grounded theory methodology, which aims to draw new findings and theories from the collected data, rather than to contribute to existing theories. The rationale for using grounded theory as well as a more elaborative description of the method will be described below.

### ***Grounded Theory***

Grounded theory is a qualitative method of gathering research data. The process of recording data using grounded theory is one which generally involves three primary steps: categorizing, coding, and finally theoretical saturation. The order of the steps usually takes a path beginning with broad categorization of themes found in interviews and secondary sources and ends when the initial discovered data has been refined using the three mentioned steps.

*Categorization*

When using grounded theory, the researcher's first step after initializing the data gathering process is to broadly categorize any themes that become apparent while interviewing participants. In categorizing the themes, the researcher will usually begin with labels using low-level abstraction known as descriptive labels (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). For example, a respondent's answer of feeling "anxiety" or "anger" can be classified under an "emotions" category using a descriptive analysis. Later in the categorization stage, evaluation of phenomena becomes more analytic. At this point the researcher will use a higher level of abstraction. Thus, in reference to the "emotion" example, participants' responses may be categorized further into categories such as "positive" or "negative" emotions, or categorized according to what sorts of events cause said emotions (Charmaz, 2006).

*Coding*

As more data is recorded, the categorizations become more individualized through the process of coding, which includes constant comparative analysis and negative case analysis. The goal of the coding step in the process is to create higher-level categories that group the lower-level categories established in the first step, followed by the creation of sub-categories. Constant comparative analysis involves the continuous comparison of data and identification of similarities and differences between cases. For example, some respondents may respond with feeling anxiety or fear when discussing their expectations of marriage, while others may respond with excitement and hopefulness.

Negative case analysis is simply deciding which cases did not fit the themes found by the researcher, so an example of a negative case in this instance could be someone who responds that they do not plan on getting married or who already are married.

*Theoretical Saturation*

Once the researcher has gone through the categorization and coding steps multiple times, creating and refining new and existing themes each time, the researcher will reach a point known as theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation is reached when data is continually being collected and no new categories, or no new variations of existing categories, can be identified. However, due to the nature of grounded theory, in that new themes may be continuously pursued and discovered, theoretical saturation is not an academic or quantifiable benchmark, but instead a subjective decision by the researcher. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe it, the pursuit of new knowledge using grounded theory is a perpetual one: "... one is constantly alert to emergent perspectives, what will change and help develop the theory. These perspectives can easily occur on the final day of study or when the manuscript is reviewed... so the published word is not the final one, but only a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory."

*Sample*

Respondents were contacted through e-mail, as well as through in-person outreach, and telephone calls. Most respondents were a part of the researcher's social and professional networks, however, some respondents were found by referrals from primary contacts, while others were approached by the researcher at random. As mentioned, respondents were divided into 4 categories: students, UM affiliates, UM non-affiliates, and community leaders. Again, membership for participants was not limited to only one group and there were multiple cases of participants identifying with more than one group.

*University of Montana Students*

The group containing University of Montana students included both currently enrolled students and former attendees of the university. The reason for this being that the researcher

deemed whether or not a respondent had *ever* identified as a student more important than whether a participant *currently* did or not. Furthermore, alumni were not included in this category (unless they were pursuing additional education), as they belonged to the University of Montana Affiliate group.

#### *University of Montana Affiliates and Non-Affiliates*

This group included affiliates of the university, aside from students. Meaning, this category refers to faculty and staff at the university, as well as alumni. Any respondents who volunteered in any university-sponsored events or organizations were classified under this label as well. To clarify, members of this respondent group must have or have had an actual affiliation with the university. So, for example, a volunteer at the annual Summer Special Olympics would be considered an affiliate, while someone who attends Griz athletic events or just lives in the University District area in town would be considered a non-affiliate.

#### *Community Leaders*

Both private sector and public sector leaders were grouped into this category on the grounds of the potential influence they have to impact a subject such as community-university efforts in Missoula. Because the university has both social and economic impacts, participants such as business owners, economic developers, as well as nonprofit executives and public officials were sought out and categorized under the same parameter.

