



Wisdom to make a difference.

# KEENE COLLEGE-CITY COMMISSION REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

“Building an Inclusive community”

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“Neighborhood Revitalization”

April 2018

*Prepared by the Keene College-City Commission*

## *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

The following individuals were influential in the development of this report. Those marked with an asterisk (\*) represent College-City Commission members, who contributed to this report but no longer serve on the Commission.

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# BACKGROUND

The members of the College-City Commission were named and began meeting in November of 2014. Mayor Kendall Lane and former President of Keene State College, Dr. Anne Huot, established this Commission following discussion and the creation of a Commission charge earlier in 2014. The Commission was subsequently designated as a permanent City Commission in 2016. The Commission is charged with facilitating long range planning and making short and long term recommendations to Keene State College and the City of Keene on issues of mutual concern.

Following one of its first community meetings at Heberton Hall in March of 2014, the Commission identified the following themes as areas of focus:

1. Housing and Neighborhoods
2. Infrastructure and Parking
3. Citizenship
4. Property / Tax Base

For the following two years, Commission members met and researched these topics, presenting a report and recommendations in September 2016.

In October 2016, President Huot and Mayor Lane directed the Commission to continue its work with a new focus on the following themes:

1. Building an Inclusive Community
2. Housing/Neighborhood Revitalization

To explore and research these topics, the Commission formed two subcommittees (Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee, and Neighborhood Revitalization Subcommittee) that met between the fall of 2016 and winter of 2018. Throughout this time period, the subcommittees would routinely provide updates and consult with the full College City Commission on its activity at the Commission's regular monthly meeting.

This report includes background information as well as recommendations for how the College and City communities may work to address these topic areas. These recommendations are intended to be a guide, and this report should be viewed as a dynamic document that may be updated over time.

# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

For the community of Keene, NH to grow, thrive and be economically successful in the future, it needs to continue embracing inclusiveness and diversity. Given the changing demographics of the United States, and the Monadnock Region in particular, the residents of Keene need to advocate for putting more systems in place that adequately address these inevitable changes. After the College City Commission submitted its Report and Recommendations for the original College-City Commission charges in the fall of 2016, former Keene State College (KSC) President Huot and Mayor Lane further charged the Commission to explore how the City could create a more welcoming community that is attractive to people of diverse backgrounds.

To this end, the members of the College-City Commission participated in a discussion facilitated by Dr. Dottie Morris whereby they explored their understanding of and attitudes towards inclusiveness and diversity. It soon became apparent that the College has excellent resources to address this topic area but there are fewer in the community. At this time, the Commission agreed that it would be a long, ongoing and evolving process - one that would involve creative ways to engage current residents and newcomers of both the College and City communities in sessions to help educate and enlighten. It is essential to develop a sustainable and enduring plan to address this charge granted by the President and Mayor.

## **Themes**

The four major themes of addressing inclusiveness and increasing diversity that were explored by the Commission include:

- Concerns
- Benefits
- Resources
- Challenges

## **Concerns**

The majority of potential concerns identified by Commission members related to becoming a more diverse and inclusive community included fear of: the unknown, potential conflicts, crime, "outsiders" taking jobs, less "of the pie" becoming available, losing rights, becoming a minority in our own community, danger/not feeling safe, some feeling different, not being accepted, being marginalized and harassed.

## **Other potential concerns included:**

- the possibility of setting up laws/policies/rules/practices that exclude groups of people based on majority vs. minority and/or out of fear for something new or different;
- having assumptions where our own beliefs need to change;
- establishing and maintaining safety for those who may be perceived as different due to religious beliefs, physical appearance, abilities, gender identification, country of origin, etc.;
- the difficulty of having diverse groups learning to come together, including language challenges, different values, traditions and cultures, while maintaining uniqueness and acknowledging that "birds of a feather like to flock together"; and
- that unacknowledged fears might come out as anger.

