

**How Attitudes and Perceptions Can Influence Policy Changes**

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## Introduction

Town-gown relations have a very large impact on the student experience at Duke University. The overall college experience is not based solely on academics, but also on the social and cultural outlets that a university can provide. The location of Duke in Durham, North Carolina is thus a major factor in growth and development of the students who chose to attend this University.

Many universities are the center of the town in which they are located. Often times, the city in which these schools are located would not be a city if not for these institutions. Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts are examples of a colleges located in a typical “college” town. In Cambridge, the students, faculty, staff and administration, along with the local business owners whose businesses rely solely on these individuals, constitute most of the population.<sup>1</sup> The University of North Carolina Chapel Hill is another such university. Chapel Hill was built around the school and many of the businesses in the area are there to meet the needs of the students that attend the University. However, not all universities are located in this particular type of setting. Duke University, while located in a metropolitan area, is not the sole center of activity of the city.

When Trinity College was moved to Durham, North Carolina in 1892, a city already existed. The College added to the wealth and population of the city, but it did not create the town. With the booming tobacco business and the railroad through the center of town, it is likely that Durham would have continued to prosper without the addition of

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<sup>1</sup> *City of Cambridge, Massachusetts, The Department of Cambridge Community Development, September 2004, available from [http:// www.cambridgema.gov/](http://www.cambridgema.gov/); Internet; accessed 20 February 2007.*

Trinity College. Yet, this school was a welcome addition to the city. Local residents looked upon the University as an integral part of their community. The College provided more job opportunities for local residents as well as an intellectual environment in which they could immerse themselves. In addition, the University provided an elite institution of higher education for the South and a possible destination for local Durham students.<sup>2</sup>

In the beginning to an extent, Duke was separated from the community. The granite wall around East Campus given by Benjamin Duke in 1915 served as a constant reminder of the division between the University and the community. One reason for the separation was the residential requirements for the students. In the years of The Woman's College, students were required to live on-campus for their entire tenure at the University, unless they were local residents.<sup>3</sup> The Woman's College also provided for most of the students' needs, thus limiting the amount of time students spent venturing into the city. During the period of this limited interaction, the University was looked upon as a beneficial addition to the community. Events were hosted by the students of The Woman's College to allow local high school students to experience a day at an institution of higher education. Athletic events were community affairs and parades went through downtown to advertise events on-campus. However, many of these relations changed once the residential policy was altered.

Another reason for the separation has become apparent through the passing of time. The attitudes and perceptions of the residents of the community and the students of

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<sup>2</sup> Letter, Sylvia Mangum to Mrs. Persons, December 5, 1952. In *Duke University Records: Woman's College- Office of the Dean, Box 1. Subject Files: Durham at Duke Day.*

<sup>3</sup> *Duke University Bulletin, 1936-1937, In Duke University Archives.*

the University have changed, creating a divide in the two communities. These perceptions changed with the change in the residential policy.

In the mid-1960s there was a movement by students to pressure the deans of The Woman's College to allow students to live off-campus. This type of residential change was occurring at institutions across the country, such as Cornell and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, among others.<sup>4</sup> After much debate and research, this request was approved by the administration and the residential life at Duke changed, as did the relations with the community.

After students moved off-campus, fewer University-wide events occurred between the community and students at the University. In general, Duke students became more isolated from the community even though greater numbers were actually living in the community. This did not appear to be the case at other institutions where similar residential policies were implemented. At present, Duke students are often criticized for disturbing the community, such as parties at off-campus houses and other general unruliness in the community. The University is no longer seen as part of the community, but is viewed as an elite institution isolated from Durham.

This investigation demonstrates how the change in residential policy, specifically off-campus living, has led to changes in attitudes between the students and the community residents.

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<sup>4</sup> *Letter, Mary Grace Wilson to Ruth W. Darling, October 2, 1967. In Duke University. Records: Woman's College- Office of the Dean. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972.*

## Methods

To investigate this topic, several different resources were utilized. I began by obtaining information regarding the residential policy of The Woman's College starting in the 1930s. The yearly bulletins proved to be good sources for this information. There was no mention of off-campus housing policy until 1936. This omission can be attributed to the addition of new dormitories for women and the subsequent lack of a clear residential policy. In the bulletin school year from 1936-1937, the first mention of residential off-campus policy is mentioned and can be found in all subsequent bulletins.

I next investigated why the original policy mentioned in the bulletin was implemented. Substantial information regarding the residential policy through the years was available in the Office of the Dean's Records for The Woman's College. However, I could not find specific information concerning the rationale for the original residential policy. Because of the extensive information for later years, I draw inferences as to the reasoning for implementing the original policy.

Specifically, Box 36 was a fount of information regarding the push for off-campus housing, especially in the "HOUSING" folder. These records include memorandums between deans regarding the issue as well as applications that had to be filled out to live off-campus. There are records of the research done by the administration regarding housing options. Finally, these records include letters between residential deans of multiple universities undergoing the same change in residential policy, as well as newspapers discussing the student opinion. Along these same lines, Box 41 contains surveys and questionnaires filled out by students and administration that provided some useful insight.

Box 27 contains the Code of Campus Living, which gives insight into why students wanted a change. This code of living was useful in determining why campus living was so highly valued by some and not others. Boxes 32 and 34 provide insight into the student grievance procedure and how students could file a concern with the Office of the Dean. These records were not extremely useful, but they did help lead me to inferences about attitudes and policy decisions.

In order to find information about attitudes between the community and the students on-campus, I mostly utilized *The Chronicle* and articles from Durham newspapers, including *The Durham Morning Herald* and *The Durham Sun*.

Most importantly, I utilized, the Duke University Archives Town-and Gown Reference Collection. This collection has files for each year from 1950 up until 1993, with newspaper clippings, editorials, and speeches that proved quite useful.

