Town/Gown Survey Summary
Villanova University – Lower Merion Township

Villanova Student Participation: 196 students (1,998 invited to participate) – 124 completed surveys
- Survey was sent to the following groups: 196 Law School 1L & 2L, 1095 random sampling of undergraduate students, 707 graduating seniors who had completed the senior survey
- 77% of respondents lived in the residence zip code 2 years or fewer
- 26% were employed
- 25% graduated in 2018

Community Participation: 157 members – 110 completed surveys
- Community members were invited to participate by Commissioner Scott Zelov and the Township Manager for Lower Merion
- 41% lived in the residential zip code for 20 years or more
- 65% are employed
- 35% had taken classes at Villanova
- 13 respondents graduated from Villanova

Amount of contact with selected groups:
- Community members ranked students as the group they interact most with (40%)
- Students responded that they had little to no contact with each group listed (business/industry leaders, elected or appointed city officials, local school district teachers/leaders, members of non-profits)

Nature of relationships with selected groups:
- Both students and community members ranked their personal relationships in the middle of the spectrum (roughly 3.16 median)
- Those numbers are higher when you calculate only for those respondents who reported some level of contact with each group. Those who said they had No Contact with each group were excluded
- It should be noted that students had ranked their interaction with elected or appointed city officials as higher than other groups – leading us to believe they may view police in that category
Students ranked their interactions with community business leaders and members of nonprofit as positive – possibly due to students volunteering, working, or having internships in the community. Community members rank their interactions with students as more negative than any other category.

**“Party habits”**

- Students do not believe there is a large amount of trouble created in the community by partying.
  - Interesting to note that students cited “fraternity houses” as the largest % of trouble created by partying.
- Community finds a great deal of trouble created by partying at the following locations: private residences, fraternity houses, bars. Restaurants and tailgates ranked significantly less.
- Students and community members believe that Thursday, Friday, Saturday are biggest party nights.

**Problems related to partying:**

- Students and community members agree that trash/littering and excessive noise occur frequently. The community also cites public urination as another issue related to partying.
- 64% of the community believes that student partying has put a large strain on campus-community relationships. 18% of students agree.
- 51% of community respondents believe that partying has had a moderate or more financial impact on the community.

**Relationship Between Campus and Community:**

- Community members and students answered similarly about there being not enough events on campus that would interest community members (3.4 and 3.2 respectively).
- Community believes the coursework offered on campus is too expensive.
- Community believes campus representatives are not very visible at community events.
- Community believes that the campus does not contribute enough to the local economy as they should. Students do not agree with this sentiment.

**Perceptions of Campus & Community:**

- 65% of student respondents have a neutral view of the relationship between the community and city officials.
- 75% of community respondents answered neutral to very positive when ranking this relationship.
- 66% of the students ranked the relationship between campus and city police as negative. 42% of the community ranked the relationship between community and city police as positive.
- 25% of student respondents ranked the local media portrayal of campus as negative. 55% of student respondents ranked the local media portrayal of the campus as positive.
- 59% of community respondents ranked the local media portrayal of the campus as positive.
Survey Comment Section Summary:

Question: Are there any public spaces used by students for partying that create trouble in the community?
Summary: Many responses from the community members include noise and trash complaints. Most responses say that students create a lot of noise in the streets traveling to and from the bars late at night.

Question: Time of year for heavy drinking that is problematic to community?
Summary: St. Patrick's Day, college basketball games, warmer weather, beginning and end of school year.

Question: Other problems not named as a result of study partying?
Summary: Community sees noise and parking issues as the biggest "other problems" occurring in the community as a result of student partying. Also to note, trash and litter.

Question: What can the campus do to improve relationship with the community?
Summary: Students and community members both feel as though the University needs to include the community more in events and do a better job of advertising events and programs available to the community. Many members of the community want the University to take steps in improving off-campus housing relations between students and their neighbors. An opportunity exists to better inform the community about Villanova University's commitment to community service, especially the St. Thomas of Villanova Day.

Seems as though a good amount of community respondents do not know about the community service day and the volunteering VU students do in the area. VU needs to better communicate efforts in the community.

Question: What can the community do to improve its relationship with VU?
Summary: Students consistently responded that those living in the community and the police department need to understand that they live in a college town and that this is what students do. A few community respondents responded by saying that neighbors should introduce themselves to students. Mostly, the community responses were that the community has done enough and it's on the University. Two community respondents noted the Garrett Hill picnic in September that used to "welcome back" students. Both groups suggested more events on campus and in the community with more advertising.
**Suggested Action Steps:**

- Quarterly meeting between representatives from Lower Merion Township and Villanova University.

- Increase the University’s Neighbor Update email distribution list by adding more members of the community. Increase frequency of neighbor communication by the University – regular emails and enhanced social media presence through the University’s newly launched Nova Neighbors Facebook page and Government Affairs Twitter page.

- Increase presence and participation of Villanova University staff at community events.

- Better convey opportunities for the community to be involved on campus; identify additional opportunities.

- Find opportunities where Villanova University can be more active in the community – ex: Speaker Series at Ludington, volunteering at the PALM or Eldernet, etc.

- Lower Merion Township and Radnor Police partner with Villanova to include the Police in the first-year student orientation program and any other back to school programs that may exist for upper class students moving off campus.

- Have Police when patrolling the bar areas speak to students about responsible conduct in the early evening prior to entering the bars when they are more likely to be receptive to the advice. The message/communication received after a few drinks doesn’t tend to have the desired impact but conversation before may improve conduct later and build relationships.

- Lower Merion Township should help to publicize the volunteer effort and projects by Villanova students that benefit the community.

- Consider cooperating with neighborhoods to institute welcome back picnic and like events to help students and full-time residents get to know one another.