## **Benefits**

Commission members acknowledged that the potential benefits of becoming a more diverse community include increased opportunities to celebrate our differences and how much we have in common as well as discovering new ideas and ways of thinking.

### Other potential benefits include:

- increased resiliency towards change at the individual and community levels;
- opportunities to learn and experience personal growth through understanding of other cultures;
- improvements in economic vitality and overall quality of life; and
- improvements in problem-solving abilities at the local level by utilizing knowledge and experiences of individuals from other cultures.

With increased diversity, there is likely to be an infusion of a wide array of cultures, traditions, foods, art, clothing, opinions, knowledge and ideas, philosophical and religious beliefs. In general, ours could be an even more vital and interesting community.

## **Resources**

The Commission discussed a wide-range of existing resources that already exist in the community. Attracting students, faculty, staff, workers, visitors, and residents from out-of-state or from outside the Region, has the potential to enhance:

- the current interest level in diversity and inclusiveness;
- the need to keep open access to the City government process;
- the rich history of overcoming problems; and
- our strong education system and well-versed and experienced people, and "a business community that wants diversity and should be willing to partner".

All of the above combine to make this an opportune time to make advances in our ability to improve our capacity for inclusion. The students, faculty and staff from various communities bring so much to the Keene and campus communities. Additionally, colleges are willing to share their available resources with the greater Keene area community.

Please see the appendix for more specific information on some of the current services and programs that address this theme area.

## **Challenges**

The Commission identified the following as potential challenges to becoming a more diverse and inclusive community: lack of recognition that there is any issue; resistance to change; ignorance; fear of the unknown; insecurities; prejudice; stubbornness; isolation; narrow focus in our lives; lack of experience in spending time with others who are not the same; little economic diversity; lacking formal way of working between College and City to move this forward; lack of opportunities to come here and limited job opportunities; current lack of diversity; few services for different groups (ethnic stores, etc.); lack of adequate support services in the City; cultural and language barriers; and lack of "critical mass" for minority group support, laws and regulations.

## **Accomplishments**

Following the exploration of the themes addressed above, the Commission spent the last 18 months researching and discussing the various ways inclusiveness and diversity can be embraced at a higher level in the community. The Commission's Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee met monthly, gathered relevant documents, solicited feedback from the community, organized events to promote diversity and inclusiveness, and partnered with various community organizations. The overarching goal of this subcommittee's work was to become more knowledgeable about this topic and to think of ways to translate the outcomes of the discussions into action. The members of the Commission would like to express gratitude to Marcia Kayser for her thoughtful leadership and dedication in guiding this Subcommittee since its inception.

The following is a list of accomplishments that have occurred since the release of this report:

- In April of 2017, the Commission held "Keene on Diversity" - Community Conversation series<sup>1</sup> – a community-wide outreach event developed by the Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee. The Subcommittee is in the process of planning a series of these events.
- The Commission partnered with the City of Keene and Keene State College in supporting the Green Dot Bystander Training at Cheshire Medical Center in the fall 2017.
- The Commission supported and coordinated with the Colonial Theatre's Educational Director, Vicky Pittman, to hold the screening of "Shadows Fall North" in September of 2017, which was followed by a discussion about slavery and other NH racial issues.
- The Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee met with Dr. Denise Burchsted in November of 2017 to learn more about the Indigenous Peoples event that she and her team are planning to bring to the KSC campus.
- The Commission supported the Resolution, adopted by Keene City Council, relating to *Ensuring that Keene is a Safe and Welcoming Community for all People Regardless of Race, Creed, Ethnicity, Religion or Immigration Status.*<sup>2</sup>

## **Recommendations**

After reviewing the results of this exercise, and recognizing the complexity of this topic, the Commission suggests the following short, medium, and long-term recommendations. Given the current national climate on this topic, there is a sense of urgency for some of our current residents.