It is important to address what issues I did not investigate as possible alternative explanations for the change in attitudes, not related to the housing policy. These possibilities include the equal rights movement; the activity of the Duke students during the equal rights movement, which has been described as rude and obnoxious;<sup>5</sup> the change in population dynamics of the city due to this movement; or the change in the dynamics of the University's population over time due to its popularity and fame. When examining the issue of community relations, I did not take into account these other possibilities. I chose to look only at how the housing policy change in The Woman's College resulted in a change in the attitudes of the community toward the students of Duke University.

Another issue that I did not delve into extensively was the automobile policy and the

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<sup>5</sup> Sherry Bindewald, "A Town Gown Partnership," *The Durham Morning Herald*, 10 May 1975. In: *Duke University Town-and-Gown Reference Collection*. 1977 File.

drinking policy. I found plentiful information regarding these two policies, but did not find a good point to work them into my analysis of the situation. The Office of the Dean of Trinity College, 1928-1974 was where I found most of this information. Box 25 contained a folder solely devoted to automobiles on-campus, while Box 29 contained a folder regarding the drinking policy on-campus. Changes in these policies could be responsible for changes in attitudes as well, but these have not been thoroughly examined. I do realize that the change in attitudes and perceptions cannot be attributed solely to the change in housing policy, although I do maintain that it is the largest and most significant factor.

### **The Hey-Day of Town-Gown Relations**

During the 1920's to the 1950's, Duke-Durham relations were said to be at their hey-day.<sup>6</sup> The University was giving back to the community and the community was contributing to the success of the University. Relations were perceived as extremely positive, when they are looked back upon from the present, because both the University and the community were working with each other toward common goals of successes and establishing a name for both the University and the town.

### **Demographics**

During this early time period, the majority of the students that were attending Duke University were from Durham, other towns in North Carolina, or neighboring states in the South. Duke was not yet known as the prestigious, elite university that it is today.

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<sup>6</sup> *George Lougee, "Oct. 4, 1941: Color, Fun and A Blue Devil Win," The Durham Morning Herald, 11 October 1981, 1C.*

Trinity College moved to Durham in 1892 from Randolph County, and the school did not become Duke University until the endowment was given in 1924. Thus, from the 1920s to the 1950s, Duke was just beginning to make a name for itself and its purpose was to provide higher education for the residents of the neighboring cities and states.

In terms of attitudes, the community looked upon Duke quite favorably. Durham was a city before Duke was relocated there, and it would remain a city, were the University to move to another locale. However, the presence of Duke in Durham brought fame and fortune to many of its citizens as Duke grew and became a prestigious institution. Duke was one of the first premier institutions of higher learning in the South. Many students that attended Duke went on to do great things. The research that was done in the Medical School and in the different departments of the University was becoming well-renowned. The community looked upon Duke students favorably. The students were seen as hard working people who gave back to the community through charitable works and economic contributions. Students of The Woman's College were extremely involved in community service as the women donated their time to nursing homes, the YWCA, and other local Durham institutions. Members of the community perceived that students were involved in Durham institutions because the students understood the need for commitment to betterment of the community.

Since the majority of the students were Southerners, the community looked upon them as friends and neighbors who could understand the community and its needs. As discussed later, when this population demographic changed, the attitudes toward the students took a downward turn. Events that took place during the time frame evidence the harmony between the community and the University.



### Special Events

In October of 1941, due to the threat of the Japanese military, the Rose Bowl was moved to Durham. Duke and Durham used this opportunity to show the connection between the community and the University by having the homecoming parade proceed through downtown. Storeowners donated items to help build the floats and restaurants donated food; eventually, this parade became a town celebration. This special event only occurred once in the history of the University and it is often looked back upon as the main example of how relations between the school and the town used to be less controversial and antagonistic.

Similarly, between the years of 1936 to 1941, there was an annual May Day Celebration hosted by Duke students. Invitations were issued to the community through the mayor's office, once again showing the positive relationship between the two entities.

Other events also showed community solidarity. In the 1950's there was a day called Durham-at-Duke Day. All students from the local Durham high schools were invited to attend a day on the University's campus.<sup>7</sup> Residents looked upon this day as a time when local students could attend an institution where they might go for higher education. These days were meant to persuade students to stay in the South and attend Duke rather than heading north, as many did. This day also contributed to the demographics of the student population by attracting locals, reinforcing the belief that the majority Southern population of the University was one reason for these good town

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<sup>7</sup> "Durham High Meets Duke," *The Durham Morning Herald*, 29 November 1950. In: *Duke University. Records of the Dean of The Woman's College, Box 1. Subject Files: Durham at Duke Day.*

relations. In addition to the demographic composition of the student body, economics also played an important role in maintaining community interaction.

### **Economics**

Starting at the beginning of construction of the University in Durham, residents of Durham have given to the school and helped it “grow in stature and in fame.”<sup>8</sup> During a four-day campaign in 1920, Durham residents gave to the University a total of \$211,000. Between 1942-1944, a total of \$50,000 was given. These donations helped pull Duke through the wartime, when operating costs skyrocketed due to inflation and increased demands for service.<sup>9</sup> The goal of these donations was to preserve the status of the University as a premier place that has high standards of teaching, research, and training.<sup>10</sup> Without this aid from the residents of Durham, it remains unclear as to what would have happened to the University during difficult times.