#### ***Data Collection***

All in all, 15 respondents were interviewed, and 26 participants completed the multiple-choice survey. Of those 15 interviewed, 7 were UM students, 6 were UM affiliates, 4 were non-UM affiliates, and 2 were community leaders. 4 of the interview participants overlapped at least

2 categories: 2 were UM affiliates and community leaders, 1 was a non-affiliate and a community leader, and 1 was a (former) student and now non-affiliate. 9 identified as female and 6 were male. For the multiple-choice survey, 12 respondents were female and 14 were male. The average age for participants was 30 years old, with the oldest participant being 64 years old and the youngest participant being 19 years old.

Respondents were also presented with the opportunity to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire in addition to their participation in the interview. Furthermore, eligible candidates who did not wish to be interviewed were allowed to participate in the questionnaire-only part of the research if they desired. Thus, there was a group of persons only participating in the questionnaire portion. All respondents who participated in the interviews also completed the questionnaire.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with participants of various backgrounds and levels of involvement in/with UM and Missoula. Thus, the researched may have asked questions such as “Do you feel an obligation to respect and serve the community of Missoula?” when interviewing students, while asking questions like “What is your perception of the University of Montana generally?” or “Can you tell me about any particular experiences you’ve had with a UM student, either positive or negative?”

The semi-structured interview template in its entirety is included in Appendix A. Due to the varied backgrounds of participants, interview questions differed between interviews and interviewees, and irrelevant questions for certain groups were omitted (for example, non-UM students were not asked about campus life). However, all questions from the original template which were applicable across groups were kept, such as “How long have you lived in Missoula?” and “If you could change one thing about your experience in Missoula, what would it be?”,

among others. Furthermore, questions for respondents were changed or added at different points in time throughout the data collection process, to coincide with changes in the research question, as it changed continuously while data was gathered and analyzed following each interview. For example, as will be discussed further in the Findings section, the question “Do you feel safe in Missoula?“, was added when participants began to demonstrate a pattern of introducing the topic of safety without any probing on the topic from the researcher.

Lastly, specific questions which were considered specifically relevant to each of the different participant groups were altered or added based on the respondent’s membership. Thus, questions for community leaders may include the topics of economic development and government and their experience in those fields, while questions for a student may ask them to describe a more student-oriented experience instead, such as attending on-campus events or how they feel about their academic department and professors.

Interviews averaged about 24 minutes in length. The shortest interview was approximately 16 minutes, while the longest interview was a second under 52 minutes. As noted in the signed Informed Consent form, participants were not required to participate for a certain allotment of time, nor were they required to respond to any question. Additionally, participants were reassured prior to beginning the interview that indifferent or unknown response would be recorded differently than omissions. In other words, to the researcher an “I don’t know” or “I wasn’t around when that happened,” or even an “I don’t care” response is still valuable, recordable data, whereas a simple “pass” or “no comment” cannot be used.

Interviewees were also given a multiple-choice questionnaire, either in hard copy or digitally, and were allowed to complete the written portion of the research at any time, before or after the interview, as the researcher did not perceive the risk for any potential bias based on

when the questionnaire was distributed. Questions in the questionnaire were either identical to or similar to those asked in the interview. The researcher included the questionnaire format to help quantify certain demographics, such as age and whether or not the participant is a Missoula-born resident. Additionally, some questions asked in the interview were also included in the written survey portion, including in Likert scale format or yes/no questions, again to quantify respondents' answers in addition to recording their opinion using qualitative methods. As with the interview script, the original questionnaire was slightly altered, depending on which group the respondent belonged to. The written questionnaire is also appended to this paper in Appendix B.

Locations of said interviews varied, including various coffee shops, restaurants, bars, and the researcher's residence. This was also left to be decided upon by the interviewee so as to not put any undue pressure or feelings of discomfort on the respondents.

## **Findings**

As mentioned, and as is the case most of the time when using grounded theory as a research method, the research questions answered were only generally defined by the researcher prior to the collection process. Thus, the findings from this research will be presented by themes that *arose* from the interviews, as opposed to research questions being *answered by* the interviewees. Furthermore, the themes will be classified by positive and negative. Following the presentation of themes, the Discussion section will describe how the topics here relate to community-university partnerships and how mutual efforts on behalf of the town and the school can address any issues that were mentioned in the interviews as well.