It is recommended that the College-City Commission:

- support and disseminate information regarding events and training related to diversity and inclusiveness in Keene and beyond, through the Keene City Council and the Keene State College Senate;
- continue the Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee, which will meet monthly to gather and discuss relevant information; invite participation from a variety of organizations, residents of Keene and members of the College; and support events that contribute to Building an Inclusive Community. The subcommittee should serve as an informal forum for all to engage in productive dialogue and provide the Commission with relevant information

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<sup>1</sup> Staff, Sentinel. "City-College Committee to Host Discussion on Diversity Tuesday." *SentinelSource.com*, 18 Apr. 2017, [www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/city-college-committee-to-host-discussion-on-diversity-tuesday/article\\_99108ea8-44ab-5a91-be6b-7539fb8602bc.html](http://www.sentinelsource.com/news/local/city-college-committee-to-host-discussion-on-diversity-tuesday/article_99108ea8-44ab-5a91-be6b-7539fb8602bc.html).

<sup>2</sup> City of Keene, Keene NH. Resolution R-2017-29. *Relating to Ensuring that Keene is a Safe and Welcoming Community for all People Regardless of Race, Creed, Ethnicity, Religion or Immigration Status*. 16 Nov. 2017, [https://ci.keene.nh.us/sites/default/files/2017-11/2017\\_11\\_16\\_City%20Council%20Agenda\\_Packet\\_optimized.pdf](https://ci.keene.nh.us/sites/default/files/2017-11/2017_11_16_City%20Council%20Agenda_Packet_optimized.pdf).

to act upon; and

- work with the Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee to engage in supporting a “grassroots movement”, local activism, empowerment, and participation in discussing the issues of diversity and inclusiveness through formal and informal College and community conversations.

The following are recommendations for consideration of the College, City, and community organizations/groups to pursue with respect to advancing and addressing this theme area both on campus and in the greater Keene community.

#### Short Term (0-6 months)

- Discuss possibilities for developing a branding strategy for the City and the College to include the idea of “Building an Inclusive Community” in their respective mission statements. This should be seen as an economic development tool to attract people to the Region.
- Develop a messaging strategy of Diversity and Inclusiveness on web portals for both the City and College. Consider areas of similarity in order to amplify the message.
- Arrange for University of Pennsylvania's Dr. Margaret Bruchac to come to KSC in spring 2018 to speak to the community about our native Abenacki residents.
- Develop a process of including representatives from other institutions of higher education in the Region on the Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee.
- Support the Keene Immigrant and Refugee Partnership (KIRP) with research methods and outreach that may provide reassurance to Keene immigrant and refugee residents.
- Develop recommendations for creating crime reporting platforms to be used by the City of Keene, similar to KSC's "The Silent Witness"<sup>3</sup>.
- The Commission met with a wide array of experts from the local community and realized that the topics of diversity and inclusion are discussed locally and within the region on regular bases. However, there is a substantial lack of coordination and dissemination. It is recommended that the resources of the City, the College, Chamber of Commerce, and some local organizations be pooled to develop a portal for disseminating information regarding Diversity and Inclusiveness, and Building an Inclusive Community.

#### Medium Term (6 months - 1 year)

- Implement a branding of “Keene - an Inclusive Community” as a joint strategic initiative of the College and the City.
- Institute a Diversity Commission on KSC’s campus.
- Develop and coordinate a series of workshops related to Diversity and Inclusiveness. It is envisioned that this could be a collaborative effort between the City of Keene, KSC, Antioch University New England (AUNE), Cheshire Medical Center, and the Historical Society of Cheshire County.