In 1953, the *Durham Morning Herald* published an editorial that asked, “Why should any city want a university?”<sup>11</sup> The general response was that when a university was placed in a city, the two entities could grow together and create a stronger community. In the particular case of Duke and Durham, Duke contributes culturally as well as monetarily to the success of the city, dumping almost \$11 million per year into

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<sup>8</sup> *Bulletin, Durham City Campaign Committee for Duke University Development Campaign, “Strength for the Future: Duke University and the People of Durham,” ca late 1940s/early 1950s. In Duke University. Town and Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1950s.*

<sup>9</sup> *Bulletin, Durham City Campaign Committee for Duke University Development Campaign.*

<sup>10</sup> *Bulletin, Durham City Campaign Committee for Duke University Development Campaign.*

<sup>11</sup> *Anonymous. “Duke Buying Heavy Here,” The Durham Morning Herald, ca. 1953. In: Duke University. Town and Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1950s.*

the city. Duke and its attractions, such as sporting events, the chapel, and the gardens is credited with attracting thousands of visitors every year that also add money to the Durham economy. Durham residents provide substantial numbers of employees to the University and thereby support University operations. The editorial claims that these mutual contributions contribute to a strong community.<sup>12</sup>

### **Other Influencing Factors**

The Woman's College did not allow its students to have cars on-campus during the era of harmonious town-gown relations. A window into the attitudes of Duke students toward the community can be seen when examining the change in the car policy in the late 1960's. One of the reasons that women were not allowed to have cars was the social code that dictated men as the ones who would drive on dates. Another reason cars were not necessary for women was that women were located on East Campus and were therefore closer to downtown. This reason shows that downtown was not only a place to volunteer, but was one of the social centers for the students and was often utilized by the students for both purposes. It is also important to note that downtown was a central location for retail for the women students. This area was the only location that met the shopping needs, especially the major department stores, for the students and residents of the community.

Without the use of cars, women were forced to stay close to East Campus for their extracurricular activity. This policy therefore helped to promote good relations between the students and the community. If the students did not respect the community around

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<sup>12</sup> *Anonymous. "Duke Buying Heavy Here."*

them, then they would not have been welcome there and would not have an outlet available for shopping or entertainment. At the same time, by keeping the women in Durham, all of the money was spent within the community, demonstrating the economic impact of the University on the community, yet again.

Similarly, an issue that has been appearing in the community recently is that of students not purchasing parking permits for on-campus and parking off of East Campus in the neighborhoods. Congestion and parking in the neighborhoods was not an issue when cars were not allowed, demonstrating that policy changes can lead to changing attitudes.

The alcohol policy was also a non-factor during this time period. The Woman's College had a strict alcohol policy that was not only enforced on-campus, but applied to students that went off-campus as well. Any drinking by women on-campus, even if of age, was an honor code violation, and drinking off-campus was not tolerated.<sup>13</sup> Thus, many of the complaints that are coming from the community today, regarding student's unruly behavior and drinking, was simply not a factor in the years of The Woman's College.

Very few, if any, complaints from the community can be found regarding Duke students at that time. There were also very few negative attitudes toward the community from Duke students. In fact, the attitudes in the community and the attitudes of Duke students during the time of The Woman's College were mutually positive. The community enjoyed having a premier institution in their town and benefited from the fact

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<sup>13</sup> *Memorandum. In: Duke University. Woman's College, Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Box 29, "Drinking". There did not appear to be a sole recipient for this memo or a clear indication of who authored it.*

that Duke University was the number one employer of Durham residents. The students relied on the community for a pleasant surrounding environment and a locale for extracurricular events. Once the women moved off-campus in 1969, however, these attitudes took a dramatic turn.

### **The Original Housing Policy**

As previously mentioned, for many years it appears that community relations with Durham were very important aspects of Duke University. The University was placed in the center of town and a great amount of money from the community was spent on the institution. However, over time, these relations changed. The change in residential policy at the University is a major reason for this change. The implementation of the new policy was a very, long drawn out process and the change was not made without substantial investigation and contemplation, but the results still had a very negative effect on town-gown relations.

In the Duke University Bulletin of the 1936-1937 school year, there was a specific section pertaining to off-campus living for women. It said, "All undergraduates who are not residents of Durham are required to live in the dormitories unless they are living with their parents or near relatives."<sup>14</sup> In the bulletins from previous years, there was no mention of off-campus living, suggesting that it was not an issue. However, in the mid to late 1960s, there was a large push by the undergraduate women of The Woman's College to be able to move off-campus. This push was also seen nationally at other schools, including, but not limited to Cornell University and the University of North Carolina.

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<sup>14</sup> *Duke University Bulletin, 1936-37.*

After much research and debate, the deans of The Woman's College decided to revise their policy in order to accommodate the student's needs and desires.

The regulations regarding residential policy that are located in the bulletins changed in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s. Men enrolled at Trinity College were allowed to find their own living accommodations off-campus. In contrast, women enrolled in The Woman's College were allowed to choose off-campus accommodations only in an extremely limited number of special cases. Students that challenged this double standard were often greeted with the response that, "we are a residential college" and only special exceptions would be made.<sup>15</sup> Even students 21 years of age or older or seniors with only a few hours left to qualify for graduation were very rarely granted special permission. The deans of the College were unwilling to listen to the desires of the students for reasons explained only by the statement, "we are a residential college." However, this refusal did not discourage the students from continuing to apply pressure.

### **The Evolution of a Change**

The deans became more willing to listen and began to do more research when it became apparent that the push to live off-campus was occurring in several different parts of the country and the privilege was being granted at many colleges. After communicating with Dean Katherine Carmichael from the University of North Carolina, and discovering that the institution eight miles down the road was revising their residential policy, students at Duke University began receiving different answers to their

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<sup>15</sup> *Memorandum, Jane Philpott to The Woman's College Community, March 6, 1969. In: Duke University. Woman's College, Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972.*

requests to live in the community. UNC modified its policy to permit senior women students who were 21 years of age or older, and all seniors, even if they were under 21 as long as they had parental permission, to live off-campus. Inquiries were then sent out to several other universities to discover what their residential policies were and why these policies were established. Cornell University responded that they were also conducting a reassessment regarding the residential policy of the women students. Many universities discovered that there was a large movement away from dormitory life when residential restrictions were lifted and students were given freedom to choose. Duke University reassessed and eventually changed their residential policy in part because of the exchange of information between multiple institutions. The deans of this institution did not just take the research and investigation done at other universities and make their decision; independent inquiry and exploration was conducted and analyzed before any conclusions were drawn.