*Positive**Volunteering and Employment*

Most respondents who are students mentioned that they volunteered at least once in the community during their academic career, whether as part of fulfilling their extracurricular requirements as a member of a fraternity or sorority, or as part of earning class credit for a particular course. Even participants who were not students or even affiliates of UM mentioned they have a sense of the high activity of volunteer work that students from the university provide for the community. On a related note, several respondents noted that students and business owners had a mutually beneficial relationship. Students are not only consistent patrons around town, but serve as inexpensive and seasonal employees at many of the same establishments they frequent as consumers.

*Mutual Respect*

Overall, residents and students alike seemed to view one another favorably. Negative interactions between UM affiliates and non-UM affiliates were described by only 2 respondents, and both incidents involved noise and alcohol, two common characteristics in college towns, as explained earlier. However, these occurrences were definitely an exception to the rule. One 23-year-old student, originally from England, supported this by responding to the question of how his interactions had gone with Missoula residents:

“ Nothing really, but good stuff... Missoula is... One thing I can say about it, coming from England, is that people who live in a big city have got no time to stop around, stop for people, like, have conversation and stuff... But here it's a far more laid back environment... Everyone's really nice, no one's looking for trouble... No crime, nothing to stress about really... There's a good mix of school life and town life, where the people are actually really nice... It's a better community [than a big city].”

*University Equals Diversity*

When asked about their experience living in Missoula, the main positive theme shared by most participants, regardless of group membership or university-affiliate status, was diversity. Many participants cited this as one of the main reasons they enjoyed living in Missoula and attributed the increased diversity, in comparison to the rest of Montana, to the presence of the University of Montana in Missoula. For example, one respondent, a Missoula graduate student and resident originally from Butte, Montana, said:

“There’s a lot more to do in this community than in Butte, because there’s more people... The University of Montana brings more people into the community... people who have, like, varied life experiences and come from different places and have different things to offer than your ‘standard, White, Montana person’ would... there’s a demand for a lot of art and music events, so part of that is to cater to the students”

Another resident, from Helena, the state’s capital, who is a UM alum, worked at the university for four years, and is now a leader in the community of Missoula, shared a similar sentiment:

“Missoula is not very diverse, but it feels super diverse compared to any other community in Montana, I mean not very ethnically diverse, although it’s probably more diverse than other places in Montana... but I mean the diversity in viewpoint and the liberalism at the university [of Montana] ... there’s so many experts in different fields; that has a big impact on the community of Missoula as a whole. So, for [former] students like me, coming to the University of Montana, it’s kind of like coming to the big city, going to school in Missoula. It just has so much more... it has more of a city-like feel than a lot of other places in Montana.”

*Negative**Awareness of Resources and Events*

Generally, awareness of events available to both UM and non-UM affiliates was average to low, specifically when community members were referring to university-sponsored events. Although about 75% of all research participants reported having recently attended an event at or sponsored by the university, most accounts were athletic events like football or basketball games. Furthermore, when asked whether their infrequent attendance at UM events was due to their lack of desire to attend or lack of awareness of such events, responses were mixed, but leaned more towards the feeling that the University of Montana was not advertising such events well enough, aside from sporting events. Additionally, some felt that the information on such events was available, but it was up to the community members to seek it out. In other words, the outreach from UM to the community of Missoula was seen as below substantial. One respondent went as far as to consider that this may be done purposely. While this feeling of purposeful exclusion was only entertained in one instance, and was not explicitly found, this may be a reflection of a significantly negative perception that town residents have of the University of Montana and their belonging in Missoula and warrants further investigation of the topic in future analysis.

When probed by the researcher, resources on-campus, as one would expect, were most recognized by current UM former and current students and alumni. For example, many UM affiliates identified as members of an on-campus organization, including sororities and fraternities and faith-based organizations. Although general awareness of available on-campus resources was higher among students, the awareness and utilization of one resource inquired about by the researcher was low both for students and non-students. Interestingly, this largely

underutilized resource by students and residents alike, is one specifically designed to assist in the development and mediation of relationships between students and residents.

The Associated Students of The University of Montana (ASUM), is just one of the many on-campus organizations at the University of Montana. According to the University of Montana website, ASUM “represents, empowers, and advocates for UM students... and it works to improve the quality of UM education, fund student groups, and provide valuable services.” One of those valuable services provided by way of ASUM is the ASUM Renter Center, which provides personalized counseling and support to student renters living off-campus (University of Montana Website).