Possible collaborators and/or presenters would include:

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<sup>3</sup> Crime reporting: [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?KeeneStateCollege&layout\\_id=8](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?KeeneStateCollege&layout_id=8) and other reportable items: <https://www.keene.edu/featured/reporting-at-ksc/>

- Jim Waller and others at KSC Cohen Center
- Jim Gruber and Abigail Walton at AUNE

Possible topics include:

- Bystander Training - Green Dot, Safer Scenes, Step-Up, No Zebras,
  - "Ask A \_\_\_\_\_" - Resource: Cindy Cheshire, KSC Director of Campus Ministry,
  - Indigenous People: The Real Story - Dr. Bob Goodby or Kearsarge Indian Museum,
  - Trans 101 or other LGBTQ topics,
  - Inclusiveness and Diversity,
  - How to talk to children about diversity,
  - Include topics relevant to people with disabilities,
  - Social justice - How to be an activist, and
  - New Americans in Keene: Focus on new immigrants and refugees.
- Empower the Inclusiveness and Diversity Subcommittee to research models of successful inclusion, diversity efforts, and best practices in college towns.
  - In order to discuss inclusiveness and diversity within the local context relevant data needs to be collected on regular bases. It is recommended that a Climate Survey be conducted in the Keene community. The KSC Campus Climate Survey could serve as starting point and a correlation of questions/outcomes sought would allow for closer coordination of future changes and recommendations. While this is a long range recommendation, it is important to begin the discussion and setting up of the survey in the fall in order to synchronize it with KSC's current survey efforts.

#### Long Term (1 year or greater)

- Use data from Keene City Climate Survey and KSC Campus Climate Survey to inform future work, including the development of a plan of action for “Building an Inclusive Community”. This work should inform the implementation and subsequent refinement of branding “Keene - an Inclusive Community”.
- Invite participation of local businesses in discussions about Diversity and Inclusiveness. Conduct an inventory of what local businesses are currently doing to:
  - promote and expand diversity;
  - successfully recruit and retain a diverse workforce;
  - understand what resources they have available to acclimate new employees to the Keene environment; and
  - document their strategies to prepare current employees for the potential demographic shift.
- Continue to offer educational experiences and dialogue opportunities for community members. Develop a process to determine relevant and high impact topics.
- Examine policies, procedures and practices within the city of Keene and at KSC using an equity lens to make sure these are in line with our goals, mission and objectives associated with diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice.
- Develop a strategy to communicate positive message about diversity and inclusiveness on regular bases through a variety of media to reach a large portion of the KSC campus and the community.
- Include more information and training on Diversity and Inclusiveness in the orientation for

new KSC students and the proposed First Year Experience at KSC.

- Review KSC's strategic plan and assess what has been done in regard to the community and culture and what is still not being addressed.
- Provide appropriate Diversity and Inclusiveness training to frontline members of the City and College.
- Empower students to be active advocates for Diversity and Inclusiveness.

# NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

The work of the Neighborhood Revitalization Subcommittee was grounded in the recognition of residential neighborhoods surrounding the College as a vital source of student housing that facilitates the transition of future residents into the community and beyond. The health and conditions of these neighborhoods depends on a delicate balance of varied housing choices, population diversity, and ease of access to small businesses and services.

Furthermore, the symbiotic relationship between the College and surrounding neighborhoods must be seen in the larger context of the City of Keene and the owners and managers of rental properties. Only close collaboration of all these parties assures economic vitality and stability of these important neighborhoods and areas adjacent to the College campus.

The members of the Subcommittee in coordination with the College City Commission discussed ideas and concepts relevant to neighborhood revitalization and documented them in a set of thematic recommendations, which are included below.

## **Themes**

The four major themes of addressing neighborhood revitalization that were explored include:

- Focus Areas and Concerns
- Benefits
- Resources
- Challenges

## **Focus Areas and Concerns**

The majority of concerns identified revolved around fears of the unknown, potential conflicts, crime, and the impact of "outsiders". Additionally, the Subcommittee recognized there is a need to:

- address the changes occurring in the neighborhoods adjacent to the College;
- document and identify the areas of large concentration of student rental housing in the vicinity of KSC;
- research solutions to mitigate the impact of noise, litter and large gatherings on residents;
- respond to the current and future area housing stock in terms of vacancy and the impact on the local community, City ordinances related to housing and code enforcement;
- assess current landlord practices and guidelines; and
- explore best practices of town-gown relations with City officials, the local colleges, area landlords, students and city residents.