Mary Grace Wilson, the first Dean of Undergraduate Women at Duke, suggested that the women who desired to live off-campus should conduct inquiry amongst their peers and report to the deans on their findings. From that point on, student thoughts and interests were taken extremely seriously and encouraged. The research conducted by the students was highly valued, but was only a limited part of the research conducted. One aspect that was extremely well investigated was the amount of dormitory space there was on-campus. A census was conducted of all the rooms in every single dormitory on-campus in the spring of 1968.<sup>16</sup> It was discovered that many rooms were being used as

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<sup>16</sup> *Report, Woman's College Residence Hall Statistics, 1969. In: Duke University. Woman's College Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972. This report did not have an author or a date attached to it.*

doubles when in fact they should have been singles, as well as there being many dormitories that were in sub-par condition. Dormitory capacity had increased from 938 students in 1956 to 1376 students in 1968, and there were the same number of rooms. Students were just being shuffled into rooms that were not meant to hold more than a single occupant.<sup>17</sup> However, despite this startling discovery, changes were not immediately instituted as documented in several more refusal letters to women requesting off-campus housing. The one good thing to come of this primary investigation was that students were no longer being given a simple no. Now, the undergraduate women were encouraged to continue pushing for this policy change and were told that changes are being recommended for the very near future.<sup>18</sup>

### **National Change of Residential Housing Policy**

Duke University was not the only school facing this push for change. There appeared to be a national movement of students to live off-campus. The administrators of Duke performed further investigation into this potential policy change by contacting other universities that had large female populations. The institutions that were contacted were Agnes Scott College, Emory University, Goucher College, Newcomb College, N.C. State University, Vanderbilt University, and Wake Forest University.<sup>19</sup> In the fall of

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<sup>17</sup> Letter, Myrtle Irene Brown to Dr. Marcus E. Hobbs, January 21, 1970. In: Duke University. Woman's College Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972.

<sup>18</sup> Memorandum, Margaret Ball to Provost Cole, November 25, 1968. In: Duke University. Woman's College Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972.

<sup>19</sup> Study, Study of Certain Regulations Applicable to Women Students, November 7, 1968. In: Duke University. Woman's College Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972. The study did not list an author.



1968, only two of the universities investigated allowed women to live off-campus, while all men undergraduates were permitted to live where they chose. However, it was also documented that most of these institutions were currently investigating possible policy changes. Duke also continued to investigate in both The Woman's College and in the Nursing School. A Residential Life Committee was established and charged with further discovery.

The chairman of one of the numerous sub-committees of this Residential Life Committee returned with an extremely forceful recommendation in November of 1968. Dr. Edward Tiryakian maintained that "with particular concern for the psychological and sociological factors"<sup>20</sup> pertaining to The Woman's College, it was his strong recommendation that senior women be allowed to live within the Durham community mostly because they were of age to make these decisions for themselves. This recommendation was a result of Dr. Tiryakian's research as well as a national consensus that seemed to be taking place. Yet again, one strong recommendation was not enough to initiate change because there were too many other aspects that needed to be evaluated. In particular, many deans were worried about safety and how this potential residential policy could affect admissions because of that factor.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Memorandum, Margaret Ball to Provost Cole, November 25, 1968.*

<sup>21</sup> *Report, Arguments for and against permitting seniors 21 years of age, or who have parental permission, to live off campus. In: Duke University. Woman's College Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972. This was a report without an author or a date.*

### **A List of Pros and Cons**

When a decision could not be reached despite this extensive research, administrators went back to the simple method of making a pros and cons list in order to help them evaluate their decision. One pro included was the ability to renovate the East Campus dormitories which were in vast need of renovation. Not only would these renovations make dormitory life more inviting for future residents, it would help in preventing a mass exodus to off-campus living. It would also permit the initiation of summer programs that were not possible due to the conditions of the dorms and the summer North Carolina heat. Another pro was the fact that it would make Duke like many other universities that allowed off-campus living. Clearly, this was not a strong enough pro by itself, as seen by the vast amount of discussion that went into making the change, but it was still a fact that was considered. The administrators also felt that allowing off-campus living might relieve the University of some of the responsibility for some of the extracurricular activities students might be partaking in. This particular aspect of off-campus living was clearly evaluated and identified as a positive for the University without taking into account the reaction of the community to the extracurricular activities that the University was trying to avoid. Finally, the University decided that the household management skills that could be gained from an off-campus experience, as well as the benefit of potential lower costs for housing for the students would all be positive aspects for changing the policy.<sup>22</sup> However, the administrators were able to think up a long list of negative aspects as well.

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<sup>22</sup> *Report, Arguments for and against permitting seniors 21 years of age, or who have parental permission, to live off campus.*

First and foremost on the mind of the University was the fact that they could lose money if students decided they would all enjoy an off-campus experience. If the policy was changed, then money would be lost and renovations would not be made to the East Campus dormitories. Thus, future students would all choose to live in nicer surroundings, moving off-campus, and taking more money with them. This, however, could also be remedied by raising the cost of living on-campus during the earlier, mandatory years. If more single rooms were created due to the exodus of students to off-campus housing, then the overall payment to the University would increase because single rooms have higher fees, so it was determined that this movement would in fact be beneficial to the University.

The next item on the University's agenda was the fact that having students live off-campus would invite public criticism and damage the image of the University. Again, activists were able to show that other schools, such as UNC, had successfully avoided these criticisms and Duke could take the same measures. However, Duke also faced a tricky situation in that the Duke Loyalty Fund campaign was being conducted around this same time. It was believed that alumni and local residents were less likely to contribute to this fund if students were able to move off-campus. With money obviously being a very important factor in all aspects of the University, this was of great concern. There proved to be no evidence to back-up this assertion.

The administrators were also concerned about the change in leadership on-campus. If most of the seniors moved off-campus, the leaders, as established by their age, would no longer be around to educate and mentor the younger undergraduates.

Finally, concern was raised about how the change in policy could lead to increased enrollment in The Woman's College.<sup>23</sup> If the enrollment increased, then one of the advantages of The Woman's College, the personal attention and advisement from the Dean, would be lost and The Woman's College would lose its identity.