Within the Renter Center exists the Neighborhood Ambassador Program, or NAP. NAP is student-staffed and directed, and students serve as ambassadors to neighborhoods surrounding the UM campus. Their objective is to decrease neighborhood disturbances, increase communication between student renters and permanent residents, and educate students on their rights as renters.

Although ASUM and NAP exist to address some of the issues that were directly discussed in interviewing participants, actual awareness of both programs was extremely low. Out of all participating respondents, only about one-third knew of ASUM’s Renter Center, and only one knew about the Neighborhood Ambassador Program.

### *Sexual Assault and Safety on Campus*

The topic that was discussed the most, without incitement from the researcher, was that revolving around a number of sexual assault cases involving University of Montana students as victims, and Griz football team members as alleged perpetrators occurring from 2008 and 2012.

This finding was extremely salient to the researcher and of obvious importance to the participants, as the topic was introduced in each of the first ten interviews by the participating interviewee, not the researcher. This topic was of particular interest not only because of the level of impact it had on the community of Missoula, but also because of the different factors revolving around the reporting of and aftermath of the incidents.

Not only was it the sexual assault scandal itself that changed the social and cultural environment in Missoula, but the repercussions surrounding the event as well, including the treatment of the defendants before they became defendants, the treatment of the victims, and the appropriate reporting of the incidents (Haake, 2015). What made this case extremely controversial for many people was the way that it was handled by the university officials and the police departments. At one point, according to a Supreme Court Justice appointed by the Department of Justice to investigate the matter, the head coach of the Griz had relevant information about the accusations against his players and failed to report them to the police, however, the coach refuted the actions of the university against him. He claimed that, at the time of the investigation, he was told by Missoula police that he was cooperating fully and appropriately (Neighbor, 2012). After a federal investigation into the accused, the local police department, and the university associates involved in the case, the head football coach and athletic coordinator for the university were both fired in 2012.

The results of the cases were mixed. One player was charged with sexual intercourse without consent for a 2010 incident. Another did have charges pressed against him for committing sexual assault, however, in this case the defendant was acquitted in 2013 and actually ended up receiving a settlement from the university for almost a quarter of a million dollars after suing the university for an “unfair and biased” trial (Miller, 2016).

Specifically, many participants referred to this fact when discussing the impact of the book *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town* by Jon Krakauer. In it, Krakauer divides his pages between describing the events reported to have occurred, the experience of the victims of sexual assault, and the aftermath of the drama, including the way the university and city police departments handled the cases. In his book, Krakauer makes it clearly known that Missoula is not the most dangerous place to attend college by any means, in fact, he states that the University of Montana actually is ranked as below average when it comes to the amount of sexually related offenses.

Sexual assault being an epidemic on college campuses nationwide is unfortunately not a new discovery, or exclusive to being problematic at any particular university. As discussed, the increasing acceptance of excessive alcohol consumption on college campuses results in illegal and risky behaviors from students, with some of those behaviors including participating in unprotected sex or being a perpetrator or a victim in cases involving sexual assault.

However, most respondents felt that although they understood it was not his intent to portray Missoula and UM as “Rape Capital, USA” as one participant put it, the fact that the book did change things for Missoula was inevitable. For a semi-sleepy, close-knit small town like Missoula, “this was the biggest thing to happen here in at least the past 20 years,” another participant said.

Although it was a general consensus that while the rape and sexual assault cases were being reported on, written about, and investigated the city felt divided, most people noted that in present day the event doesn’t get talked about very much. It was unclear, however, whether this was due to a true overcoming of the event, or an effort by townspeople to sweep the incident under the rug in an effort to return to their near-utopia view of their small, safe community.

During the time when the cases were current news, though, several respondents noted that the main divide between people in Missoula was between those who hoped or expected the accused athletes to be found innocent, against those who believed they were guilty.

Although not determining the events and the way they were handled as a sole deterrent for potential future UM students, several respondents referred to the events as a definite factor when considering choosing the University of Montana as their college choice, and believed the events had a negative impact on enrollment from out of state and out of town students. When asked about the community's general opinion on what happened, as well as her own decision to attend the University of Montana despite its negative situation at the time, a 23-year-old female graduate student replied with the following:

“It is a pretty sensitive topic... But it was something that made me, I guess, less eager to attend the University of Montana, and it definitely had an impact on enrollment here. People don't want to go to the University of Montana anymore, and I don't blame them. If they didn't have my program, maybe I wouldn't be here right now.”