## **Benefits**

A major benefit of exploring this focus area, with the resulting collection of recommendations and tasks that follows, is the initiation of an on-going dialogue and exchange of ideas among multiple stakeholders towards the pursuit of a vibrant college/city partnership that will positively impact neighborhoods in the vicinity of the College.

## **Challenges**

The Subcommittee identified the following as potential challenges to neighborhood revitalization:

- scarcity of financial and human resources;

- decrease in KSC student enrollment;
- increased pressure for greater economic development; and
- limitations of current policies, laws, and ordinances that may restrict new approaches, and may discourage new and possibly experimental perspectives, projects and programs.

### **Resources**

The Subcommittee identified the following as potential resources to support efforts advancing neighborhood revitalization:

- committed and engaged College City Commission members;
- a solid working relationship between the City and College;
- access to the ITGA (International Town and Gown Association) database;
- cadre of students who could assist with surveys and projects;
- a keen interest among the members of neighborhood associations in the revitalization efforts of their neighborhoods.

### **Recommendations**

The following is a collection of suggestions organized around thematic clusters. These proposed recommendations are intended as a guide for KSC, the City, and others in the community to be considered with respect to enhancing the conditions of neighborhoods and fostering neighborhood vitality in a collaborative manner.

The themes categorized below include recommendations related to opportunities for more effective communication between relevant stakeholders, creating incentive programs for improving quality of life and vitality in neighborhoods near campus, and studying the impact of student housing in neighborhoods off-campus.

### **College Engagement**

Students living both on- and off-campus have an impact on the quality of life and economic vitality of neighborhoods in proximity to KSC. Close collaboration among all parties involved in the process of housing students has a potential to enhance the diversity of the housing stock, promote vibrant neighborhoods, and improve the transition of students into the community. We recommend that KSC continues to engage with various stakeholders in the following categories:

#### **Student Housing - Assessment**

- Continue to research and articulate to all stakeholders the trends in international, national, and regional demographic shifts that impact student enrollment.
- Establish a joint task force between KSC, the City and rental property owners to exchange data and ideas regarding current and projected levels of student enrollment. This joint task force might:
  - assess the impact of future enrollment trends on the KSC campus and the greater Keene community;
  - quantify the number of students living off-campus and in the community;
  - gather information on and map the locations of student off-campus housing;
  - assess the capacity of on-campus residential housing and establish an optimal size for the cohort of students living off-campus;

- explore criteria for off-campus student housing eligibility such as GPA, good standing, etc.

#### Student Housing - Planning

- Revisit the Campus Master Plan in respect to on-campus housing taking into consideration current budgetary constraints.
- Identify opportunities to exchange information among the College, City of Keene, and rental property owners in order to retain stability of the rental property market (study affordability and vacancy rates in the City).
- Work to establish public and private partnerships to explore possible incentive programs for attracting young professionals and families, including college and City employees, to neighborhoods that have been predominately occupied with student housing rentals. Potential incentives could include: programs to subsidize portions of closing costs or down payments for qualifying home-buyers in areas near the KSC campus; sponsorship of neighborhood revitalization by area banks and businesses; tax relief or credit programs to encourage renovations and rehabilitation of properties to support residential and commercial (re)development; KSC management of historically problematic off-campus properties, etc.