As evidenced clearly in the pros and cons that the administrators listed in their decision-making process, this policy change was not taken lightly. Eventually, the deans of The Woman's College were convinced that the proper decision was to alter the policy. It was at this point that the center of the fight for implementation of this altered policy change became the Duke University Board of Trustees. With The Woman's College administrators behind the voices of the women students, the process was much smoother.

### **The Policy Change with Lasting Repercussions**

Dean Margaret Ball, along with colleagues, applied extreme pressure on the Provost and others that held the decision in their hands. Dean Ball explained her lack of a previous strong recommendation one way or another regarding the policy by providing the research performed as well as referencing the campus culture-altering Vigil in 1968.<sup>24</sup> Coming on the heels of this very important demonstration that celebrated the life and goals of Dr. Martin Luther King as well as protesting his murder,<sup>25</sup> inequality between men and women was not going to be accepted on this campus any longer. At this point, it

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<sup>23</sup> *Report, Arguments for and against permitting seniors 21 years of age, or who have parental permission, to live off campus.*

<sup>24</sup> *Report, Arguments for and against permitting seniors 21 years of age, or who have parental permission, to live off campus.*

<sup>25</sup> *The Duke Vigil 1968 Collection. In Duke University. Special Collection. I did not use a specific primary source but drew conclusions from reading the documents in the collection.*

becomes clear that the equality of women's housing was not a very important issue prior to 1968, and that one of the reasons the policy change took a long time was because it was placed on the backburner due to other nationally important issues. However, once things settled down, the women undergraduates were able to push their cause to the forefront. The formal recommendation that the dean of The Woman's College, Margaret Ball, turned in to the Provost stated that the "Staff is now prepared...to recommend herewith that beginning in the autumn of 1969, seniors over 21 or having parental permission be permitted to live off campus."<sup>26</sup> Thus, the argument became that the College is a residential college and values the educational opportunities provided by the residential policy, and a variety of different types of residential opportunities should be offered.

Further, administrators began to highlight policies that were restrictive to women that were not applied to men. They argued that women needed to have the same opportunities and that women were becoming restive to achieve the same independence and liberty that men were able to experience. It was shown that not all students benefit from the same aspects of the residential experience and thus, they should be accommodated so that they can grow and learn from a residential experience that would provide the most benefit. Dean Jane Philpott argued that several hundred undergraduate men, not just seniors or men over 21, were being allowed to live off-campus with special permission. At a time in history, when women were making strides toward equality, this argument was extremely effective with the policy-makers, as they did not want to appear

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<sup>26</sup> *Memorandum, Margaret Ball to Provost Cole, November 25, 1968.*

discriminatory. Thus, the policy was adopted and a pilot program was implemented in order to test the new boundaries.

The first year that a large number of women students were allowed to live off-campus was the 1969-1970 school year. A goal was set to have at least 30 applicants apply for this living situation. Without at least 30 students, the pilot program would be looked upon as a failure and women students would not be allowed to live off-campus. As of April 15, only 20 applications had been turned in to the office and thus the administrators who had worked very hard for a long time began to examine ways in which to increase this applicant pool. Suggestions were floated around, including allowing students under 21 to live in the community even if they were not seniors.<sup>27</sup> Ultimately, however, these ideas were shot down and the age limit was held firm. It appears that at least 30 women eventually applied to live off-campus because from this point on, the Duke University bulletins included the new restrictions for off-campus housing for women.<sup>28</sup> As it is possible for women students to live off-campus today, it is apparent that this goal was met and women were allowed to live off-campus from 1969 on.

### **Absence of Forethought**

One aspect that was not fully investigated however was the effect that moving off-campus would have on community relations. As previously documented, there were concerns regarding whether or not the community would continue to fund the campaigns that Duke was conducting. Other than how women students living off-campus would

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<sup>27</sup> *Memorandum, Mary Grace Wilson to Dean Philpott, April 14, 1969. In: Duke University. Woman's College Office of the Dean Records. Subject Files: Off-Campus Living, 1965-1972.*

<sup>28</sup> *Duke University Bulletin, 1970-1971. In: Duke University.*

benefit or be detrimental to the community, these concerns were not raised. One reason could be that at this time, off-campus housing was not particularly popular and only a limited number of students chose this option. Along these same lines, men had been allowed to live off-campus for many years and there were no major reports of any problems. It appears that most of the attention was being given to national events rather than local, University issues. However, the most important item to note is that while off-campus housing was not in the dormitories, it was not really in the community either. As Beth Berman, Trinity 1975, explained, living off-campus meant living in the houses that once stood where Duke University's Central Campus is now located. Some local residents resided in these areas, but overall, the residents were related to the University in some aspect, whether they were students, professors, or staff.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, it seems reasonable that the University would not be very concerned with the community reactions to students living amongst them. Once again, the University benefited from the limited responsibility they held pertaining to the student's activities once they were off-campus.

The residential policy, however, did not remain stagnant. By 1974, as told by Beth Berman, students were allowed to live off-campus their last two years. Now, in 2007, all seniors, regardless of age, are allowed to decline housing on-campus, and a limited number of juniors with special circumstances are able to do the same. The thought and research behind these decisions is quite extensive as indicated by the vast amount of investigation that was conducted in the initial policy change. However, now, the reaction of the community is taken into account much more so than it was 40 years ago and the University is still held responsible for the activities of the students even when

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<sup>29</sup> *Beth Berman, Trinity Class of 1975. Ms. Berman came to discuss her time at Duke with our class.*

they are off-campus. As demonstrated in this decision-making process, timing is everything. Without the Duke Vigil and the other events of the 1960s, it is possible that the issue of inequality between men and women's restrictions on-campus would not have changed. This residential policy was not only about the ability to live "off" or "on" campus. It reflects the bigger issue of the time. It was a statement to show that women should have the same rights as men and housing was a simple, easy way to make that statement. Policy change is never a simple, quick process, and residential policy affects more than just the students of the University. The community that surrounds and fosters Duke University is also affected by many of the guidelines that the University sets forth, and this change in policy caused a shift in attitudes within the community.