#### *Underage drinking*

As is noted historically in the literature, and generally well-known, college campuses across America are typically associated with the consumption of alcohol, namely in binge fashion and being done illegally by underage students. Although this is a commonly known and prevalent issue on college campuses all over the country, most residents interviewed in Missoula commented that this was not a major issue with University of Montana students. Those that did comment on the matter acknowledged that although parties and underage drinking were present in the community, overall it was not an accurate indicator of the behavior of all UM students in general. For example, when asked about any areas of conflict between students and residents, one UM student, a junior psychology major, said the following:

“Underage drinking... goes on a lot... as one will know, you know, like lots of partying, especially for the sophomores and freshman...”

When asked about whether or not UM students generally were consciously aware of the impact their behavior has on the Missoula community, the participant added:

“... in general, I think they do, but, for the most part, you’re talking about 18 to 22-year-olds that are still kids... there’s ‘idiots’ obviously, but for the most part you have people that are morally aware of what they’re doing... there’s people that know and there’s people that don’t know... I don’t know, I mean, I’ve never personally been involved in a bad situation because of parties or underage drinking.”

## **Discussion**

As previously stated, the objective of this research is not to identify a causal relationship between the entities involved in the study, but only to observe, record, and describe themes arising from the perceived phenomena. However, in seeking improvement of the existing literature, as well as to make the research valuable for the object of the case study, the following section will provide recommendations for the issues identified, using both the researcher’s observations and prior similar cases found in established literature.

### ***On-campus Resources and Events***

After examining the existence and awareness of on-campus resources such as ASUM and events such as the Presidential Lecture Series, it seems that this student organization is highly valuable with the potential to be very impactful in this case, however, at the moment it is seemingly underutilized in terms of its use for improving student-resident relations. Thus, the researcher recommends further use of this organization and its subsidiaries, the Off-Campus Renter Center and the Neighborhood Ambassador Program, with additional recommendations for increasing the efficacy and awareness of said program.



“I’m sure there are... I can’t say for sure any off the top of my head, but I know there’s a lot of resources within the university that have ties within the Missoula community... I haven’t [gone] about finding them, but I know they’re there. [from a current UM student]

When another respondent, a 26-year-old non-student Missoula resident, was asked about how informed she felt about on-campus events as a town resident, she mentioned she actively engages, but attributes her finding out about said events more to her own initiative than outreach by the sponsoring educational institution:

“I’ve gone to a couple different lectures... mostly lectures... I wish they were better advertised in the community, [because] I feel like I either need to seek them out, or get an invite... I feel like the university could do a better job, if they want community members to come, at least getting them up on missoulaevents (.com) ... I look at the events calendar, posters in coffee shops, but I feel like it’s mostly word of mouth when I end up going.”

This trend existed both in students and members of the community. Increased outreach and marketing efforts by the University of Montana would presumably result in increased attendance and participation from both groups. For students, it has been well documented that participation in activities outside the classroom, such as in on-campus organizations and community service, has a positive impact on students (Kuh, 2008; Sterrett & Bond, 2012; De Donato & James, 2017). The activities students choose to voluntarily engage in outside the classroom, Kuh describes, are highly impactful on the shaping of different categories of self-growth; areas which are referred to as Practical, Personal, and Interpersonal Competences. Exposure to different groups of peers and challenges helps students improve their clarification of their personal and vocational goals, as well as helping facilitate the way they see the world and the way they see themselves fitting into that world.

For residents, increased community outreach would likely result in increased attendance, especially when considering that most of the events are free to the public. Finally, increased attendance from both parties would likely result in increased interaction, possibly resulting in betterment of overall perception of one another, as was the case with the joint Keene State library project described earlier.

Although there are already organizations on-campus designated to improving student-resident relations, such as those housed under ASUM, it seems that students and residents alike are largely unaware of them. Thus, one recommendation would be for UM to implement an increase in marketing and outreach in the community would be a logical step to increase awareness and attendance for the university's resources and event.