#### Student Housing – Communication and Education

- Develop social media and instant communication platforms to communicate with rental property owners in a more effective way about opportunities, issues, and upcoming events.
- Establish a mechanism for the KSC Coordinator of Student and Community Relations to report annually to the Planning, Licensing and Development Committee. Report could include the following: projections of off-campus students, new housing programs and initiatives, and information on housing trends. Additionally, the reporting mechanism could serve as a venue for exchanging information regarding student housing in general.
- Continue developing strategies and providing access to resources for off-campus students on issues of physical and personal off-campus safety.
- Develop an Off-Campus Peer Ambassador Program to utilize peer-to-peer education and promotion of strategies for successful and safe off-campus living experiences.
- Create educational materials to show examples of unsafe environments within a rental unit and provide resources to address issues related to student safety in off-campus housing.
- Partner with KSC students in the Occupational Health and Safety, Journalism, and Graphic Design programs to develop effective communication strategies about student safety in off-campus housing through handouts and short videos.
- Transition the current mandatory off-campus housing orientation program to become a mandatory online course (using Canvas) for students choosing to live off-campus. These students would be required to complete this course before they move off-campus.
- Continue the work necessary to create a database of addresses for all KSC students living off-campus in Keene. While some progress has been made since October 2016, large gaps in data still exist.

## **Student Engagement**

Student engagement starts “at home.” The college campus provides an immense opportunity to nurture student behavior, model social growth, and plan for the transition of students into the community. Cultural shifts within the student body have been observed over the last two years, with many initiatives still in the development pipeline. Most notably, recently created Academic Curricular and Co-curricular plans call for much closer integration and coordination of Academic and Student Affairs. We recommend strengthening this positive trajectory through the following recommendations related to reinforcing student engagement on-campus:

- In collaboration with KSC Student Government, continue exploring options to keep students engaged in on-campus activities during the late evening hours and during the weekends.
- Develop strategies to keep students informed and regularly updated about on-campus activities. These strategies could include:
  - Integrate information disseminated on various social media platforms such as Facebook into the myKSC platform to inform students about upcoming events.
  - Employ Hooties Rewards application as a unified advertising and messaging strategy to encourage students’ participation in on- and off-campus activities and events.
  - Encourage KSC faculty to incorporate event content into their classes and/or syllabi. This could be especially effective in the core courses of the Integrative Studies Program.<sup>4</sup>
- Continue to increase the offering of Friday classes that fulfill major requirements.
- Designate a large multi-purpose space/building on KSC’s campus to host events led by the Student Government. This space could be used as a venue for student musicians, karaoke, local bands and games, etc.

## **Parent Engagement**

Parents play a significant role in facilitating the transition of students to living on-campus. Typically, parent engagement is much higher in year one of the student experience, and decreases when students plan their transition to off-campus housing. The City of Keene and Keene State College already provide many resources for students related to off-campus housing. However, to further facilitate a smooth and safe transition of students moving into the neighborhoods off campus, the following parent engagement strategies are recommended:

- Research an opportunity to create and implement an orientation program for the parents of students who are interested in off-campus housing options. This could include opportunities to educate them on the voluntary inspection program of rental properties listed on the KSC website<sup>6</sup> and in the City of Keene database<sup>7</sup>.
- Explore options to disseminate and share information collected by the Community Coalition, which is composed of representatives from the City’s Police, Fire, Code, and Health Departments, the KSC Student Conduct officer and the KSC Coordinator of Student and Community Relations.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information about the Integrative Studies Program see: <https://www.keene.edu/academics/isp/>

<sup>6</sup> Off-campus resources are available at: <https://www.keene.edu/office/reslife/och/>

<sup>7</sup> Voluntary Inspection resources are available at: <https://ci.keene.nh.us/code-enforcement/>

- Initiate platforms/programs for disseminating off-campus housing information to parents in the form of newsletters, webinars, etc. located on the KSC Off-Campus Housing web-page. An off-campus housing orientation could promote parent awareness and engender their support on issues such as leases, local laws and ordinances, student expectations and consequences.