### **Important Distinctions**

It is important to realize that it is not the attitude toward the University that is changing, but the attitude toward the students. The University is blamed in part for the change in dynamics of the student population, but overall, Duke only did good things for Durham from the start and it continued to do so. Duke contributed the largest library in the South; cultural activities such as concerts, lectures, art exhibits, and sermons; a leading medical center; entertaining athletic contests and other public events; money from student spending in the community; and the largest payroll in Durham.<sup>30</sup> However, the student dynamic changed and the attitudes of the students and the community residents followed.

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<sup>30</sup> *Bulletin, Durham City Campaign Committee for Duke University Development Campaign, "Strength for the Future: Duke University and the People of Durham.*



After the first women were allowed to live off-campus in the trial year of 1969-1970, the official policy was changed. Once this shift took place, a huge flux of students living off-campus occurred. This exodus could be the result of many different issues.

First and foremost on the minds of the women, was the fact that there was not enough space on East Campus to house all of them.<sup>31</sup> The administration had two options for how to solve this issue. The first option was to cut back on enrollment. This option was really not a choice at all. Duke University was still becoming more popular and well-known. More applications for admission were being received than ever before, and the administrators did not look favorably upon cutting back enrollment. The other option was to start having a lottery to allocate on-campus housing. Now, housing off-campus was not only a choice; for some it would be their only option.

Thus, it seems reasonable, with so many students now living off-campus, that the students would become more involved in the community. In the 1970, Duke students were the people that were mainly responsible for the creation and recreational planning of a youth center located downtown. It was also the Duke students that were marching in town and calling for equal rights in 1973. While the former would most likely lead residents to look favorably upon the students, the latter soured the opinion of certain segments of the population towards the students.

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<sup>31</sup> *Memorandum, Dean Margaret Ball to Provost Cole. In: Duke University. Records of the Deans of Trinity College, Box 16. Subject Files: Housing Problem. This was a very informal memo that was partly handwritten.*

### **The First Repercussions**

The changing of attitudes is evidenced in multiple editorials and articles in both the *Durham Morning Herald* and *The Chronicle*, as well as the increased efforts of the University presidents to repair relations with the community.

In 1975, interviews were conducted for the *Durham Morning Herald*, which asked students about their perceptions of Durham. The majority opinion was that “Duke students do not think Durham satisfies their needs as college students.”<sup>32</sup> Some students even believed that the only attraction that Durham had was the University itself. The main complaint was that many of the stores, bars, and restaurants were not geared toward students. Some students, such as Nancy Deacon, even said that before coming to Duke University, she had heard that “Durham was an awful town.”<sup>33</sup> Other students believed that Durham was “the funniest little grit town they’ve ever seen, and the people in it belong there.”<sup>34</sup>

When students are recorded making statements such as these, it is not hard to visualize why the attitudes of much of the community changed toward Duke students. However, some of the most inflaming remarks and attitudes about the students came from Duke graduates who remained in Durham.

After 1975, there was a short trend of Duke students choosing to remain in Durham after graduation. It appeared that the trend started because of the ability to live off-campus. Students would move off-campus their senior year and Durham would

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<sup>32</sup> Douglas T. Davidoff, “Durham: What has it done for you lately?” In: *Duke University. Town and Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1977.*

<sup>33</sup> Douglas T. Davidoff, “Durham: What has it done for you lately?”

<sup>34</sup> Sherry Bindewald, “A Town Gown Partnership.”

become their hometown. They would establish themselves, find friends, lovers, hangouts and other acquaintances.<sup>35</sup> The trend continued into 1977. During this time period, the dynamics of the student body of Duke were also changing.

*The Chronicle* ran an article about the Duke graduates in Durham in 1977. One graduate said that while he was at Duke, he thought ill of Durham; however, his attitude changed once he lived off-campus and he chose to remain after graduation because there was a lot to do in Durham.<sup>36</sup> Another graduate had a different perception of what there was to do in Durham. Susan Pate, a 1976 graduate said, “It’s a fallacy that there’s not enough to do in Durham, there’s a lot to do here, most of it at Duke.”<sup>37</sup> Despite the differences in perception of activities in Durham, these graduates did agree that Duke was completely separated from Durham. Many similar graduates believed that it was the Duke students that created the stereotypical impression of Durham as a bad city. The older students passed along their perception to the younger students and the stereotype was passed down through many generations of classes. The Duke graduates also looked at the changing dynamics of the student body and blamed this factor on some of the more obnoxious behavior. “I am certain that the average Durham citizen has at one time or another encountered an obnoxious Duke student and automatically assumed he or she was ‘one of them Yankees come South.’”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Sherry Bindewald, “A Town Gown Partnership.”

<sup>36</sup> Douglas T. Davidoff, “Grads ‘Find’ Durham after Graduation,” *The Chronicle*, 22 April 1977. In *Duke University. Town and Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1977.*

<sup>37</sup> Douglas T. Davidoff, “Grads ‘Find’ Durham after Graduation,” 22 April 1977.

<sup>38</sup> Sherry Bindewald, “A Town Gown Partnership.”

### **Changing Demographics and Stereotypes**

As evidenced by the previous statement, the changing demographics were a major factor in the changing attitudes. The students in the area were no longer friends and neighbors, but were coming from states farther away. The University was no longer aiming to attract just Southerners, but was hoping to attract students from all over. This change might not have had a large effect on community relations except for the fact that the housing policy had also changed. Now, the students were much more present in the community and the neighboring residents were subjected to more of their behavior and attitudes.

The reaction of the residents to this stereotype of being a 'redneck' town was as previously stated, the deterioration in the attitudes toward the students. The Duke students became looked upon as, "an inbred community" and as uninvolved in the community.<sup>39</sup> However, this perception was based on some falsehoods.