In addition to increasing marketing, the existing University of Montana organizations may have a greater impact if they increased and integrated the scope of their activity. For example, current efforts by ASUM's Neighborhood Ambassador Program include organizing neighborhood events that promote university-community interactions, publishing a monthly newsletter, and distributing educational materials for student renters. However, these efforts are largely targeted at areas surrounding the university campus, specifically efforts from the Renter Center whose target audience is off-campus renters. To promote further partnerships and increase their presence in the community, ASUM and their subsidiary organizations may seek to extend their outreach both geographically and demographically. For example, the NAP could place Neighborhood Ambassadors in neighborhoods other than those near the university, or distribute marketing materials to these areas as well. The proximity to campus for its current outreach activities can easily be seen as an extension of university services and geographic extension of its presence in the town, as opposed to active integration between the two groups.

Although neighborhood residents in these areas may not interact with student renters, or students at all, as often as those who live closer to UM, this would create more awareness about UM's efforts for positive engagement with the Missoula community.

Additionally, programs under ASUM like NAP could increase their efforts to extend beyond the scope of student renters to non-renters as well. This could include hosting block parties or neighborhood cookouts in other sections of the community, to increase overall turnout as well as representation from a larger percentage of Missoula residents. Furthermore, this approach could be used to improve the marketing and outreach from other UM resources as well. ASUM could partner with other student organizations for events in order to promote both of their missions and exposure to the community.

## **Limitations**

### *Time Constraints*

As with any study, particularly using grounded theory, there are temporal limitations, both in terms of length and point in time. In the use of grounded theory, the "end" of the data collection period occurs when the data becomes saturated with reoccurring themes and the research determines no new theory can be developed from subsequent data gathering. However, the potential for new data extraction never actually ceases. The researcher can shift focus onto one or two of the discovered themes and begin a new cycle of investigation. However, in this case, in efforts to adhere to deadlines and maintain relevant subject matter, the investigator primarily only recorded initially discovered themes and sub-themes of interest.

Furthermore, the timing of the study was a limitation as well. The gathering of data was interrupted by the end of the academic school year. Ideally, the research would take place at least

for 1 full calendar year, to account for changes in town demographics during certain periods, such as breaks in the academic school year during holidays or periods of the year experiencing a rise in tourist activity. Being present in the community year-round would allow for greater access to a greater population sample, as well as a wider range of group memberships for participants.

### *Variation in Participants*

As discussed in the Methodology section of the paper, participants were sought out from various backgrounds, ages, and social and affiliate status in the community. However, the respondent sample was not evenly distributed between groups. This tilting was a result of convenience sampling. Using an alternate probability sampling method, where each group would have equal representation, would be a worthy improvement to provide a more accurate representation of the population being represented through the sample being researched.

## **Recommendations**

### *Longitudinal studies*

One recommendation I would suggest for future research on the subject of town-gown evaluations is that of the longitudinal approach. Now, this could be either quantitative or qualitative, but what is truly important is recording change over time. The research presented in this document was itself an improvement over prior work by the researcher. At first, general themes and literature about community-university partnerships were reviewed, and so the case study of Missoula and UM was pursued in order to eliminate differentiating factors found in the original research, such as population of locality and school, geographic location, demographics, etc. The next step in more accurately identifying which factors influence a city-college relationship, and to what extent, is to measure change over time. As many of the themes discussed mentioned, occurrences such as the rape trials, or enrollment trends, may be specific to

only a specific set of students who attended the university during a certain time period. Ideally, future research could follow a set of students as a cohort for at least 4 years per cohort (the typical time it takes to obtain a bachelor's degree) and then compare findings between cohorts. This would add another level of accuracy to the potential identification and analysis of what are consistent, proven trends concerning the University of Montana and the city of Missoula, and which repercussions are specific to events taking place at a specific time.

### *Participant Sampling and Grouping*

Future research could also improve upon the methods by which the current data is presented by increasing the sample size. Again, due to temporal limitations, the researcher interviewed and distributed the survey to a total of 25 people. Increasing the sample size, of course, would improve the validity and accuracy of the study. This strategy would be especially helpful for a town the size of Missoula. Due to its generally low population, even a minor increase in the total number of participants for a study would be a significant improvement in terms of representation.