### **Resident Engagement**

Neighborhood groups and associations provide an important forum to voice concerns, discuss emerging trends, and provide opportunities to manage and improve the environment of neighborhoods adjacent to the KSC campus. KSC and the City could benefit from more regular collaboration and coordination between these existing neighborhood groups. While there has been improved communication over the past few years between these entities, there is an opportunity for more routine and structured engagement. Therefore, we recommend the following:

- Coordinate current efforts between the City of Keene and KSC to engage the residents of the neighborhoods adjacent to the KSC campus in a dialogue that fosters relationship building and identifies the resources needed to manage the transition of students in and out of the community.
- Develop a Resident Info Session to update residents on current policies and trends regarding off-campus student housing, including the KSC student conduct and accountability processes.
- Continue to encourage neighborhood groups and associations to advocate and collaborate with all local institutions of higher education and the City.
- Encourage and support members of neighborhood associations to be active participants in promoting enhanced quality of life. The efforts of the South East Keene Neighborhood Group could be used as a model for other groups in the City.
- Provide appropriate resources and continue to facilitate the “meet and greet” opportunities for introducing students and neighbors in order to develop positive relationships.
- Consider providing resources from the City of Keene Police Department to train volunteers for community patrol opportunities to aid the law enforcement with maintaining safe living environments in their neighborhoods.

### **Rental Property Owner/Manager Engagement**

Engagement of landlords managing rental properties in the vicinity of KSC is vital to maintaining and improving the quality of life in neighborhoods near the campus. The subcommittee has identified the following recommendations as a way to further develop the relationship between landlords, KSC, and the City:

- Encourage the establishment of a local Landlord Association and coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce for possible outreach, administrative, and organizational support.
- Explore options for developing and offering a training program for new and existing landlords. Such program could address topics related to existing regulations for rental property owners, pro-active management of nuisance and disorderly conduct situations, etc.<sup>8,9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Landlord Training and Certification Program resources: <https://www.thegoodlandlord.net/home/>

- Research the development of a rating system for rental properties.<sup>10</sup> This system could consider various criteria such as safety, sustainability, recycling, alternative transportation, practice and policies, sample leases, etc.
  - Consider an Off-Campus Housing Partnership Program to incentivize landlords who participate in the rating system.<sup>11</sup>
- Establish close collaboration between the City, rental property owners and KSC to strategically address vacancies and transition properties from student rental to other uses like workforce housing, etc.
- In collaboration with rental property owners develop a local open house program for off-campus living opportunities. Coordinate the open house timing with Move-in Day activities to allow parents to visit local rentals and manage student engagement during the Opening Day/weekend.

### **Municipal Engagement**

The municipal government of the City of Keene is a vital partner in facilitating the relationship between KSC and surrounding neighborhoods. We recommend that the City continues engaging in a dialogue with rental property owners from the perspective of providing incentives to enhance effective management that reduces need for municipal enforcement.

### Rental Properties – Management, Incentives and Regulations

- Explore an option for establishing an ordinance that regulates unruly gatherings on private property.
- Encourage the City of Keene Police Department to re-establish a program that pro-actively targets known areas of disorderly conduct in the vicinity of the College.
- Research opportunities to enact laws, ordinances, policies and programs that encourage rental property owners to provide exceptional service and safe living environments to tenants, and to reduce violations and service calls. Examples of potential programs that have been implemented in other communities include:
  - Mandatory registration/licensing of rental properties with the city.<sup>12</sup>
  - Provide mandatory initial rental property inspections and yearly voluntary re-inspections by unit, not per building.<sup>13</sup>
  - Provide a guidance program for new and existing property owners about best practices for property maintenance.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Landlord Training Program offered by municipal government: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/Landlordtraining#.WruZHma-LMU>

<sup>10</sup> Landlord Rating Program: <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2017/05/19/burlington-releases-landlord-rating-data/322445001/>

<sup>11</sup> Example of a partnership program: <https://offcampus.osu.edu/partner-with-us/off-campus-housing-excellence-program/>

<sup>12</sup> Rental property registration process for the City of Boston. <https://www.boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/how-register-rental-property>

<sup>13</sup> Information regarding current inspection program in Keene: <https://ci.keene.nh.us/sites/default/files/Voluntary%20Inspection%20report%203-13-18.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Tennant and Landlord handbook sample: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/LeadProgram/RENTINGinVERMONT.pdf>

- Provide options for legal counsel services related to rental property agreements/violations to off-campus students.
- Provide sample lease agreement language developed in collaboration with rental property owners, the City of Keene and KSC.
- Encourage a pro-active approach to property maintenance through the development of incentive programs (e.g. Badge of Honor for Landlords) in an effort to reduce service calls.
- Clarify and communicate with rental property owners the consequences of non-compliance with City regulations.