Duke students were extremely involved in the community during this time period. Women especially became involved in volunteer programs in the city. A Student-Volunteer Tutors in Durham City Schools' Volunteer Program was established and fostered by Duke students. Duke students also headed up an effort to arrange for homeless people to receive firewood in the winter. This effort was the result of a very dangerous situation in which several homeless people died. The end result was that Duke students were able to convince the powers-that-be to use the trees from Duke forest to provide for those less fortunate. Duke women took part in the establishment of the

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<sup>39</sup> *Douglass T. Davidoff, "Durham held less appeal for students 20 years ago, according to alumni," The Chronicle, 21 April 1977. In Duke University. Town and Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1977.*

YWCA, which would not have been successful without the women's participation. Many businesses were able to establish themselves in Durham because of the University and the students who would venture out into the community and spend money.<sup>40</sup> As evidenced by all of these community-related events, the Duke students were not "uninvolved" in the community, as many residents believed them to be. Therefore, just as the residents of Durham resented being looked upon as members of a dangerous and boring community, the Duke students resented being referred to as uninvolved and pretentious. These attitudes shifted slightly and the University was blamed for the actions and perceptions of the students, and the campus became more isolated.

### **The Influence of University Leaders**

Further evidence of deteriorating attitudes is seen in the actions of the presidents of Duke University, beginning with Terry Sanford. Sanford became the president in 1969, just as students were moving off-campus in much greater numbers than in the past. At the beginning of his tenure, there is not much evidence of deliberate action on his part to strengthen Duke-Durham relations. However, starting in the late 1970's there are apparent efforts to repair relations with the community. The lack of previous attempts to repair relations and the sudden appearance of many steps do to so suggest that somewhere along the line the relations changed.

Sanford began pushing for a joint community-university effort to build a civic center in the city that could be used for cultural events as well as Duke athletics. Previous presidents of the university had threatened to pursue the building of the civic

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<sup>40</sup> *Douglass T. Davidoff, "Durham held less appeal for students 20 years ago, according to alumni," 21 April 1977.*

center without the city's help, and it would have been used for Duke events only. Sanford promised the city that the civic center would not be built unless the city would jointly pursue the project. He also proposed the building of a hotel that could be used to house important guests that were coming to visit the University. This hotel would be located in the city, rather than on the outskirts of town and would thus allow the visitors to see Durham as well as the University. These two efforts were meant to reunite the town and the school. They were especially important at a time when the residents began to perceive snobbery in academia and a non-working relationship between the two entities. Sanford also convinced the Board of Trustees to sell, in a good faith gesture, the residential property it owned in Walltown to the community. Finally, Sanford's most concerted effort to repair the growing divide was the establishment of Sunday morning meetings of Durham leadership at Duke. These meetings allowed for the leaders of Durham to come and have a discussion with the leaders of the University. This establishment of the Sunday morning meetings was another gesture on the part of Duke to show Durham that the University appreciated the city and hoped to have continuing relations with it.

In 1980, Terry Sanford even tried to make students desire to go downtown more often. The idea was that if students were out of the little bubble that was Duke, and were actually interacting with the residents of Durham, the community would alter their attitudes once again. In order to encourage this behavior, Sanford "issued a call-to-arms for revitalizing downtown."<sup>41</sup> This revitalization did not just include the proposed hotel and civic center, but new businesses and entertainment options as well. This plan,

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<sup>41</sup> *Carlton Harrell, "Shoulder to Shoulder," The Durham Sun. 5 Feb. 1980. In: Duke University. Town-and-Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1980.*

however, did not take effect and the majority of students remained trapped inside the walls of Duke University.

The failure of Sanford's efforts to restore attitudes to a positive nature is evident in a letter that was published in 1981 in the *Durham Morning Herald*. As new students were arriving at Duke University for their freshman year, the community wanted to make sure they came in with the correct attitudes, or what the community considered to be the correct mindset. The open letter to the students begins with, "Welcome. The pleasure is ours—and we hope it will be yours, too."<sup>42</sup> The community goes on to say that the experience of the Duke student depends largely on the behavior of said student. If the students were to bring certain ideas with them about the experience they were going to have, and was not open to new and different ideas, then the student would not have a good experience with Durham. The author encouraged the students to not accept ideas about the "Old South" or "American racism" or "materialism and shallowness" that were probably fed to them before arriving in the city. If the student left these ideas in their hometown then the experience at Duke would be a learning and growing experience. The letter ended with a warning. "Do not convey, by look or manner, your disgust for that which is different."<sup>43</sup> This warning essentially summarizes the problems that the residents have with the students at the University. Previous students had certain impressions and expectations of what they would find when they arrived in Durham. It

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<sup>42</sup> Anonymous, "A Message to Students" *The Durham Morning Herald*. 3 Sept. 1981. In: *Duke University. Town-and-Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1981*. This letter was just a clipping that I found in the reference collection and it did not show an author's name.

<sup>43</sup> Anonymous, "A Message to Students."

was these prejudices that altered the attitudes of the residents toward the students because the stereotypes led to disrespect, a lack of courtesy, and close-mindedness.

When President Brodie began his tenure in 1985, he continued with Sanford's efforts to restore community attitudes toward Duke students. He also tried to use the philosophy that if the residents of Durham are around the students more, the two groups will begin to become more accepting of one another and will look more favorably upon each other. In the spring of 1986, Brodie issued an open invitation to all residents of the city to attend the commencement exercises. The goal of this invitation was to show the community how hard the students work to receive a degree and how much their success depends on Duke and the city that it is located within. The combined efforts of Brodie and Sanford, may have led to a limited amount of change in attitudes.

In 1988, Durham Mayor Wib Gulley, a Trinity graduate in the class of 1970, said that, when he was a student at Duke, there was a distinct air of animosity between the students and the community. When asked to describe the current situation, he said, "We're moving from a sort of neutrality to a mutually beneficial relationship."<sup>44</sup> This statement shows that somewhere between 1970 and 1988, the animosity gave way to a certain neutrality, which was then shifting yet again. The shift from animosity to neutrality during the specified time suggests that the efforts of Sanford and the early efforts of Brodie actually did work to repair a certain portion of the relations. The Mayor's statement also suggests that through continued efforts, the attitudes might be restored to their original state.

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<sup>44</sup> Sean Reilly, "University Examines role in Changing Durham," *The Chronicle*. 10 Oct. 1988. In: *Duke University. Town-and-Gown Reference Collection, Subject Files: 1993*.



In 1993, Nannerl Keohane became the president of Duke University and she continued with the previous president's goals. It was an extremely important step when, as her first duty as president of the University, she called the Mayor of Durham.<sup>45</sup> Another important achievement during her tenure was the establishment of the *Duke Community Reporter*, which was a magazine that handled issues in the Duke community as well as in the Durham community. This magazine was another gesture to the community to ask them to share their experience in the neighborhood with the University and the students.

### **Attitudes and Perceptions in 2007**

At present, attitudes appear to have grown significantly more negative than they were even in the late 1980s. It seemed that great strides were being made toward restoring the attitudes so that a beneficial, mutually respectful relationship could be formed. However, a large step backward occurred somewhere in the late 1990s and the early years of the new millennium. The same issues seem to be causing the problem. Students now refer to Durham as "sketchy." They now have complete access to cars so they go farther away from campus to find entertainment and food. Students also are known for causing disturbances in the Trinity Park area, such as having loud parties, and in general, just being disrespectful to the neighbors. The neighbors and residents of Durham make certain that the students know how they feel too. Students are referred to as "uppity", "rich", "disrespectful", and "promiscuous." The students do not take these

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<sup>45</sup> *Debbie Selinsky, "Duke, Durham build partnership for a better community," The Duke Community Reporter, 1993-1994. In Duke University. Town and Gown Reference Collection. Subject Files: 1993.*

stereotypes kindly, even if they are in some ways true, and thus we are led back to the perpetual cycle. Students make stereotypes about Durham and community members make assumptions about Duke students, leading to an uninterrupted state of resentment on both sides. No matter how much work is done on behalf of Duke University to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with Durham, obstacles will always be in the way. The University as an entity could have a beneficial relationship with the town governance, but the students will not have a positive relationship with the community until stereotypes are eliminated. As stereotypes are still in place from over a century ago, it seems unlikely that the Duke-Durham prejudices will be removed any time in the near future.

## **Conclusion**

The current attitudes that are present in the Durham community and those of the student body at Duke University are drastically different than they were during the time of The Woman's College. I attribute the change in attitudes to the movement of women off-campus. I make this assumption because prior to the change in housing policy, there is very little evidence of any negative stereotyping. The women appeared to be extremely involved in the community and the community seemed happy with the Duke students and their presence in Durham. However, after the women moved off-campus, there was a large flux of other students away from the campus as well. Living in the community became very popular because of the different opportunities it afforded the student. However, suddenly there was an appearance of deteriorating relationships and attitudes. The University presidents started making it their goal to repair relations. Prior

to this point, these efforts were not visible, suggesting that there were no relations in need of repair. Both the community and the students became much more vocal about how they felt about one another, and thus attitudes deteriorated further. When Duke University decides to make an important policy change, it needs to be aware that the University is not the only institution that is affected. As seen with the off-campus housing policy change, the city of Durham was extremely interested and affected by the alteration. Prior to the late 1960s, Duke and Durham were intimately joined in many different ways. Attitudes were positive and relations were mutually beneficial. However, when women began moving off-campus in 1969, it opened the doors for a large exodus of students from the residential quadrangles. The Durham residents were more exposed to the attitudes and opinions of the Duke students, and attitudes and relations quickly deteriorated. Negative and derogatory impressions that Duke students hold about the community and the impressions of Durham residents toward Duke students are creating a downward-spiraling cycle in community-university relations. Offense is taken by both sides for previous thoughts and actions, and more negative attitudes result. Despite efforts on both sides to foster better relations, the attitudes remain unchanged or are worsening. If the situation is to be fixed the same way in which it was created - the only solution would be to move Duke students back on-campus, preventing their exposure to Durham. This in and of itself could result in deteriorating relations.

The implications of my research are very interesting to me, especially with the new construction on Central Campus. It appears that nothing is going to change the continuous decline in relations unless one side of the battle can “turn the other cheek.” As a student that will be moving off-campus next year, I find that my research can help

me to try and break the cycle. Unless Duke is going to move the students back on-campus, which is a possibility with the new Central Campus, it does not appear that change can take place any other way than on an individual level. If Duke does revoke the privileges of students to live off-campus, this could also have a very negative effect on the community because it would close down the apartment buildings that were built for student living, and it would take a large chunk out of the economic contribution to Durham. Similarly, students would not be exposing themselves to the community residents as much and the previous, negative impressions could be the lasting ones unless new impressions can be formed. Thus, one of the only ways that I foresee any change occurring is if Duke takes it upon itself to educate its students regarding town relations. This small addition could take place during orientation week for freshman (and maybe older students as well), and should not just be an event like "Into the City" where students only see the side of Durham that needs help and community service. They need to be exposed to the whole picture.

Most importantly, my research has shown me that it is very important for Duke University, and other universities that find themselves in similar residential arrangement, to consider all aspects of a decision before a policy change is made. By not taking into account the affect on the community, the university set itself up for disaster. With any policy decision, the University is not the only entity that is affected and the decision-makers need to take this into consideration. Many times it is said that being aware of history can help prevent the same mistakes in the future, and that philosophy is very apparent in this situation. Relations, attitudes, and perceptions were at their peak when communication was open and flowing freely between the two communities. When policy

changes are made without input from the other side, it is only natural for problems to occur. Obviously, each community is going to be looking out for itself, first and foremost, but if relations are as important as the University and the Durham community makes them out to be, then it would be wise for policy-makers to learn from their mistakes.

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