Furthermore, future studies could include more categories for classifying respondents. For example, the non-UM affiliate/town resident category in this research could be further divided into Missoula-born residents and non-Missoula-born residents, presuming being born here or not would have an influence on perceptions of the University of Montana. Or, if one wished to focus on a particular event, such as the sexual assault incidents or the enrollment decline, they could seek out alumni who graduated within a specific time frame to be interviewed. Additionally, gathering data from more groups, and more specifically defined groups, would provide a more holistic insight into the case study.

*“College Town” vs. College (in a) Town*

It is not unusual for residents in Missoula to describe their city as a “college town.” One respondent, however, made an interesting distinction between living, working, and studying in a municipality which identifies as a college town, as opposed to being a resident in a city that simply hosts an institution of higher education within its city limits without being consumed by it. A 27-year-old graduate student, who is not originally from Montana, commented on the divisiveness between students and residents, as well as the impact that colleges have on their host towns largely depends on the size of the university and the town:

“It’s very interesting... It’s almost like the people that don’t go to school feel like they’re not ‘good enough’ to be around the people that are going to school... I don’t think that’s a fair assumption...”

[in reference to discussion of decreased business hours and economic activity in Missoula during holiday seasons]

“Towns where the college comprises a large percentage of the population... That doesn’t happen in Nashville... Nashville is known as ‘the Athens of the South’ because there are so many universities, but it’s a [expletive] huge city, so, students go home... but [expletive] keeps going.”

For future studies, research may be most valuable if conducted in a comparative manner. Historically, demographics, geography, and size of institutions greatly influence the dynamics of a town-gown relationship. Thus, future research may analyze these factors by examining case studies of different community and university partnerships. Then, it may become clearer as to which dynamics are most significant in a partnership, as well as which factors could most easily be manipulated by parties involved in order to maximize the benefits of such a partnership.

*Using the Grounded Theory Approach*

Lastly, the research method used in this particular study must be discussed. As there are many variables when analyzing community-university structures, there are equally as many research approaches when studying the topic. In addition to the suggesting of longitudinal studies for future research, the researcher also recommends the continued use of the grounded theory approach.

Firstly, and perhaps most significantly, is the gathered data here in relation to the sexual assault scandal that UM and Missoula experienced a few years ago. This particular finding directly supports the use of grounded theory, in that one reason for using the theory is to minimize bias from the researcher (in fact, the researcher was not even aware of such events having occurred prior to beginning the investigation). Had the research structure maintained a rigid set of questions and analyses, issues overlooked by the researcher, but still important to the sample being analyzed, would have gone unreported.

However, there are cases where a different approach may be a more appropriate method for researchers, perhaps when seeking the answer to a specific research question, rather than to construct a holistic image of a particular setting as is the case presently. For example, if a researcher's goal was to determine how many people in Missoula support the University of Montana football team, a quantitative approach would be more accurate in determining precisely how many fans the football team has. With grounded theory, this is not a question that would be appropriately answered. Research more in line with the theory might ask "why do people support the football team so much in a town like Missoula?" or "what do people like about the experience of attending college football games?". Furthermore, researchers attempting to further examine established research by testing previous hypotheses or test one of their own, would be

better suited using a different research methodology than grounded theory. Again, this is because grounded theory is not intended for proving or disproving a hypothesis, but rather discovering what already exists in the research subject(s) in order to develop new theories.

## **Conclusion**

In comparison to the majority of university-community partnerships studies in prior literature, Missoula and the University of Montana seem to exceed expectations in terms of positive attitudes towards one another. However, there are always areas with room for improvement. While the overall attitude towards the university from community residents is generally positive, and vice versa, the actual effort from the university to maintain and improve this partnership was looked upon less favorably by a significant amount of research participants.

One of the main areas where residents and students alike expressed concerns was the lack of inclusive and sufficient advertising of university-sponsored events towards community members not affiliated with the university. Mostly, non-university affiliates felt that marketing for university events could be increased and a greater effort on behalf of the university for the inclusion of community members would improve the relationship between the two. Luckily, this issue is one that can be addressed with minimal effort on behalf of the University of Montana.

More typical concerns usually found in academic literature concerning town-gown relations were less prevalent in the Missoula-UM community. Underage drinking, vandalism and poor property maintenance, and general feelings of being overtaken by the student population were not common themes in discussions with city residents and community leaders. Contrarily, many participants expressed the positive contributions resulting from the student demographic in forms such as community volunteering and increasing diversity in the area.