#### Rental Properties - Effective Communication

- Strengthen channels of direct connection/communication between the Keene Police Department and rental property owners by improving the reporting mechanisms from the Police Department to Code Enforcement, the landlord and/or the College about incidents related to student conduct.
- Revisit the extent, timing, and level of accessibility of information included in the Police Media Log.
- Establish a regular reporting mechanism related to off-campus student housing from the Code Enforcement staff to the Planning, Licensing and Development Committee.

#### Rental Properties - Economic Development

- Market the City of Keene in a collaborative way with local colleges, City government, not-for-profits and private businesses to leverage coverage and resources available to attract economic development.
- Explore the potential for grants, financial incentives, and partnerships among KSC, City and private investors that relate to economic development and revitalization of neighborhoods in the vicinity of the College. This study could lead to establishing of coordinated revitalization plans for the areas influenced by off-campus student housing.
- Research possibilities to incentivize home ownership in the neighborhoods around the KSC campus.
- Review and expand the scope and reach of various economic incentive programs adopted by the City (e.g. Economic Revitalization Zone and RSA 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive) and the existing SEED district to the neighborhoods adjacent to the KSC campus.

# APPENDIX

## **Diversity & Inclusion Resources**

This is a non-exhaustive list of community resources that provides information on services available for various issues and topics related to diversity and inclusiveness.

### **Incarceration:**

- [Monadnock Restorative Community](#)
- [Brattleboro Community Justice Center](#)
- [Community Resources for Justice](#)

### **LGBTQ:**

- [Monadnock Restorative Community](#)
- [Freedom New Hampshire](#)
- [Transgender NH](#)
- [Green Mountain Crossroads](#)

### **Mental Health:**

- [MAPS](#)
- [Monadnock Family Services](#)
- [Monadnock Developmental Services \(MDS\)](#)
- [Active Minds](#)
- [The Samaritans](#)
- [The Hive Mutual Support Network](#)

### **Race/Ethnicity**

- [Vermont Partnership for Fairness and Diversity](#)

### **Religion**

- [Congregation Ahavas Achim](#)
- [CRU](#)
- [Islamic Society of Greater Keene](#)
- [Keene Unitarian Universalist Church](#)
- [Monadnock Interfaith Project](#)
- [Newman Center](#)
- [St. James Episcopal Church Social Justice Ministry](#)

### **Other:**

- [ACT for Social Justice](#)
- [Black Lives Matter](#)
- [Brattleboro Solidarity](#)
- [Historical Society of Cheshire County](#)
- [Jonathan Daniels Center for Social Responsibility](#)
- [Jonathan Daniels / Martin Luther King Committee, City of Keene](#)
- [Justice for All Vermont](#)
- [Keene Public Library](#)

- [Keene Parks and Recreation Department](#)
- [Keene State College](#)
  - [Office of Diversity and Multiculturalism](#)
  - [The Cohen Center](#)
  - [Safe Space Subcommittee](#)
  - [Step-Up \(Bystander Intervention Steering Committee\)](#)
  - [Common Ground Multicultural Club](#)
  - [Courageous Conversations](#)
  - [Mentors in Violence Prevention \(MVP\)](#)
- [Lost River Racial Justice](#)
- [Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention](#)
- [Monadnock Progressive Alliance](#)
- [Outright Vermont](#)
- [The Root Social Justice Center](#)