In general, the relationship between Missoula and the University of Montana is a positive one, with various examples of mutual benefits for both parties. Negative impressions of students or residents from members of opposing groups were minimal. Compared to previously researched case studies, the relations in this town-gown relationship are above average and near exemplary. However, residents' concerns about the inclusion of community members in university-sponsored events is an opportunity for improvement. Still, minimal effort would be required to improve the already positive ties to one another, and the future looks bright for Missoula and the University of Montana.

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### Appendix A – Interview Tool

Age:

Race:

Gender:

Hometown:

Major:

Classification:

Currently attending? :

Graduated? :

Dates of attendance:

#####

I chose to attend the University of Montana because:

Describe your experience living in Missoula.

Describe your experience attending UM.

How involved are you in non-university sponsored activities? List and describe any that apply.

Did you attend a non-university sponsored event in the past 12 months? If yes:

- Which one(s)?
- Did you see other UM students there?
- What was your overall impression?
- How often do you attend events such as these?

Did you attend a university sponsored event in the past 12 months? If yes:

- Which one(s)?
- Did you see other non-UM residents there?
- What was your overall impression?
- How often do you attend events such as these?

What types of university-affiliated activities do you participate in (clubs, study groups, sports, etc.)?

Do you plan on staying in Missoula after you graduate? Why or why not?

Do you volunteer in the community? If yes:

- What do you do?
- How long have you been doing it for?
- How did you initially find out about the volunteer opportunity?

What is your overall impression of the relationship between the University of Montana and the city of Missoula?

What kind of impact do you think students have on the town?

How do you think non-UM affiliates perceive students at UM? How do you think UM students perceive Missoula?

Do you think UM does a good job of maintaining a good relationship with the city of Missoula?

How about the city of Missoula's efforts on maintaining a good relationship with UM?

How do you recommend either UM or the city of Missoula improve their relationship?

Because it is a state, public, non-profit institution, the University of Montana is tax-exempt from property taxes. Do you agree with this? Why or why not?

Do you feel any sort of division between UM and the persons affiliated with it and the town of Missoula itself?

-If so, on what grounds?

**Appendix B – Survey**

1. Rate your experience living in Missoula. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Excellent
  - b. Good
  - c. Average
  - d. Fair
  - e. Poor
  
2. Rate your experience attending UM. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Excellent
  - b. Good
  - c. Average
  - d. Fair
  - e. Poor
  
3. How do you view a typical UM student? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Very Positive
  - b. Positive
  - c. Neutral
  - d. Negative
  - e. Very Negative
  
4. Overall, I think that the University of Montana and the City of Missoula have a strong, mutually beneficial working relationship. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
5. The University of Montana is responsible for the status of this relationship. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree



6. The City of Missoula is responsible for the status of this relationship. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
7. The relationship between the University of Montana and the City of Missoula needs to be improved. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
8. The University of Montana and its students have a positive impact on the city of Missoula and its residents. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
9. The University of Montana and its students have a negative impact on the city of Missoula and its residents. \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
  
10. There is a disunion between University of Montana affiliates and Missoula residents.  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree

- e. Strongly disagree
11. Because it is a state, public, not-for-profit institution, the University of Montana is and should be tax-exempt from property taxes. \_\_\_\_\_
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
12. Were you employed at any point while you were attending UM?
13. Have you attended a *university sponsored* event in the past 12 months?
14. Have you attended a *non-university sponsored* event in the past 12 months?
15. Do you/have you volunteered, in any form, in *Missoula or the surrounding area*?
16. Do you/have you volunteered, in any form, at the *University of Montana*?
17. Are you a member of any organization at the *University of Montana*?
18. Are you a member of any organization in the *city of Missoula*?
19. I plan on staying in Missoula after I graduate. \_\_\_\_\_
- a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree

20. The relationship between the University of Montana and the City of Missoula needs to be improved. \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Unsure
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
21. Missoula residents have a positive perception of the University of Montana and its students. \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Unsure
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
22. The University of Montana's students have a positive perception of the residents of Missoula. \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Unsure
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
23. University of Montana students realize the impact they have on Missoula and its residents. \_\_\_\_\_
- Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Unsure
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree